

Flush away the “1992 consensus”

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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It is ironic looking back on how self-congratulatory President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) was when he in November last year patted himself on the back for having mentioned the Republic of China (ROC) and the phrase “one China, with each side having its own interpretation” at his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平).

Ma at the time affirmed the importance of the so-called “1992 consensus,” saying that as his meeting with Xi confirmed the “1992 consensus” is the cross-strait consensus, he was building “a bridge for future presidents to ensure cross-strait peace, prosperity and stability,” and the bridge is the “1992 consensus.”

Even as recently as Saturday, after the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) was soundly defeated by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the presidential and legislative elections, China’s Taiwan Affairs Office was still trumpeting that Beijing’s policy toward Taiwan would continue to adhere to the “1992 consensus.”

Apparently Beijing is lagging behind in its grasp of Taiwanese awakening to the so-called “cross-strait consensus” following the humiliation of the Taiwanese member of South Korean girl group TWICE, Chou Tzu-yu (周子瑜).

After the 16-year-old was accused by China-based Taiwanese singer Huang An (黃安) of supporting Taiwanese independence because she waved a Republic of China national flag on a South Korean TV show, her commercial activities in China were curtailed by her South Korean management company and she also lost an endorsement deal with Chinese smartphone maker Huawei.

In an effort to end the controversy and appease the K-pop group’s fans in China, Chou’s management company allegedly forced her to apologize in a video.

The video instantly sparked public indignation in Taiwan as many watched Chou, with her hands shaking as she read from the prepared statement, apologize and say “there is only one China... I have always felt proud of being Chinese.”

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Many Taiwanese saw the forced apology as tantamount to a great insult to all Taiwanese. After all, what wrong did Chou, or any Taiwanese for that matter, commit by waving the national flag?

The incident came as a big slap in the face for Ma, whose government has long defended the “1992 consensus” as an understanding reached between Taiwan and China in 1992 that both sides acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own interpretation of what “China” means.

If Beijing, as Taiwan has been told by Ma and the KMT, agrees to both sides having its own interpretation of what “one China” means, what was the fuss about over a Taiwanese waving the national flag?

The Chou incident pierces through Ma and the KMT’s long-held lie and exposes that China’s understanding of the “1992 consensus” is different from what Ma and the KMT have been telling Taiwanese — Beijing does not recognize that each side of the Taiwan Strait has its own interpretation of what “one China” means.

Despite a confession by former National Security Council secretary-general Su Chi (蘇起) in 2006 that he had made up the term in 2000, Ma and the KMT constructed their entire cross-strait policy on this fabricated consensus and insisted that it existed, when it does not.

All it took was a 16-year-old girl to uncover the lie.

Along with the stepping down of the KMT government, it is also time to flush the spurious “1992 consensus” down the drain.

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