

KMT gets Beijing's message across

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 14 January 2021 07:05

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's announcement on Saturday that the US was to drop self-imposed restrictions on meetings between senior Taiwanese and US officials had immediate real-world effects.

On Monday, US Ambassador to the Netherlands Pete Hoekstra met Representative to the Netherlands Chen Hsing-hsing (陳興興) at the US embassy in The Hague, with both noting on social media the historic nature of this seemingly modest event.

Modest perhaps, but their meeting would have been impossible before Pompeo's announcement.

Some have welcomed this move, thinking that it is long-overdue and a step in the right direction to normalizing relations between Taiwan and the US; others were not so welcoming and expressed suspicions that the move was a dying gasp of the administration of US President Donald Trump.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Hua Chunying (華春瑩) called it Pompeo's "final show of madness," and Beijing was similarly unimpressed by the announcement of plans for US Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft to visit Taiwan. Craft was originally scheduled to arrive yesterday, but the trip was abruptly canceled on Tuesday.

The Chinese mission to the UN had issued a statement saying that "whoever plays with fire will burn himself," and after the cancellation was announced, China's Taiwan Affairs Office spokeswoman Zhu Fenglian (朱鳳蓮) said that Beijing "resolutely opposes exchanges between the US and Taiwan in any form."

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) did not have to worry about getting its message across, because Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) politicians took over that task. Former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) dismissed the planned visit as the US trying to "rile China" and called it a "superficial gesture." Former KMT chairman Eric Chu (吳敦義) questioned the trip's significance, while former KMT deputy secretary-general Alex Tsai (蔡丁旺) resorted to ad hominem attacks on Craft.

KMT gets Beijing's message across

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 14 January 2021 07:05

KMT legislators Alex Fai (蔡其昌) and Ma Wen-chun (馬文辰) expounded upon Beijing's theme, with Fai describing Craft as an unwanted guest and Ma Wen-chun saying that the visit would mean that Taiwan had become a US colony. KMT Legislator Wu Sz-huai (吳思懷) questioned what benefit the visit would have brought, repeating Ma Ying-jeou's suggestion that it was announced to get Beijing's back up.

Ma Ying-jeou's convenient amnesia of his bragging about the treatment he received from US officials during his stopovers on US soil in August 2013 and July 2015 — during which he met with senior US officials — notwithstanding, it is disappointing to hear major figures in the main opposition party, including a former president, pretend not to be aware of the historic significance of Craft's visit — had it gone ahead — when the significance of their own meeting was not lost on Chen and Hoekstra.

It is disappointing, but not surprising, as the KMT continues its inexorable drift away from the US and ever more into line with the CCP's messaging.

Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Chen Ting-fei's (陳亭妃) suggestion that the KMT should bear "responsibility" for the state department's cancelation of the trip overly flatters the KMT and its influence in Washington. Craft's trip fell victim to Pompeo's decision to call off all overseas trips by senior US officials in the remaining eight days of the Trump administration, including his own to Europe.

The reason given was the state department's desire to focus on the transition to US president-elect Joe Biden's team. While there are questions over why the cancelations came at such short notice, the important thing for Taiwan to notice is the attitude the KMT showed toward the original plan.

As Ma Ying-jeou and his ilk trip over themselves to placate Beijing, they blame the government and the US for ramping up tensions, and stay silent about Beijing's blatant intimidation of their own country.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2021/01/14](#)