

Tsay Ting-kuei considers new party

Written by Taipei Times

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Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan convener Tsay Ting-kuei (蔡丁貴) said he is considering establishing a new political party that openly advocates Taiwanese independence, saying that such a party would be necessary as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has been inconsistent in its China policy.

In a recent interview with the Chinese-language Liberty Times (the Taipei Times' sister newspaper), Tsai described the proposed party as "pro-independence" and "left wing," adding that the party's goal would be pursuing de jure Taiwanese independence, a goal that no existing party publicly espouses, including the DPP, the Taiwan Solidarity Union or the Taiwan Citizen Union (TCU) — an organization formed last year to push for political reform.

The DPP does not seem to have made up its mind on major cross-strait issues such as the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) or the cross-strait service trade agreement — appearing to regularly shift its stance — and this vacillation is unsettling for supporters, Tsay said.

Tsay predicted the DPP would win the presidency and take over the legislature in next year's presidential and legislative elections, and a left wing, pro-independence party should be formed as a check to the DPP, he said.

However, Tsay said his priority right now is to enable a transfer of power in the upcoming presidential election and prevent the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) winning a majority in the legislature.

Asked whether his proposed new party would trigger a split in the pan-green camp, he said that competition for voters among the pan-green camp would not be an issue, as his new party would only campaign for legislator-at-large seats.

He said he would be hurt if the DPP saw the party as a competitor and tried to push it out of the pan-green camp.

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While still considering the possibility of formally establishing a new party, he said that a left-wing, pro-independence party would reflect public sentiment, as momentum among independence activists toward forming new parties is growing.

A group of activists led by singer Freddy Lim (林曉峰) and lawyer Lin Feng-jeng last week left the TCU to form a new party — the New Power Party (NPP) — and TCU president Fan Yun (范雲) is reportedly planning to found a new party next month, heralding a boom in new parties, Tsay said.

Amid the launch of a flurry of small political parties, the TCU and its affiliates would aim to garner support from voters with moderate views, or voters leaning toward the pan-blue camp, whereas his “dark-green” party would be on the other side of the political spectrum, he said.

According to Tsay, while groups such as the World United Formosans for Independence and Restoration of Taiwan Social Justice are largely positive toward his proposal to set up a new party, most other independence activists have said they do not have sufficient resources to form a new pro-independence party.

He is still giving the idea of forming a new party thought, Tsay said, adding that among the issues he needs to resolve are finding a suitable person to head the party and tabling a list of candidates for legislator-at-large seats.

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