

‘One China’ destined for the dustbin of history

Written by James Wang 王健

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What is left of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) still does not want to see Taiwan succeed. It has tried to put a damper on the telephone call from President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) to US president-elect Donald Trump, warning Tsai not to allow herself to become a pawn in Washington's chess game, and to learn the lessons of the limitations of the nation's expectations from the era of its dealings with former US president Ronald Reagan.

However, the KMT's note of caution does not ring true and its warnings fail to get to the root of the problem.

The truth is that Taiwan has always played the US, too. When Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) was in power, he ensured Taiwan's security by using the US to resist China, and pro-localization governments have used the US to prevent the forced annexation of Taiwan by China.

It might be more accurate to say that Taiwan and the US are actually playing the same game of chess, on the same side. They both stand to gain from winning.

That nations play other nations off each other is a given in international relations. During the Cold War, the US blocked the expansion of communist forces by forming alliances with Asia-Pacific nations — including the anti-communist Chiang regime in Taiwan.

That is why then-Chinese leader Mao Zedong (毛澤東) called Chiang a “lackey of US imperialism.”

However, Mao, as well as former Chinese leaders Zhou Enlai (周恩來) and Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平), all chose to ally with the US and Japan against Russia by forming semi-alliances. Did that make them “lackeys of US imperialism” too?

Since Chiang and his gang are gone, the Chinese have now shifted their attention to attacking pro-independence advocates as “lackeys of US imperialism.” This, at the same time as many are quietly sending vast amounts of money, as well as their families to the US. Are those Chinese not hiding in the homes of US imperialism more like lackeys?

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Although the KMT has gotten what it deserves, it is merely accusing former US presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter of having sold out Taiwan. However, in reality, when the US formally withdrew its recognition of the Republic of China (ROC) government, it was the Chiang regime that sold out Taiwan by insisting on its claims to represent the whole of China. The KMT's absurd hubris led to the US' "one China" policy which has been harmful to Taiwan's interests.

As for Reagan, he was unable to restore diplomatic relations between Taiwan and the US during his time in office simply because the time was not right, as the US and China had just established diplomatic ties in 1979, a mere two years before he took office in 1981.

Reagan's secretary of state, Alexander Haig, was a deputy of former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, the man who signed the 1972 Shanghai Communique with Beijing to recognize — but not endorse — the "one China" policy.

It should also be pointed out that there were valid reasons for Washington's "allying with China against Russia" and Deng's "allying with the US and Japan against Russia."

Trump no longer needs to ally with China against Russia, and he might even do the opposite. Today, Chinese hegemony has exposed its ambition and brutality, despite international norms. This is more irritating to Washington.

More than half a century has passed since the signing of the communique, and it is difficult for Kissinger's followers to find legitimate reasons to defend his "pro-China" policy.

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