

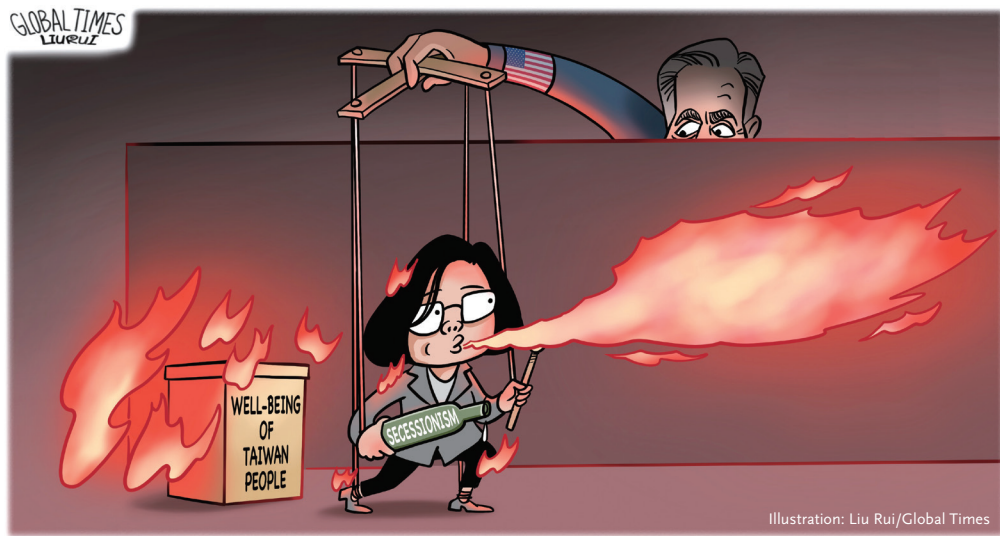
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Illustration: Liu Rui/Global Times

China's countermeasures will make provocateurs lose more than gain

Under the guise of "transiting" through the US, regional leader of China's Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen had a "meeting" with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy amid protests in Los Angeles on Wednesday local time. Although Tsai and McCarthy boasted that the bonds between the two sides had "never been stronger" and "Taiwan is not isolated," it was clear that those words carried little weight. Especially for Tsai, they perhaps have no effect other than cheering herself on. A poll within the island of Taiwan shows that nearly 70 percent of Taiwan residents don't think Tsai's trip will help the island's relations with the US, which is undoubtedly a very blunt response.

Contrary to Tsai's expectations, more people are concerned about what risks her provocative move to collude with the US and "rely on the US to seek independence" will bring to Taiwan. The meeting also showed the world what "relying on" exactly means in the phrase "relying on the US to seek independence" – those who betray their country cannot have dignity in front of Washington politicians like McCarthy, and without integrity, they can only "rely on" others. It is evident that McCarthy allowing Tsai to "rely on" himself is only a temporary move. Moreover, it is with ulterior motives and is ultimately unreliable.

To be frank, Tsai, who behaves sneakily, had a pretty miserable trip this time. She originally intended to gain some so-called political capital for herself and help boost the sagging situation of the Democratic Progressive Party in local elections through her US "transit." Unfortunately, she was "cold-shouldered" at many events in New York. The demand by the US side for Tsai to keep a low profile and remain secretive not only fully exposed her political nature of "relying on the US to seek Taiwan independence," and "flattering the US to sell out Taiwan," but also provided a firsthand example of the predicament of becoming a pawn for the US to play the "Taiwan card."

As we all know, avoiding war and seeking peace is the mainstream public opinion on the island. Tsai's cooperation with the US' political agenda and provocations will only bring about another round of conflicts and crises. In the eyes of the US, Taiwan is essentially just a pawn that is used to contain China's development, and no matter how many beautiful words US politicians may say, what they care about the most is their own interests. When it comes to interests, there are various calculations and comparisons based on their own needs, and the well-being of the people of Taiwan as well as the destiny of the island will inevitably be sacrificed. It is a pipe dream to seek peace and avoid war in

the US chessboard. This is why Tsai's trip to the US was met with indifference and condemnation on the island.

On the contrary, former Taiwan regional leader Ma Ying-jeou's visit to the mainland during almost the same period as Tsai's "sneaky transit" in the US has received completely different attention and evaluation. Many foreign media outlets also noticed the stark contrast between the two.

