

President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) administration suffers from a contradictory mental state, a personality split that trumpets upholding Taiwan's national interests and dignity, while its actions over the past seven years belie its words.

The latest evidence is the Ma government's bid to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

On Tuesday, the government said that it would not apply for AIIB membership if Beijing insists that Taiwan subjects itself to a stipulation saying that an applicant that "does not enjoy sovereignty or cannot take responsibility for its international relations" must have its application "presented or agreed upon by the member of the bank responsible for its international relations."

China has never renounced its ambition to annex Taiwan and the language of the article aims to denigrate the nation's status; as such, the Ma administration ought be lauded for saying that Taiwan would not join the bank if its sovereignty would be compromised.

That said, many must wonder why the Ma administration in March was in such a rush to apply?

The government applied for the AIIB on the night of March 31 — the application deadline. The letter of intent to become a founding member of the AIIB, which the Ma administration submitted through the cross-strait communication channel between the Mainland Affairs Council and China's Taiwan Affairs Office, lacked the official name of the nation and the Ministry of Finance. The full title of Minister of Finance Chang Sheng-ford (張盛福) was not beneath his signature and the letter was not printed on government letterhead.

The rush to apply to the AIIB in such a self-degrading manner highlights the contradictions between Ma's actions and his pledge to maintain Taiwan's dignity.

Since taking office in May 2008, Ma has forged closer ties with China and created the

## Ma aids China's annexation dream

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impression that Beijing means no harm. Aside from a statement reiterating that the relations between Taiwan and China are not state-to-state, but rather “region-to-region,” Ma has obstinately ignored that Beijing has never acknowledged the idea of “one China, with each side having its own interpretation.”

As such, on the pretense of what it calls “putting aside the sovereignty dispute,” the Ma administration is fracturing Taiwan's status as a sovereign state.

The administration's insistence on the so-called “1992 consensus” serves only to erode the nation's international standing and propel Taiwan's sovereignty into further ambiguity and an existential crisis.

China, on the other hand, has become more tactful in its dealing with Taiwan since Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) came to power. However subtly, China is showing a new pattern of assertiveness to “Hong Kong-ize” (香港化) Taiwan, creating an international impression that Taiwan is part of China.

This is obvious from the AIB incident, Beijing's recent announcement that Taiwanese visitors no longer need to apply for entry permits to China and when in May during a meeting with Xi, Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Eric Chu (吳敦義) remarked that “both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China.”

Furthermore, a new security law China adopted yesterday undoubtedly encroaches on Taiwan's sovereign status.

The split personality of the Ma administration and the KMT risks leaving Taiwan defenseless against China's annexation agenda.

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