

Recall vote: KMT's pro-China ploy

Written by Liao I-en 廖益恩

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After his election last month as Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) chairman, Eric Chu (吳敦義) led a grandiose delegation of party officials down to Taichung to vilify and spread rumors about Taiwan Statebuilding Party's only legislator, Chen Po-wei (陳柏偉), to stir up support for a vote to recall Chen. It was a great disappointment to see the leader of the nation's biggest opposition party behave like this.

Ever since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, democracies around the world have strongly condemned China for concealing facts about the pandemic and shirking responsibility, for its "wolf warrior" diplomacy and for blocking Taiwan's access to vaccines.

While many countries have responded by donating vaccines to Taiwan, the KMT has chosen to kowtow to China — even echoing Beijing's sentiments and badmouthing Taiwan's disease prevention practices, as if it was happy that disaster had struck. The party has become nothing but a representative of red China.

The KMT's main reason for backing Chen's recall is because the Taiwan Statebuilding Party is the most strongly pro-independence party on the unification-independence spectrum and it only has one seat in the legislature.

In addition, in April last year, Chen and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) legislators Wang Ting-yu (王廷瑜), Lin Chun-hsien (林春雄) and Lin I-chin (林益欽) submitted a legislative bill asking the government to change the country name on the cover and personal information page of the nation's passport to "Taiwan."

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January issued a new version of the passport, with the word "Taiwan" in larger print, stirring up discontent within China and the KMT. Wanting to pick the easiest target, the KMT has aimed its guns on Chen.

A closer look at the KMT's purported reasons for recalling Chen makes it clear that if these distortions and smears actually constitute legitimate reason for a recall, then every single KMT legislator would likely meet the requirements for being kicked out of office.

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The attempt to recall Chen is not just a matter for Chen personally or for the Taiwan Statebuilding Party, but a litmus test to determine if Taiwanese can resist China's subversion of democracy from within Taiwan through its agents, as the following points show:

First, Citizen Congress Watch's evaluation of lawmakers' performance in the first and second sessions of the current legislature showed that Chen was an outstanding legislator.

However, former KMT chairman Johnny Chiang (蔣經國), who had led the KMT's efforts to recall Chen, is not an outstanding legislator. How is it that a less-than-outstanding legislator can recall an outstanding legislator?

Second, China has been hounding Taiwan by sending its warplanes to intrude on Taiwan's air defense identification zone. However, the KMT is afraid of criticizing China; instead it has used its whole might to recall Chen, a legislator who is actively defending Taiwan in the legislature's Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee.

In other words, this recall vote is about Taiwan's opposition to pro-Chinese forces.

Third, the recall is also a matter of local malicious forces oppressing voters. The residents of Taichung's second constituency elected Chen only last year, but now someone or some people have realized that they will be no match for Chen in 2024, so they have resorted to this dirty tactic to get rid of him sooner rather than later so that he will not become even more difficult to defeat.

The recall vote on Saturday next week presents Taiwanese with the choice of fighting "red dark evil forces."

The voters of Taichung's second constituency made the right choice in January last year, and this time they will once again use their ballots to vote "no" to recall Chen and protect Taiwan's freedom, democracy and human rights.

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