When Tsai acted like a rat crossing the street, humbly begging for a meeting with her foreign master during her sneaky transit, Ma, "a Xiangtan boy" as Ma called himself in the local dialect, received a warm welcome from his mainland compatriots. Compared to Tsai's upsetting experiences in the US with full political calculations, what Ma felt on the mainland was the warmth of "people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are of the same family." Tsai's "sneaky transit" in the US was aimed at using foreign forces to cut off the blood ties across the Straits, while Ma's "roots-seeking journey," as the name suggests, is an action to show all Taiwan residents that Taiwan's roots lie in the mainland, and that compatriots on both sides of the Straits are Chinese.

Tsai is a disloyal descendant, while Ma is a returning hometown man. One is on a dead-end path, while the other is on the right path. Which one is popular and what the overall trend of history is are all revealed in these comparisons.

The meeting between McCarthy and Tsai also reminds us that in the great journey of national reunification and rejuvenation, there are internal secessionists waiting for an opportunity to take action and external forces trying to avail themselves of every opportunity to interfere. This is why China, while striving for a peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and utmost effort, makes no promise to give up the use of force and retains the option of taking all necessary measures.

Every so-called breakthrough made by the collusion between the US and Taiwan island will be met with our resolute countermeasures to ensure that their losses outweigh the gains. Just like last year's countermeasures against Nancy Pelosi's provocative visit to Taiwan, they will not be one-off but will be carried out in our determined way and rhythm. The result of the countermeasures will ensure that the mainland's dominant position and initiative in the Taiwan Straits situation will be further consolidated and strengthened.

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Middle East welcomes China's role as peace builder, rejects US determinism

Saudi Arabia and Iran meeting again in Beijing shows that China is a peace builder and China's policies are more in line with the interests of Middle Eastern countries. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Saudi Counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud met in Beijing On Thursday. This meeting marks the first official meeting between the most senior diplomats of the two countries in over seven years.

Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times

that the meeting in Beijing sends a signal that China will continue to play a pivotal role in fostering peace in the Middle East in the future. The building of trust between Saudi Arabia and Iran will not happen overnight. In this process, China, as a third party that could contribute significantly to the resumption of diplomatic ties between the two countries, may need to continue playing a role of a mediator and facilitator.

"Saudi Arabia and Iran are willing to trust China primarily because of China's positive image in the international community, including in the Middle East. For example, China's policies are more in line with the interests of Middle Eastern countries, while the US tends to promote unilateralism and hegemony, imposing its own values on the region," said Tian Wenlin, a research fellow at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

Both Saudi Arabia and Iran are aware, from their long-term engagement with the US, that Washington is unreliable. Washington is good at using conflicts and disputes in the Middle East, especially the one between Saudi Arabia and Iran, to create regional chaos and showcase its influence in the region. Hence, the US' stirring up troubles, creating conflicts, and causing historical harm to the diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran

make it impossible for the two countries to trust the US.

In comparison, China's foreign policies toward Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Middle East as a whole adopt a fair and objective stance and always strive to ease disputes and promote reconciliation among countries in the region. China is willing to act as a coordinator in resolving conflicts in the Middle East. China's balanced, fair, and objective stance, as well as its previous engagement with Saudi Arabia and Iran, have created a profound trust between China and the two countries.

The US' actions and disdainful attitude have made more Middle Eastern countries see the true colors of the US. Saudi Arabia used to be a reliable security partner for the US, but in recent years, the Saudi-US relationship has become increasingly tense. According to Wall Street Journal's report recently, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told associates late last year that he was no longer interested in pleasing the US.

The mood of resentment toward the US in the Middle East is pervasive, not just in Saudi Arabia, as the US involvement in the region is seen as primarily driven by a desire to seize oil resources. The US' attempts to control the global energy landscape, especially against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, have angered many countries, as Washington constantly demands that some Middle Eastern countries sacrifice their own interests to suppress Russia.

Moreover, Washington wants to turn the region into a battlefield for great power geopolitical competition, which most Middle Eastern countries resist. Washington needs to understand that regional affairs should be and will be decided by relevant countries in the Middle East. The US is still living under the illusion of American hegemony and determinism. However, as everyone knows, the world has moved on.

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"It is the West that has kept the Arabs at one another's throats, now they can see where their future lies."



Twitter user @dialatenti commented on the Thursday meeting of the foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia in Beijing.

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