



Independence groups protest Ma's statement

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Two pro-Taiwan independence organizations in the United States issued a joint statement Monday to express indignation at main opposition Kuomintang Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) recent remarks regarding the United States' obligation to help defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese military attack.

In an interview with United Press International on March 28, 2006, Ma said that U.S. officials had told him during his visit to Washington, D.C. that the United States would have no obligation to intervene in a military conflict between Taiwan and China if Taiwan's government did anything to spark the conflict.

Ma, who doubles as Taipei mayor, recently concluded a 10-day visit to the United States.

Terri Giles, executive director of the Los Angeles-based Formosa Foundation, said that she found it "curious that a United States official confided in the Taipei mayor and leader of Taiwan opposition party that the United States considers Taiwan to be the problem, since it is China who has undermined the status quo."

She said that China has deployed almost 800 missiles aimed at Taiwan and has repeatedly threatened to use force against the democratic and sovereign island.

"The Chinese Communist leadership has systematically isolated Taiwan from the rest of the international community, passed an anti-secession law and continued a rapid military buildup in recent years that is largely focused on intimidating Taiwan and seizing the island if intimidation fails," she said.

"China's provocative actions represent a major change in the status quo and a serious military threat to Taiwan," she continued.

C.T. Lee, president of the Washington, D.C.-based Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), said that the association condemns Ma's statement, adding that his "reckless assertion must be music to the ears of the Chinese government."