

Since Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was elected president on Jan. 16, China has made no secret of pressuring her to include the so-called “1992 consensus” in her inauguration speech on Friday, threatening “earth-shattering consequences” if it is not adopted as the basis for cross-strait relations.

The outgoing Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government claims the “consensus” refers to a tacit understanding reached between Taipei and Beijing in 1992 that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own interpretation of what “one China” means.

What if Tsai — who has repeatedly reiterated the DPP’s position recognizing that a meeting between Taiwan and China took place in 1992, but rejecting the notion that a consensus was reached — were to accept the “1992 consensus”? Would China be satisfied? Would the two sides of the Taiwan Strait resolve their differences and live happily ever after?

The answer is “No” — as evidenced by China’s incessant obstruction and belittlement of Taiwan on the international stage over the past eight years, despite the acceptance of the fictitious consensus by President Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) China-friendly administration.

The Ma government has for eight years happily toed Beijing’s line by constructing its entire cross-strait policy on the fabricated “1992 consensus,” but what has Taiwan received in return?

Not only has it veered the nation toward China’s “one China” framework, but nowhere has the Taiwanese public seen the Ma government’s acceptance of the fictional consensus conjured up by former National Security Council secretary-general Su Chi (蘇起) resulting in less obstruction and marginalization of Taiwan by China.

Instead, Taiwan has seen its national dignity downgraded on the international stage, because Ma’s narrative that the “1992 consensus” allows Taiwan more room to maneuver simply does not sit well with members of the international community, which overwhelmingly sees the People’s Republic of China as the sole, legitimate representative of China.

‘1992 consensus’ is a poison pill

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Ma and the KMT may be quick to tout the consensus as the main factor enabling Taiwan to attend meetings of international bodies such as the WHO, but even with such participation, Taiwan has to fight a constant battle against efforts by Chinese officials to downgrade its status.

Adopting the “consensus” has allowed China to oppose Taiwan’s international participation countless times by citing the “one China” principle.

The Ma government’s employment of the “1992 consensus” over the past eight years has not in any way altered China’s objective of bringing Taiwan under its control.

In fact, the opposite is more likely true: The Ma government’s touting of the “1992 consensus” only works to serve China’s political agenda by downgrading the Republic of China’s standing on the international stage and drawing Taiwan closer toward unification with China.

The essence of the so-called “1992 consensus” lies in China’s true ambition, which is to annex Taiwan under the “one China” principle.

So, while China has in recent days attempted to paint Taiwan as an exporter of telephone fraud rings that target people in China, the truth is China is itself the biggest fraud artist of all, wrapping the “one China” poison pill in the illusion of the so-called “1992 consensus.”

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