

## Ma's words undermine sovereignty

Written by James Wang 王健

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Taiwan's status is unique and unprecedented. Not only is it independent, it is generally accepted that, legally speaking, there is no need for it to declare independence.

That said, even though the reasons Taiwan has no need to declare independence appear similar on the surface, there are major differences in terms of their implications.

Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) changed the constitutional system and became the nation's first directly elected president.

By "vesting sovereignty in Taiwanese," he acknowledged that Taiwan had become an independent state via democratic elections.

The Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Resolution on Taiwan's Future also advocates vesting sovereignty in Taiwanese, deciding that the "status quo" is Taiwan is an independent state, and that any changes to this have to be decided upon by its 23 million people.

However, the pro-unification camp imposes a foreign constitution on Taiwan, deliberately confusing people with its agenda and proposes other reasons for the need to declare independence.

A classic expression of this is the rather disingenuous statement by former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) in New York when he said: "Have you ever heard of a country declaring independence twice?"

"We were independent as far back as 1912, so why declare independence a second time?" he said.

What Ma said does not make sense and has a tenuous relationship with reality. The

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Philippines, for example, became independent twice, first from Spain and then from the US.

If Ma's "we" referred to "Taiwan," then in 1912, it was a colony of Japan, so there was no way it could be independent.

And if by "we" he meant the "Republic of China (ROC)," then it has never "declared independence," and its territory does not include Taiwan.

When the ROC was established in 1912, it said that its intention was to "overthrow the autocratic government, to establish the republic," which is say, to establish a new government to replace the Qing Dynasty, not to declare independence from it.

Then-ROC minister of foreign affairs Wang Chunhui (王春惠) asked the US only to recognize "our government" as soon as possible.

When the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaced the ROC, it did so by revolution.

Mao Zedong (毛泽东) did not "declare independence," but "the establishment of the PRC central government."

Ma's nonsense conceals malice, deliberately ignores the undetermined status of Taiwan in the Treaty of San Francisco, challenges Taiwan's democracy and the sovereignty invested in the people, and acknowledges China's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.

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Translated by Lin Lee-kai

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