

The KMT is blocking more than just policy

Written by Gerrit van der Wees
Thursday, 13 July 2017 06:31

After its severe defeat in the presidential and legislative elections in January last year, the once proud Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) now seems to have damaged its reputation even further by resorting to obstructionist tactics in the Legislative Yuan, as well as in the streets.

Two articles in the Taipei Times about the role the KMT intends to play in Taiwan's democracy concerned me.

Does the party intend to be a loyal and constructive opposition that strengthens Taiwan's democracy, or does it intend to follow a destructive "scorched earth" policy?

The first article said KMT supporters — including former police officers — plan to "shadow" President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) wherever she goes, intending to obstruct her movements ("Protesters disclose 'guerilla' tactics," July 9, page 1).

Former National Police Agency Internal Affairs Office director Keng Chi-wen (鄧錫雲), one of the most prominent former police officers participating in the protests, was quoted as saying that "guerrilla" tactics can be used to get close to the president, with other former officers who are familiar with presidential security showing protesters how to congregate and scatter along potential motorcade routes.

If the KMT were a self-respecting party that is dedicated to freedom and democracy it would distance itself from such despicable tactics and denounce them in the strongest possible terms.

KMT chairman-elect Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) knows very well that this is not the way to promote democracy and he should make it clear that his party clearly disassociates itself from Keng and his police officers turned goons.

A second article described plans by the KMT caucus to stall the legislative review of the Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program budget by filing 5,000 legislative motions ("Lawmakers plan stall tactics," July 10, page 3).

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The article said that the budget review is planned to begin today, with Premier Lin Chuan (林錫山) scheduled to report to the Legislative Yuan.

The KMT caucus is now threatening to disrupt the review process with procedural and non-procedural tactics, and obstruct the premier's speech.

While a healthy debate is essential for a democracy, these tactics look suspiciously like obstructionism, which does not befit a venerable KMT.

If it goes down this road, it is likely to further damage its public image and lose even more ground in the next election.

A more constructive approach would be to engage in a healthy debate on the issues and on the substance of the proposals.

Taiwan needs to modernize its infrastructure to compete internationally and to enhance the standard of living. The proposed infrastructure program is a major step in the right direction.

Differences can exist on how these programs should be implemented and how fast. Key is the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation.

The KMT caucus would do well to focus on these aspects, and show that it can be a responsible and rational player in Taiwan's democracy.

The path toward the future will not be easy because of the perpetual dark cloud of China looming on the horizon, but Taiwanese — including the KMT — can ensure that the nation has a bright future if they learn how to make democracy work, and live together in peace and harmony.

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