

While some people believe that cross-strait ties are a “state-to-state” relationship, recent events suggest that it is a relationship between two political parties: the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Since early last month, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been bombarded with questions about when and if Taiwan would receive an invitation from the WHO for this year's World Health Assembly (WHA), which is to be held from May 23 to May 28 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Hope turned to desperation as the May 9 deadline for registration for the annual assembly approached with no sign of an invitation. The only answer from WHO Secretary-General Margaret Chan's (馬馬馬馬) office was that the invitation for “Chinese Taipei” was still being processed.

It is likely that the WHO's delayed response issuing an invitation was due to pressure from Beijing, which has resorted to all forms of intimidation to strong-arm president-elect Tsai Ing-wen (馬馬馬) to fall in line on the so-called “1992 consensus.”

The WHO on Friday last week finally sent out the invitation to Taiwan. However, even before the Ministry of Health and Welfare, to whom the invitation was addressed, was informed, KMT Central Policy Committee director Alex Tsai (馬馬馬) took to Facebook to announce not only that the invitation had been issued, but also that the “one China” principle was attached to it.

When Alex Tsai posted his message at about 5:30pm on Friday last week, the foreign ministry said it was still gathering information to confirm the news, while the health ministry was left in the dark until about 7pm. Two questions spring to mind: Who tipped off Alex Tsai and why?

If it was China — which some lawmakers have said — it suggested Beijing does not see its Taiwanese counterpart as the nation's elected government, but the KMT. Moreover, judging by the response of KMT Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (馬馬馬) to the last-minute invitation, the heads-up could have stemmed from a need to ensure that the KMT toed the line.

KMT upholding Beijing's interests

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Later that day Hung said the WHO's willingness to send out the invitation at the last minute was primarily thanks to the KMT administration's achievements in foreign affairs and its adherence to the "1992 consensus."

"We hereby solemnly remind the Democratic Progressive Party that its insistence on rejecting the 'consensus' would shatter the foundations on which the cross-strait 'status quo' has been built ... and impede Taiwan's chances of participation in international organizations," Hung said, without criticizing China for its attempt to belittle Taiwan in the international arena yet again.

The incident is reminiscent of the KMT's response to Malaysia's deportation of 32 Taiwanese fraud suspects to Beijing instead of Taipei on April 30. Immediately after news broke about the deportation, the Executive Yuan and the Presidential Office each issued a strongly worded statement of protest and expressed regrets over the case.

However, a KMT news release took a positive view, saying that the KMT had discovered after checks had been undertaken that China had notified Taiwan of the deportation and had invited Taiwanese officials to go to Beijing to jointly investigate the case.

Hours later, the government made a U-turn and followed suit, saying its change of stance was promoted by a new development.

Sooner or later, Taiwanese — perhaps even pan-blue supporters — are likely to realize that the KMT still perceives itself as a political entity of "China." The KMT's teaming-up with the CCP to try to lock Taiwan into the "one China" framework shows what the party truly cares about — and always has — is the interests of Beijing, not Taiwan.

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