

DPP US representative pleads for independence

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Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) representative to the US Joseph Wu (吳敦義) made an impassioned plea for Taiwan independence at a Thanksgiving banquet in the US on Saturday.

Echoing the words of US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr, he said that he had “a dream” that Taiwan would be regarded as an equal by the international community.

Wu said that even though Taiwan is a democracy it still suffers from segregation and international discrimination and has not been able to join international organizations such as the UN.

“We participate in organizations under the name ‘Taiwan, Province of China’ or ‘Chinese Taipei,’” he said.

“This is not the right way for Taiwan to participate — Taiwanese should have the same rights as people in any other country,” he added.

“I have a dream. It is that Taiwan will be regarded as an equal by the international community. That Taiwan will participate in the United Nations and all other international organizations just as other countries do,” he said.

Wu was addressing the annual Thanksgiving Banquet of the Taiwanese Association of America — Greater Washington Chapter, which was attended by about 400 Taiwanese Americans.

“I have a dream that Taiwan will be regarded by the international community not as a part of another country, but as a country by itself,” he added.

Speaking with great passion, Wu said that the Taiwanese government exercised exclusive jurisdiction over the territory under its control and therefore Taiwan had the same rights as any

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other country.

“I have a dream we can use our national flag and our national title and our national anthem and not attract opposition,” he said.

“I don’t want to wake up one morning to find our name has been changed to Taiwan, province of China,” Wu said.

“This is an agony that you and I have to go through and no one else — no other country has this agony,” he said. “We share the same dream that one day we don’t have to face this situation any more.

“I want to see the day when the Chinese ambassador to the United Nations and the Taiwan ambassador to the United Nations can go down the aisle of the General Assembly and say to each other: ‘Let us help those less fortunate countries,’” he said. “Taiwan has a role and a rightful place on the international stage.”

Wu said that polls showed the majority of Taiwanese do not want to be part of another country.

“We need to work with the United States in a way that will bring our dream closer,” he said.

Wu said that Taiwan’s democracy was not perfect and there was a problem with fairness between the two major political parties — the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the DPP.

“The KMT is still the wealthiest political party on the face of the earth,” he said.

By comparison, he said, the DPP was miserable and poverty-stricken.

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The DPP's budget was about one-ninth of the amount collected each year by the KMT in share dividends, he said.

Such a huge disparity in wealth made it very difficult for the DPP to compete in elections.

On the economic front he said that the gap between the rich and the poor in Taiwan was growing while high unemployment and low starting salaries were making life very difficult for young people.

"Young men dare not get married, they dare not have children," he said. "A generation of young people seem to be lost."

Wu said that Taiwanese "felt pain at not being afforded full international participation."

He said that Taiwan was not part of China.

"We struggle to make the international community see that Taiwan should not be represented by China," he said. "Taiwan is de facto independent. Taiwan is regarded by the law of the US as a real country even though there is no diplomatic recognition."

He said that Taiwan could serve as an example to Asian governments — "If Taiwan can be democratic, they can be democratic too."

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