

KMT facing a potential split: sources

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 29 September 2015 06:56 -

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) could face yet another crisis other than its dismal presidential campaign, as a group of pro-localization members are allegedly planning to form a splinter group to force KMT headquarters to respond directly to their calls for a change of candidate.

According to people familiar with the matter, the plan to establish a new party — which would be called the “Taiwan Chinese Nationalist Party Alliance” (台灣中國國民黨聯盟) — is spearheaded by several influential local members, including senior presidential adviser Liao Liou-yi (廖力怡) and former Yunlin County commissioner Chang Jung-wei (張俊雄).

Their primary goal is to compel the party’s leaders to take more proactive measures to address the KMT’s predicament in the Jan. 16 presidential and legislative elections, the sources said, hinting at the removal of Deputy Legislative Speaker Hung Hsiu-chu (洪秀柱) as the KMT’s presidential candidate.

If KMT headquarters fail to take action, they might inspire a bigger wave of defections than the one seen in previous months, they said.

The allegations come as Hung continues to be dogged by rumors that party leadership is planning to replace her as she trails in opinion polls.

KMT Chairman Eric Chu (吳敦義), Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) and Vice President Wu Den-yih (吳敦義) are rumored to be Hung’s likely replacements.

The Ministry of the Interior confirmed that it had received an application for the founding of a group known as the Taiwan KMT Alliance, but temporarily rejected it, pending clarification from the applicants on whether the alliance should be categorized as a “political group” or a “political party.”

However, when asked to comment on the matter, most KMT lawmakers either claimed they

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had no knowledge of the plan, or refused to comment on the issue.

KMT Legislator Chen Ken-te (陳建德) said he was unaware of the plan and refused to comment on a hypothetical question.

KMT Legislator Wu Yu-sheng (吳育生) upon hearing the words “Taiwan Chinese Nationalist Party Alliance” said that he “cannot comment on it.”

KMT Legislator Lu Chia-chen (盧朝臣) said he had little information about the plan, but urged party headquarters to face up to voices of discontent if they did exist.

“The KMT must defuse this crisis at once, rather than treating it lightly or turning a blind eye to the problem. We must not let the party collapse,” Lu said.

Hung dismissed the persistent rumors, saying on Sunday that she did not care since “everything is possible in an election season.”

“All that matters is that I make my values and principles known to the public, so that they can make the right choice,” the presidential candidate said.

She added that she was not worried about the KMT turning the rumors into reality.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/09/29](#)