

Rejection of 'one China' principle

Written by Lee Shyu-tu 李修圖

Thursday, 03 December 2015 09:05

The hastily arranged meeting between President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) in Singapore on Nov. 7 put the public on alert even before Ma left for the meeting, as he has earned no trust from Taiwanese over his credibility and ability to deal with China. After he came back, the scolding erupted and groups rejected what he said about the "one China" principle at the meeting.

That, along with other factors, seems likely to diminish the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) chances in the Jan. 16 presidential and legislative elections and to make Beijing's "one China" dream even more remote.

The Sunflower movement in March last year and the subsequent defeat of the KMT in November's nine-in-one elections proved that the public blames Ma's China policy and his party for political disorder, setbacks to democracy, economic downturn and income disparity. In fact, Taiwanese are aware of Ma's hidden agenda in his China policy — the intention to unify.

Those issues — coupled with China's aggressiveness toward Taiwan in the past two decades, such as the communique signed by then-Chinese president Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) and then-KMT chairman Lien Chan (連戰), the Anti-secession Law, unilaterally designating an air defense identification zone in the East China Sea, the threats and effort to influence the election process in Taiwan and the obstructions of the nation's participation in the international community — have all brought about a sense of deep distrust over the Ma-Xi meeting.

Although some Taiwanese support dialogue with China, many saw the timing as inappropriate, as it was only 10 weeks prior to the presidential election, the process was carried out in secret and Ma is not trustworthy as a participant.

After Ma returned from Singapore, Taiwanese blasted him for selling out Taiwan by not defining "one China" with respect to the definition of the "one China" principle. Fierce protests over Ma's shameful behavior erupted after the Mainland Affairs Council, two days after the meeting, released the text of the speech it prepared for Ma, which said: "In November 1992, both sides of the Strait reached the [so-called] 1992 consensus for one China principle with respective oral interpretation by each side."

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Ma failed to mention the “respective interpretation by each side.”

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) — who has a strong lead in opinion polls for the the presidential race — blasted Ma, saying: “We expected him to note Taiwan’s democracy, Taiwan’s freedom, the existence of the Republic of China [ROC], and most importantly, the rights Taiwanese have to decide their future freely. However, he did not mention any of those.”

People First Party presidential candidate James Soong (宋楚瑜) also expressed disappointment that Ma did not stress the existence and dignity of the ROC, or the rights and welfare of Taiwanese.

The Taiwan Association for University Professors released a strongly worded statement saying that Taiwanese would not accept any agreement or promise made between Ma and Xi without the authorization and concurrence of the public through the democratic process.

The association said that if any agreement was made, it would have no binding power on the new administration.

On Nov. 19, 16 groups — among them the professors’ association, the Economic Democracy Union, the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, the Association for Taiwan Indigenous Peoples’ Policy, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the Black Island Nation Youth Front, Democracy Tautin, Taiwan March, the Independent Youth Front, Taiwan Society, World United Formosans for Independence and the Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan — held a joint press conference to denounce the “one China” principle and to speak up for the right of self-determination for the nation.

The anger toward Ma and the protest against the “one China” principle has even spread abroad.

The North America Taiwanese Professors’ Association released a statement on Nov. 12

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warning that the ultimate goal of the “one China” principle is to suck Taiwan into communist China and called for legislative candidates to denounce the so-called “1992 consensus,” on which the “one China” principle is based.

Taiwanese students studying abroad, including some in Japan, the US, Australia and Germany, have mobilized themselves to write letters to the media, hoping to protect the international image of Taiwan's sovereignty.

The China-factor wildfire, which is burning the KMT, was not ignited by the Ma-Xi meeting; the fire was started by China itself two decades ago when it fired missiles in an attempt to intimidate Taiwanese ahead of a presidential election. The fire became uncontrollable when the KMT ignored Taiwan's welfare under Ma's pro-China policy, which gradually surfaced starting shortly after Ma's first term in 2008. It became a wildfire after the Sunflower movement in March last year. Whoever advocates “one China” will get burned.

Once Deputy Legislative Speaker Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) announced that her political platform was “one China, with the same interpretation [by both sides of the Strait],” her approval rating as the KMT's presidential candidate quickly dropped to the point that she had to be removed three months after she was selected.

Now that Ma has openly uttered the “one China” principle, it is predicted that Taiwanese will make his party pay the cost next month.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/12/03](#)