

Independence camp making gains

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 20 October 2017 06:44

There was a time when the term “pro-independence” was considered a synonym for radicals, outdatedness and irrelevance, similar to most people’s image of the pro-unification camp nowadays.

When former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was in power, the “pro-independence” position was hijacked for reasons of political expediency and so heavily propagated that most people became numb to the issue.

All that was left of pro-independence forces were occasional, repetitive protests calling for rectification of the nation’s name and a UN membership bid.

If it were not for the 2014 student-led Sunflower movement, which allowed what the news media call “naturally pro-independence” young people to enter the limelight, independence advocacy would not have undergone much-needed rejuvenation and regeneration.

Although the old pro-independence camp remains relatively active, mainstream perception of independence advocacy efforts has shifted greatly, as they become increasingly diversified, and driven by artistic and innovative young people.

The independence issue has been successfully rebranded and this trend has caught the attention of the previous generation of activists, who are now trying to seize the opportunity to further their decades-old agenda.

A few recent incidents in the political arena are proof of that.

First, independence proponent William Lai’s (賴清德) confirmation as premier last month is believed to be partially the result of growing pressure on President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) from the pro-independence camp, which has been upset about her lack of progress in pursuing measures that could push the nation closer to de jure independence.

Independence camp making gains

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 20 October 2017 06:44

Last week, there were rumors that the pro-independence camp is mulling backing New Power Party Legislator Freddy Lim (林錫山) as a candidate in next year's Taipei mayoral election.

World United Formosans for Independence chairman Chen Nan-tien (陳南天) told reporters that independence supporters are displeased by Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je's (柯文哲) discourse on cross-strait issues and that Lim's stance was more to their taste.

Ko, an independent who secured the DPP's backing in the 2014 elections, has seen his prospects for a second term grow increasingly shaky as the DPP is reportedly considering fielding its own candidate out of dissatisfaction with Ko's policy direction.

The relationship between Ko and the DPP worsened in July, when he told the Taipei-Shanghai Forum that Taiwan and China were "one family" and "a community of common destiny."

Lim is a spirited politician from a new party who has been featured in international media due to his career as a goth rocker and his hardline pro-independence stance.

A member of the legislature's Foreign and National Defense Committee, Lim has devoted much of his time to improving Taiwan's international status and removing remnants of the past authoritarian government.

Lim and Lai both declared, in their official capacities, their support for Taiwanese independence in their official capacities, while most of their colleagues remain content to be ambiguous.

If Lim, who seems to have embraced the idea of running for Taipei mayor, secures backing from the pan-green camp, his candidacy could further boost the cause of independence, even if he does not win.

Independence camp making gains

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 20 October 2017 06:44

It is a clever move by the pro-independence camp, as putting popular politicians who share its cause in important positions could prove more effective than relying on Tsai and the DPP to steer the nation toward true independence.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2017/10/20](#)