

Lee calls for deepening democracy

REFORM NEEDED: The former president said no progress had been made since 2000 because the two political camps had been engaged in virulent partisan competition

BY KO SHU-LING
STAFF REPORTER

Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) yesterday introduced a new political association to the public, with the stated aim of deepening democracy in the country, which he said had fallen victim to ideology and partisan warfare.

Lee said the Lee Teng-hui Democracy Association (李登輝民主協會) was established to point out the flaws of the government and speak out for the people.

Bemoaning the fact that no progress has been made since 2000, Lee said the nation desperately needed a new wave of reform to deepen its democracy. Such reform initiatives should cover the areas of democracy, politics, education, the judiciary and spirit, he said.

During his 12-year presidency, Lee said his policy was to transform the country from an authoritarian state to a democracy and he was glad that goal was achieved with the help of the people.

Although Taiwan saw two transfers of power in 2000 and 2008, Lee said moral decline and cultural retrogression since then has become a major problem.

Lee said many people believe the two changes of government have made Taiwan's democracy

healthier and more mature, but in reality the two political camps have been engaged in virulent partisan competition at the expense of national interest and public well-being.

"People must vote the government out of power if it does a bad job," he said. "People are the real masters of the country and it makes perfect sense for a master to change his servant if he cannot do his job properly."

Lee urged the government to reach out to the opposition and seek consensus on national identity. As it

will take a long time to resolve the complex issue of Taiwan's statehood, he also urged politicians to handle political matters rationally and be tolerant of different ideologies and political positions.

Criticizing the government's economic policy, Lee said it not only failed to address the unemployment problem, but also adopted a hands-off approach in managing China-bound investment and appeared not to care about the hardships the public is facing.

Lee also questioned China's sincerity following its recent

promises to help Taiwan sign free-trade agreements with other countries if Taipei signs an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA).

"It never means what it says and will lie if that serves its purposes," he said.

Tadae Takubo, vice chairman of Friends of the Lee Teng-hui Association in Japan, expressed concern over the government's China-friendly policy, saying Tokyo could not afford to ignore such a disturbing development.

"Taiwan's attitude toward Japan, the US and China plays a significant role in the shifting military balance in the Asia-Pacific region," he said.



Former president Lee Teng-hui speaks at the introduction of a new political association to the public in Taipei yesterday.

PHOTO: LO PEI-DEE, TAIPEI TIMES

Taiwan needs ECFA with China, Siew says

STAFF WRITER, WITH CNA

Vice President Vincent Siew (蕭萬長) said on Friday that Taiwan needed to sign a trade pact with China, but added that the government would not open its doors too wide to China.

Making his case in Taiwanese at a forum on a proposed economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with China at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, Siew said that when the global economy was in crisis, Taiwan felt its impact. Given that

these crises occur about every 10 years, Taiwan must find ways to cope with these challenges, he said.

In dealing with the crisis, Taiwan has many challenges to overcome: its national competitiveness must be enhanced, it must actively innovate domestically, and it needs markets abroad.

Furthermore, as Asian economies continue to integrate, Taiwan cannot be left on the outside, Siew said.

"Taiwan needs to sign an ECFA

with China. Otherwise, it will be marginalized," he said.

If Taiwan signs an ECFA with China, investment and employment opportunities will increase, and exports will grow, he said.

"This is a crucial moment for the nation, and we must seize the opportunity," he added.

He said Taiwan would not open its doors too wide to China while negotiating the trade pact.

"Taiwan will start with the items it needs the most and then gradually move on to others," Siew

said, adding that "we will solicit the maximum benefit, and we hope to minimize the pressure on us in the future."

He said that Taiwan's goal was tariff concessions and the protection of investments and intellectual property rights.

"Taiwan will also insist on not allowing in more Chinese agricultural products or opening the door to Chinese workers," he said.

Siew acknowledged that the ECFA would not benefit some sectors, and he said the govern-

ment would try its best to exclude those sectors in the ECFA negotiations or put them off to a later date.

Meanwhile, the second round of talks on the ECFA, which Taiwan had originally hoped would take place in Taipei some time this month, are now most likely to be held at the end of the month, economic officials said.

The focus of the second round of negotiations will be the exchange of "early harvest" lists, they said.

US asks Taiwan to cancel Haiti's US\$95m debt

BY WILLIAM LOWTHER
AND SHIH HSIU-CHUAN

66 Monkeys borrowed



■ MEDIA

MOFA protests designation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) yesterday said it had asked its representative office in Washington to lodge a protest against a US magazine for referring to first lady Chow Mei-ching (周美青) as the "first lady of China (Taiwan)" in its photo caption. The ministry will also demand a correction, MOFA spokesman Henry Chen (陳銘政) said. Hopefully, the magazine will correct the error in a day or two, he added. The US magazine, *Washington Life*, published a photograph of Chow taken with members of the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre (雲門舞集) when she accompanied the company on a North American tour in January. She was referred to as the "first lady of China (Taiwan)" in the caption. Next to Chow's photograph was Chinese Ambassador to the US Zhou Wenzhong (周文重), who was identified as the envoy from the "People's Republic of China."

■ NATIONALITY

Nearly 10,000 naturalized

The nation added 9,853 naturalized citizens last year, with more than three-quarters coming from Vietnam, Ministry of the Interior data showed. The ministry said 98.09 percent of the new citizens were female, 98.62 percent were from Southeast Asia and 97.2 percent obtained Republic of China (ROC) passports through marriage. A breakdown of the origins of the newly naturalized showed that 76.7 percent came from Vietnam, 11 percent from Indonesia and 2.2 percent from the