

Meeting shows Ma wants unification, groups claim

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The first cross-strait government-to-government meeting has again reflected President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) pro-unification stance and could jeopardize Taiwan's future dealings with China because it had trapped Taipei in Beijing's political agenda, pro-localization advocates said yesterday.

Mainland Affairs Council Minister Wang Yu-chi's (王郁琦) failure to bring up the sovereignty issue and challenge Beijing's anti-Taiwan independence claim in his meeting with Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun (張志軍) in Nanjing last week showed that Ma has always been a unification advocate who does not see the interests of the Taiwanese as his priority, Taiwan Society president Chang Yen-hsien (張炎憲) told a news conference in Taipei.

"Ma has always had that illusional sentiment toward a Great China, which is why Taiwan's sovereignty and human rights have never been high on his agenda," Chang said.

Beijing unilaterally listed "anti-Taiwan independence and the insistence on the [so-called] 1992 consensus as the official consensus between governments across the Taiwan Strait, a claim that Wang and his ministry never challenged — either during or after the meeting — and "that is dangerous," Chang added.

The meeting reaffirmed that a platform for political negotiation has been established and the proposed meeting between Ma and Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) was already on the table, Taiwan Thinktank councilor Tung Li-wen (鄧力文) said.

Given that Wang touched upon political issues that the Legislative Yuan had prohibited prior to his departure to China through a resolution, Tung said that a legislative committee monitoring the cross-strait negotiations should be established as soon as possible.

This year could be "a year of unexpected acceleration" for the development of the cross-strait relations, Taiwan Thinktank deputy executive director Lai I-chung (賴宜中) said.

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As political negotiation is on the table, Ma could abandon his previous pledge of “first the economy, then the politics” and “first the easy, then the difficult” and take initiatives in follow-up events this year, including the meeting between Xi and former vice president Lien Chan (連戰), the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT)-Chinese Communist Party forum and Zhang’s return visit to Taiwan, among others.

Ma has already betrayed his pledge that Taiwan’s future should be decided by the 23 million Taiwanese, Lai said, since his administration has remained mum about China’s claim of agreement on opposing Taiwan independence.

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