

## Ma Ying-jeou the Trojan horse

Written by Taipei Times Editorial  
Thursday, 14 December 2017 06:48

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During a talk on cross-strait relations and international law at Soochow University in Taipei on Tuesday, former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) commented on the possibility of Taiwanese independence, comments which were more illuminating about the past than the future.

Ma reiterated his stance on unification with China, as if it needed clarification — Ma is all for it.

Taiwanese independence has nowhere to go and there is no need for it. Even if there were, it is unachievable, he said.

Chinese communists have put “peaceful unification” on the table. Taiwanese can just bide their time and things will progress accordingly, he said.

Good things come to those who wait.

Ma prefers the word “unification,” which does sound palatable. The word suggests unity, a coming together of equal parties working toward a mutually beneficial future.

The word annexation would be closer to the truth. Taking over. Swallowing up. Devouring.

In addition to promising peace, Beijing should offer to proceed using democratic processes, Ma added.

If Taiwanese do not choose unification, then we can just maintain peace and try again later when the time is right.

When Ma was president, he followed a “three noes” policy: no unification, no independence

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and no use of force. He discounted independence, but was not willing to talk about unification explicitly, because the time would come when it would happen naturally.

That being the case, why use force?

As president, he said that he was putting Taiwan first; what he was actually doing was setting out the conditions for eventual peaceful unification.

Now he is disingenuously suggesting that making this happen through a democratic process is a viable option for Taiwanese and Chinese alike.

Where has he been? Does he not know that the vast majority of Taiwanese identify with Taiwan, not China? Does he not remember the routing his party, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), was subjected to at the hands of an electorate that resoundingly rejected his pro-China stance?

He also criticized the Democratic Progressive Party's Resolution on Taiwan's Future ( ) for its contradiction, saying that Taiwan is a sovereign, independent nation that is called the Republic of China (ROC).

He is right. There is a glaring contradiction. He did not mention that its tenaciousness was due in large part to his own party's refusal to let the ROC fade into history where it belongs.

However, the best part of his talk was when he said that the majority of the rights that Taiwanese independence advocates want have already been realized.

Again, he is right. The problem is that these rights — democracy and human rights, for starters — have come about not because of his party and its stranglehold over Taiwan, but in spite of it, and only grudgingly conceded when Taiwanese made it clear they would not take no for an answer.

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These hard-won rights are also precisely what Taiwanese fear would be taken away should China swallow the nation.

Ma is justified in expressing his opinion that independence is unachievable. It would certainly take a more skilled politician than himself to achieve it.

To suggest that unification is a desirable option that can be achieved through democratic means and would be equal in any way is utterly disingenuous. His position on this coheres perfectly with the direction in which he steered Taiwan while president.

Ma's surname means "horse" and indeed, he acts like a Trojan horse.

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