

Many people have high expectations of the presidential debates, especially candidates with lower support ratings, as they hope that the leading candidate will reveal flaws as she comes under fire and that her approval ratings will drop, providing them with an opportunity turn the situation around. By the same token, if the leading candidate does not stumble, she is likely to be victorious.

The first debate showed that the combined firepower of Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Eric Chu (胡錦威) and People First Party Chairman James Soong (宋楚瑜) was not enough to shake Democratic Progressive Party Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文). The debate did not turn the campaign around; it only consolidated the willingness of supporters to vote for their candidate, swaying perhaps only a minority of swing voters.

As the unchallenged leader in the polls, Tsai only has to maintain a middle-of-the-road stance. Chu attacked her for not recognizing the so-called “1992 consensus” and said that she has not explained what maintaining the “status quo” means because she simply has no answer.

Tsai counterattacked, saying that “you can never wake someone up who is pretending to be asleep” and that given this situation, she has been clear and consistent on the “1992 consensus” — namely that she “will respect public opinion and democratic mechanisms in order to promote cross-strait relations within the current Republic of China system.”

She also said that the results of cross-strait efforts over the past two decades would serve as the foundation for how her team would handle cross-strait ties.

Tsai also questioned Chu over a statement he made during his May visit to China: that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the same “one China.”

She also said that although he had strongly criticized President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) during the Sunflower movement last year and said the KMT would have to engage in some hard introspection, he has showed no such tendencies since becoming KMT chairman. Chu has simply been repeating Ma’s record of failure, she said.

Debates are for show, not reality

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Tuesday, 29 December 2015 08:10

Chu said things must not be taken out of context, and that the KMT's position has never changed — that Taiwan should adhere to the "1992 consensus" and "one China, different interpretations."

Soong said that cross-strait relations are a matter of being "pragmatic, pragmatic and pragmatic," and that time should be used to create space for cooperation and mutual understanding, and to further expand exchanges.

Although Chu launched a forceful counterattack and Soong attacked from the flanks, Tsai was well prepared for questions about cross-strait relations and fired back. In the end, there were no winners or losers on this issue.

The difference between the presidential and the vice presidential candidates is that those seeking the nation's top office are seasoned politicians who are supported by strong and experienced teams. They have prepared for all the possible questions and answers on every issue. Therefore, the debates can only show how carefully prepared they are.

The crucial factor in the debates is their empty accusations, lies and superficial promises. Remember how Ma offered pie-in-the-sky promises during the debates in the past two presidential elections. He has failed to deliver on almost every one of those promises during his almost eight years in office.

The debates are political shows and the best performer is likely to come out ahead. The debates should not be taken too seriously because a politician's abilities and honesty are unlikely to be revealed.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/12/29](#)