

Forum discusses DPP's China, 2016 strategy

Written by Taipei Times

Monday, 05 August 2013 09:09 -



Ketagalan Foundation chairman Mark Chen speaks at a forum discussing the Democratic Progressive Party's strategy for returning to power.

Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times

Comparing the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) China policy under former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and the party's current policy is hard because of the rapidly changing dynamics of international politics, but there is no doubt that cross-strait policy during the Chen era was more than "eight lost years," as some say, DPP members and academics said yesterday.

"The years between 2000 and 2008 were not lost years, but eight legendary, glorious years," You Ying-lung (游盈隆), deputy executive director of the DPP's think tank, told a forum in Taipei.

The forum, focused on the DPP's China policy during Chen's years in office and the party's winning strategy in the 2016 presidential election, was organized by the Ketagalan Foundation, which was founded by the former president.

You, who served in the DPP administration as vice chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, praised Chen as a pragmatic idealist, a practitioner of de jure independence and a leader who dared to confront Beijing and Washington to safeguard the nation's interests.

Chen, who is serving a 20-year sentence for corruption charges, extended olive branches to China before July 2002, but dramatically changed his cross-strait policy after Beijing humiliated him by establishing diplomatic ties with Nauru, a former Taiwan ally, on the day he was sworn in as DPP chairman, You said.

Determined to walk his own path after that, Chen proposed the “one country on each side” initiative, holding several national referendums and staging discussions to write a new Constitution, You said.

While Chen’s legacy is debatable, the former president remains to this day the only DPP candidate to have won a Taipei mayoral election and two presidential elections, and has shown what it takes for to succeed politically, he said.

“The winning formula for a candidate is to be political and professional competent and have strong agenda-setting ability on cross-strait issues,” You said.

Meanwhile, Lai I-chung (賴宜中), deputy executive director of the Taiwan Thinktank, challenged the “myths” that the triangular relationship between the DPP, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is important and the DPP’s China policy would be the “last milestone” the DPP had to cross to return power.

Overemphasizing the relationship is flawed because, while DPP-CCP talks are welcome, the administrations of Chen and former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) were still able to facilitate negotiations without “the political foundation” of the so-called “1992 consensus,” he said.

The last milestone for the DPP’s quest to return to power is not its China policy, but the feasible policy options it proposes for developing the national economy and trade to places outside of China, such as the ASEAN countries or India, Lai said.

“The last milestone for the DPP is freeing cross-strait policy of CCP-KMT domination,” Lai added.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2013/08/05](#)