

Risks of having a Beijing city office

Written by Lin Shiou-jeng 林錫榮
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New Taipei City Mayor Eric Chu (朱立倫) has proposed establishing a representative office for the city in Beijing to facilitate cross-strait exchanges.

Chu has said that he is open to discussion and negotiation of his proposal, but in responding to a statement by the Mainland Affairs Council on Monday that it was inappropriate for local governments to deal with such matters, he maintained that providing a service to Taiwanese expatriates living in China can be “carried out in accordance with the framework of the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area (兩岸人民關係條例).”

“This matter does not necessarily need to be viewed purely from a political perspective,” he added.

According to Chu’s logic, a representative office in Beijing would extend its reach to local governments across the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and could be used to deal with central government and city government-level problems.

However, Chu’s plan has a flaw.

Macau has the “Office of the Macau Special Administrative Region in Beijing.” So, if New Taipei City established a representative office in Beijing, it would be nothing short of tacit recognition that the PRC exercises jurisdiction over the special municipality.

By extension, it would indirectly recognize the municipality as Chinese sovereign territory.

Chu is a former chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT); he should therefore be fully aware of the political effect of such a proposal.

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If his stance produces the desired response and attracts financial rewards, other mayors and county commissioners wishing to receive favors from Beijing would likely compete to outdo each other.

Under such a situation, the central government's executive authority would be usurped — and the nation would be dismembered.

In 2015, Chu said that “both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China,” an opinion even more toadying to Beijing's position than the so-called “1992 consensus.”

Is Chu seriously arguing that he should become a Chinese regional governor?

As one of Taiwan's leading politicians, Chu really should learn to watch his words.

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Translated by Edward Jones

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