

Ma accused of 'lying' about relations

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Commentator Nan Fang Shuo speaks to the press yesterday on the sidelines of a Democratic Progressive Party China policy forum in Taipei.

Photo: Lo Pei-der, Taipei Times

Political analysts and Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) politicians yesterday criticized President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) for describing cross-strait relations as not international and cross-strait flights as domestic flights.

“What Ma has been doing in the past five years, in terms of external relations, is lying. He lied to the Taiwanese, the US and Beijing, hoping to reap benefits and personal gains,” political commentator Nan Fang Shuo (方芳) said on the sidelines of a DPP-organized forum in Taipei.

At the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) weekly Central Standing Committee meeting on Wednesday, Ma, noting that domestic flights in the US have been more profitable than international flights, said that Taiwan's airline companies would not have been profitable if they were not operating cross-strait routes.

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"The relations between Taiwan and China are exactly like that," Ma was quoted as saying.

His comment was interpreted to mean that cross-strait flights are domestic flights.

Ma also drew fire with his Double Ten National Day speech on Oct. 10 when he said the cross-strait relations were not international relations.

The Ma administration's handling of diplomatic affairs has failed to maximize Taiwan's gain and minimize potential damages, Nan Fang Shou said, adding that Ma assumed his deceit would win him an opportunity to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) at next year's APEC summit in Beijing.

Asked if Ma's recent comments underlined the necessity for a constitutional amendment, Nan Fang Shuo said that the true problem did not lie in the Constitution, but in the way Ma and the KMT distorted the Constitution.

"If someone could distort the Constitution like that, amending the Constitution would not be meaningful," he said.

Meanwhile, Ma yesterday tried to dismiss concerns about his defining cross-strait ties as "not international relations."

"The Republic of China [ROC] is a sovereign country, and mainland China is part of our territory according to the Constitution. Therefore, our relations with the mainland are not international relations. It is a special relationship," he said at a meeting with a US delegation led by Wyoming Governor Matt Mead at the Presidential Office.

The president also reiterated his "three noes" policy of no unification, no independence and no use of force in handling cross-strait relations, and said that the government continued to promote cross-strait development under the so-called "1992 consensus."

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He said that cross-strait air routes are neither international flights nor domestic ones, shrugging off concerns about his comparison of US domestic flights to cross-strait flights.

"We've defined that the cross-strait air routes are not international ones or domestic ones. They are special flights," he said.

"Such a definition allows the two sides of the Taiwan Strait to enhance their relations and bring profits to the people from both sides that they did not enjoy in the past," he said.

Ma cited the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) and the service trade agreement, and said the cross-strait relations are the most peaceful and stable they have been in the past 60 years.

He also said the nation will continue to seek cooperation with the US in maintaining a sustainable defense force to protect public safety.

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