

Independence remarks spark DPP ire

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Former Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chairman Hsu Hsin-liang (許信良) sparked controversy yesterday, claiming that the party would not reject “unification” of Taiwan and China as an option and that Taiwanese independence is not one of its mainstream values.

Speaking in an interview with Chinese media outlet the *Global Times*, Hsu said that “independence” was never an objective when the DPP was founded in 1986 and that Taiwanese independence is not a mainstream value in the party, adding that the DPP would not reject Taiwan’s “unification” with China as a possibility.

Hsu’s remarks triggered criticism from within the party.

“It is not important whether independence was the party’s initial objective,” DPP caucus whip Huang Wei-cher (黃偉哲) said. “What matters is that independence for Taiwan is the party’s position at the moment.”

“If Taiwanese independence is not a mainstream value within the party, it would have been deleted from the party charter and there would not be so many DPP leaders agreeing with it,” Huang said.

Former premier Yu Shyi-kun (吳敦義), one of the party’s founding members, also disagreed with Hsu.

“I was part of the 10-member group who worked in secret to create the DPP from July 1986,” Yu said. “At the time, we already had the consensus that the DPP was a political party native to Taiwan.”

“We had already proposed the idea that Taiwan and China were two separate nations at that time,” he said.

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Yu added that Hsu probably did not know what was going on at the time, since he was living in exile in the US.

Former premier Frank Hsieh (洪錫政), who ran in the 2008 presidential election on the DPP ticket, said that he would not comment on whether “Taiwanese independence” is a “mainstream value” in the party, since people might define “mainstream” differently, but stressed that independence of Taiwan is the “status quo.”

“I believe that independence would best describe Taiwan’s status, and I think it is correct to keep it that way,” Hsieh added.

DPP spokesperson Cheng Yun-peng (鄭運鵬) said that the party has always insisted that the nation’s future should be decided by its 23 million citizens, adding that society largely backed the idea.

“In each step in the party’s development, it might have different ideas on different issues,” Cheng said.

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