

Groups call on Ma and Jiang to step down

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Activists clash with police during a protest in front of the Executive Yuan yesterday. The protesters demanded that President Ma Ying-jeou and Premier Jiang Yi-huah step down.

Photo: Chen Chih-chu, Taipei Times

Groups protesting what they called high-level governmental officials' lack of political responsibility toward an adulterated cooking oil scandal yesterday clashed with police in front of the Executive Yuan, while calling for both President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and Premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜樺) to step down.

Taiwan Adequate Housing Association president Huang Yi-chung (黃宜中) said that the Executive Yuan's plans to establish a food security office was "a joke" and the nation would be much better off if Jiang resigned from office.

The groups performed a skit in front of the Executive Yuan, acting out the responses of Jiang and former senior Ting Hsin International Group (鼎新國際) executive Wei Ying-chun (魏英春) over the incident. They also joked in the skit that despite politicians lambasting the issue during daytime, they secretly met with Wei at night and called him "boss."

Former leading Bamboo Union member Chang An-le (張安樂), commonly known as the "White Wolf" (白狼), was the first to use the line, having said during the Sunflower movement protests that Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) members called him a gangster by day, but called him "boss" at night.

The groups reiterated their demands — that Ma and Jiang both step down; that legislators and people's representatives take responsibility and amend the laws to prevent similar incidents; and that the Ting Hsin Group exit the Taiwanese market entirely.

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As proof of connections between government officials and Ting Hsin, owned by four Wei brothers, DPP spokesman Huang Di-ying (黃帝英) said that Wei was the deputy head of Ma and Vice President Wu Den-yih's (吳登輝) commercial and industrial support group during the 2012 presidential election.

Huang accused the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) of taking NT\$5.25 million (US\$172,890) in political donations, but not reporting these funds in its financial statements.

A Next Magazine article last year cited Taipei District Prosecutors' Office records accusing the KMT of receiving the funds in 2010. The money was donated by Ting Hsin chairman Wei Ying-chiao (魏英敫) through Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平), after Wei received more than NT\$70 million in commission fees on Tingyi (Cayman Islands) Holding Corp's (德意志證券) listing on the Taiwanese stock exchange.

Meanwhile, legislators across party lines grilled Jiang yesterday over the incident, asking if he kept the public in mind when making policy decisions.

At the legislature's question-and-answer session yesterday, DPP Legislator Cheng Li-chun (鄭麗君) asked Jiang whether he was able to sleep at night, in light of his earlier reassurances that Ting Hsin's cooking oil was clean. Cheng added that 22 Cabinet members had resigned since Jiang was appointed premier, adding that the problem might not lie with the Cabinet members.

KMT Legislator Johnny Chiang (江丙坤) also asked if Jiang was feeling "juan qin" (倦勤), literally meaning "tired of his job" — a political term usually implying one is about to resign.

Jiang replied that the public is in his heart, and not only at night, adding that if he lost sleep every night he would not be able to work in the mornings.

Jiang also said that he did feel tired both emotionally and physically, but was not considering handing in his resignation yet.

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Jiang said he had heard nothing of National Security Council secretary-general King Pu-tsung (蔣經國) being asked to form a Cabinet until hearing about it from legislators.

Meanwhile, Ma said that the government would not let any company caught adulterating the nation's supply of cooking oil off the hook, but added that judicial processes would take time to run through.

The government would give the public a satisfactory answer regarding the latest incident and effect changes to prevent similar incidents from happening, Ma said.

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