

## NCC must stand firm against KMT

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉  
Saturday, 31 October 2020 06:54

---

CTi News' six-year broadcasting license is set to expire on Dec. 11. It remains unclear whether it will be renewed, and many are calling on the National Communications Commission (NCC) not to renew it due to the channel's pro-China leanings.

Beijing is worried, but dares not say anything for fear of making the case for the critics of the news channel. However, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) is throwing its full weight behind a campaign for CTi News' license to be renewed, decrying damage to freedom of expression in its opening salvo. If the situation were not so serious, it would have been comical.

A second front was opened by former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and ousted Kaohsiung mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜), which was like cleaning a cesspit: The more muck you rake out, the worse the stench.

Many might be asking what right Ma has to talk of "freedom of expression" and how Han is qualified to raise the issue of "democratic freedoms."

All that their public protestations achieved was to highlight the party's manifest shortcomings on freedom of speech.

Ma is a professional hatchet man, nurtured by the party-state system. Armed with a Sun Yat-sen Scholarship, Ma as a young man headed to the US and became a campus spy, reporting on fellow Taiwanese students and compiling a blacklist of "offenders."

From an early age, Ma took a hatchet to free speech, yet today he is accusing the NCC of "suppressing freedom, beyond even what was done during the Martial Law era."

It is interesting that Ma uses the Martial Law era as benchmark for a lack of freedom of expression before accusing the government of doing even worse.

## NCC must stand firm against KMT

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

Saturday, 31 October 2020 06:54

---

As Ma — a blood-stained perpetrator of that era — has first-hand knowledge, and since this chapter of the nation's history is still in recent memory, perhaps he should step forward and explain how freedom of expression was quashed by the party-state and in which way the government is doing worse today.

While in the US, Ma blacklisted Taiwanese students for “political crimes,” yet he now pretends to be an innocent observer compelled to take a stand against crimes against free speech. If he had a shred of moral fiber in his body, he would never show his face in public again.

Meanwhile, Han has called on the public, whether people like the channel or not, to stand behind CTi News to defend freedom of speech and freedom of the press. He also said that defending the channel would show the real measure of Taiwan's democracy, as the hallmark of a dictatorship is when no alternative views are accepted.

The problem is that Han, who spent nine years in China, took to the People's Republic of China dictatorship like a fish to water.

Until the CTi News controversy, had he ever displayed any interest in democracy, freedom of expression or freedom of the press? No, Han enjoyed his time in autocratic China a little too much.

Another problem with Han's stance is that the alternative that CTi News represents is problematic. In a democracy, alternative viewpoints are welcomed; pumping out Chinese Communist Party propaganda is not.

Washington last month announced that by the end of this year, all US universities must close Confucius Institutes on their campuses. Nobody in the US has said that this policy is an assault on academic freedom.

Washington earlier this year designated a number of Chinese state-run media outlets operating in the US as foreign missions. Nobody in the US has criticized their government for encroaching on freedom of the press.

## NCC must stand firm against KMT

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

Saturday, 31 October 2020 06:54

---

CTi News has, in accordance with regulations, applied for an extension of its broadcast license. Likewise, the NCC must, according to the law, decide whether to renew it.

Critics are accusing the NCC of violating freedom of expression by following its legal mandate — that is completely absurd.

Compelling the NCC to renew the license would have three negative consequences: It would cause broadcast regulations to become unenforceable, turn the commission into a toothless regulator and produce a stale broadcast media environment whereby established players have the right to exist in perpetuity.

The NCC has laid out eight assessment criteria at CTi News' administrative hearing, which started on Monday last week. The main theme running through them can be distilled into two words: national security.

The accountability of Want Want China Times Media Group founder Tsai Eng-meng (蔡英萌) is a secondary theme: Are there any internal controls of the day-to-day running of CTi News' output? Is its financial structure sound? Does Tsai's business involvement in China create a conflict of interest and constitute a national security threat?

Indeed, Article 10 of the Satellite Broadcasting Act (衛星廣播電視法) clearly states that a license application shall be rejected if the applicant's operations plan could adversely affect national security.

Interestingly, those who are advocating ignoring the law are also saying that the Regulations for License Renewal Applications by Broadcasting Enterprises (廣播事業機構申請換發執照辦法) and the Examination Regulations for the License Renewal of Satellite Broadcasting and Foreign Satellite Broadcasting Businesses (衛星廣播電視事業及境外衛星廣播電視事業申請換發執照辦法) make no mention of "national security," claiming this proves that the NCC is engaging in political censorship.

## NCC must stand firm against KMT

Written by Chin Heng-wei 陳恆偉

Saturday, 31 October 2020 06:54

---

The NCC has set out its stall. If it is relentlessly attacked by the KMT so that it might be forced to retreat into its shell, it would not just damage the commission's authority or that of the whole Democratic Progressive Party administration: The greatest damage would be done to national security.

*Chin Heng-wei is a political commentator.*

Translated by Edward Jones

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2020/10/30](#)

---