

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) has been championing a proposal to end Taiwan's "hostile relationship" with China by signing a peace agreement; she might even conclude that espionage and mutual — or to be more exact, one-sided — blocking would be unnecessary with such an agreement, but the people she needs to persuade are more likely to be Republic of China (ROC) loyalists than ordinary Taiwanese.

Hung's statement presupposes that the Chinese Civil War is still ongoing, and until an armistice or peace treaty is signed between the warring parties — the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) — that hostilities will not cease.

However, there is also the view that the Chinese Civil War ended when the KMT regime in 1991, four years after the lifting of martial law, announced the abrogation of the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion (動員戡亂時期臨時條款) instituted in 1948, which amounted to the KMT-led ROC no longer regarding the CCP a "rebel group."

There are also questions over whether the war, fought between and started by the KMT and the CCP in China, should trouble Taiwanese that have instituted democracy in a new land.

ROC defenders might argue that the ROC is still the face of Taiwan, but they might have to choose between agreeing that the ROC is coterminous with Taiwan and its outlying islands, or ditching the idea of the continuation of the ROC altogether and "China" to be "intact" again.

Some KMT members choose to live in limbo or under the illusion that the ROC can be retained and represent China, but they face their political stance gradually being incorporated by Beijing and their existence assimilated in the eyes of Taiwanese, as the call for recognition of the so-called "1992 consensus" as a prerequisite for participation the World Health Assembly, issued in unison by the KMT and the CCP, has shown.

Hung has apparently chosen to ditch the idea of the ROC. Ending hostilities with the CCP is, for the KMT, no less than admitting that the Chinese Civil War is over and the KMT lost, and with that the legitimacy of the ROC has ended.

The KMT's failing relevancy

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Hung in this sense at least should be praised for her honesty and being truthful to the KMT's canonical goal of unification, as opposed to her comrades who wish to have it both ways — upholding the illusory, China-including ROC and also conforming to a Taiwan-centered outlook.

For ordinary Taiwanese, the “need” to end hostilities is a nonstarter, as Taiwan is not the one making hostile moves and a scene on the international stage. Taiwan is on the defensive, facing the ostensible ambition of annexation, blatantly flaunted by a foreign authoritarian regime.

A “peace agreement” signed in this context would be none other than surrender of sovereignty and “imposed peace” would ensue, as the peace agreement signed between the CCP and Tibet in 1951 showed.

Hung said that if she retains the KMT chairperson in this month's election, formal Taiwanese independence would never be the party's choice. However, she failed to answer how she would lead the party in a society where Taiwanese identity has naturally developed in an environment that allows free and independent thinking.

She might have been rightly sharp when urging an election rival, former vice president Wu Den-yih (吳敦義), to clarify where he stands on the identity spectrum, but that does not make her a better candidate for the presidency than other major KMT competitors, who are also struggling to remain relevant in today's political landscape.

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