

KMT's Chiang is nuts, not the public

Written by Chen Mao-hsiung 陳毛雄

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According to the pro-unification Chinese academic Li Yi (李宜), who was deported from Taiwan last year for encouraging the use of force against this nation, pro-unification forces in Taiwan were essentially eradicated in January's presidential election.

Li said that if the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) failed to take the Presidential Office back in 2024, then Taiwan would be irreversibly set on the path to independence.

KMT Chairman Johnny Chiang (江啟元) disagrees and believes that Li neither understands the situation in Taiwan, nor the nature of democratic politics.

Li sees that sections of the electorate still vote for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in national elections even if mainstream public opinion does not fully cohere with the DPP's policies, and that even though pro-unification politicians have an amount of room to maneuver in local elections, they are gradually being ushered to the sidelines in national elections.

Chiang remains nostalgic for the KMT of the past, a time when Taiwanese did not completely reject the idea of unification.

He cannot see any reason why, if Taiwanese found the idea of unification with China palatable in the past, things should be any different now.

Former president Chiang Kai-shek (蔣經國) was pro-unification, but only in the sense of "retaking the mainland" by defeating the Chinese communists.

Initially, many people were with him on this: The KMT was exiled to Taiwan, not because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was stronger, but because the KMT was riddled with corruption.

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The KMT needed to get its house back in order, and then — so the argument went — defeating the CCP was within the realm of possibility.

Unfortunately, the KMT continued to be corrupt, and the CCP went from strength to strength, and as time went on, the dream of “retaking the mainland” became just that: a dream.

By the time of former president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), the idea of defeating the communists was replaced with unifying China through the “three principles of the people” — the KMT’s founding principles.

Chiang Ching-kuo remained staunchly anti-CCP, but when it came to unifying China, to paraphrase Mencius (孟子), it was a case of being unable to do it, not being unwilling to see it happen.

In that, he was being honest with Taiwanese.

With today’s pro-unification elements, it is a case of “if you cannot beat them, join them.”

With one side of their mouth, they call on Taiwanese to protect the Republic of China (ROC), while on the other, they smile at an enemy who would see the ROC’s demise, apparently unaware of the stark contradiction therein.

They say that they want “peaceful unification,” but any fool can see that this would mean unification under the banner — and political system — of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which would be nothing short of surrender.

Taiwanese are not stupid: They know that this is trying to pull the wool over their eyes, and that is why they have little time for it.

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Beijing will stop at nothing in its attempts to suppress Taiwan, even in areas unrelated to politics. It is only natural that Taiwanese would respond negatively, and that mainstream public opinion would turn against the CCP.

It follows that the electorate would turn its back on pro-unification forces seen to be pro-China and having capitulated to it — Li understands this, while Johnny Chiang does not.

The unification advocated by Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo was unification of China after the communists had been dispatched.

Even though it was delusional, there was no pretense on their part, and they did not advocate it in bad faith, so Taiwanese accepted it.

Peaceful unification under the ROC banner as advocated by today's pro-unification elements is neither dream nor delusion, it is a con.

Taiwanese are clear that this “peaceful unification” is capitulation pure and simple, and they will have no truck with it. This is why they have rejected the pro-unification forces.

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Translated by Paul Cooper

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