

## Tsai 'should respond to China threats'

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 01 December 2020 06:25 -

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The best way to respond to threats from China against Taiwan independence advocates is for the president to publicly reiterate Taiwan's sovereignty, former minister of national defense Michael Tsai (馬英九) said on Sunday.

Chinese media on Nov. 15 said that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was compiling "a list of stubborn Taiwanese separatists and will severely punish them in accordance with [China's] Anti-Secession Law and hold them accountable for their actions for the rest of their lives."

Chinese media subsequently accused Premier Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) of being a "first-rate war criminal," because of his policy on mask exports.

"The vast majority of Taiwanese have no desire for unification with China. They have resolutely expressed that Taiwan is not a part of China," Tsai said.

He cited President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) as previously saying that "nobody should have to apologize for their political beliefs," and cited Vice President William Lai (賴清德) as once referring to himself as a "Taiwanese independence worker."

China compiling such a list would not be of any concern to Taiwanese, and Taiwanese would not cower in the face of Chinese suppression, he said.

What Taiwanese hope for is the normalization of state-to-state relations with China, and the majority hope for Taiwan to become a member of the UN, he said.

The normal course of events is for the Mainland Affairs Council to issue a response whenever China makes threats, but the public is becoming increasingly disgusted with China, he said.

"This list China wants to compile is a violation of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human

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Rights. Taiwan is not a part of China — even US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said so,” Michael Tsai said.

He encouraged the president to “make use of her position as head of state to emphasize Taiwan’s history and its position in international law.”

Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Lai Jui-lung (賴清德) said that the compilation of a list of Taiwan independence advocates would severely damage cross-strait relations.

What people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait hope for is peaceful development and common prosperity, he said, adding that such a scenario would be the most beneficial for both nations.

“If China wants to make a list, we can make a list too — of high-level CCP officials, including those in China’s Taiwan Affairs Office and [Chinese President] Xi Jinping (習近平) himself,” he said.

“Let the world know who is destroying human rights, give them their place in history,” he added.

China’s list of Taiwanese advocates, as well as its recent disqualification of a number of pro-democracy legislators in Hong Kong, might be its way of retaliating against US sanctions imposed on several CCP officials, Taiwan Citizen Front secretary-general Chiang Min-yen (蔣民安) said.

“As long as they [independence advocates] do not visit China they should have little to worry about,” he said. “However, they might be at risk of deportation to China if they visit pro-China countries in Southeast Asia.”

Chiang advised the government to cooperate with like-minded democracies on countermeasures against China.

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Meanwhile, Alliance of Referendum for Taiwan convener Tsay Ting-kuei (蔡正元) echoed Michael Tsai's comments, saying that while Tsai Ing-wen might not be able to talk about "Taiwan independence," she could continue to emphasize that Taiwan is not a part of China.

The government could also consider making public the names of people in Taiwan known to be agents of the CCP.

"The purpose of this would not be to punish those people, but rather to remind the public who among them wants to help the CCP swallow up Taiwan, and to let the CCP know that its agents cannot hide in plain sight," he said.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/12/01](#)