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Communist Chinese Denounce Dalai Lama Visit to Taiwan

Republic of China (ROC) President Ma Ying-jeou has approved a visit to Taiwan by the Dalai Lama - the exiled Tibetan Buddhist religious leader — scheduled for August 31 to September 4.



"We have decided to [approve] the Dalai Lama's visit to pray for the souls of the deceased and seek blessings for the survivors of the typhoon," Ma told reporters in central Nantou county on August 27. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 5, 1989, 30 years after a failed uprising against the communist Chinese invaders forced him into exile. His current home base is in Dharamshala, in northern India.

Ma's spokesman Wang Yu-chi told the press that the visit will be "based on humanitarian and religious considerations which should not hurt cross-strait ties." The phrase "cross-strait ties" refers to the ROC's relations with the communist Chinese government on the mainland.

The Dalai Lama was invited to Taiwan by seven mayors and magistrates who are members of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which advocates a sovereign and independent Republic of China on Taiwan. President Ma is a member of the ROC's Kuomintang (KMT) party, which has since the election of Ma in May 2008 engaged in a more relaxed foreign policy with Beijing. Prior to Ma's election, Taiwan under DPP rule had taken a tougher stance against the communist mainland, asserting the ROC's status as an independent nation. Beijing considers Taiwan to be an integral political entity of China.

On the same day as Ma's announcement, Taiwan's government confirmed that 543 people were killed and 117 were missing after Typhoon Morakot struck the island nation on August 8. AFP news cited Ma as stating that the amount of damage caused by Morakot was more severe than a 1959 typhoon that killed 667 people and left around 1,000 missing.

AFP also observed that, because the mainland Chinese government has accused the Dalai Lama of trying to separate Tibet from China, Beijing reacts angrily to any country or territory hosting the him. The world-famous spiritual leader has made two prior visits to Taiwan, the first in 1997 and then again in 2001.

The announcement of the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan had scarcely been made when the mainland communist government voiced its objections.

In its August 27 report, Xinhua, the official press agency of the communist government, quoted China's Taiwan Affairs Bureau spokesman as stating: "The Dalai Lama is not a pure religious figure.... Under the pretext of religion, he has all along been engaged in separatist activities."

In Chinese government parlance, "separatist activities" can mean any assertion of sovereignty for



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regions occupied or threatened by the communist regime in Beijing.

The Beijing spokesman continued: "When people from all sectors on the mainland are lending a hand to help Taiwan reconstruct and overcome the typhoon disaster quickly, some DPP members have taken the chance to plot the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan." He continued: "Obviously this is not for the sake of disaster relief. It's an attempt to sabotage the hard-earned good situation in cross-Strait relations."

Reuters news quoted Tenzin Taklha, an aide to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, who said that the spiritual leader had been eager to visit Taiwan. A Reuters correspondent observed that by blaming the opposition DPP and not Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou or the ruling Nationalist Party (KMT), the mainland government may have indicated that it does not wish to escalate the matter.

"As of now, we are planning a visit to Taiwan and the dates are still being worked out," said Taklha. "We want to make it very clear that the Dalai Lama is visiting Taiwan to express condolences to victims and lead prayers."

CNN quoted Taklha as saying: "His holiness has received an invitation from several mayors inviting him to Taiwan. He has accepted for the sole purpose [of expressing] his condolences and to share his sorrow for Taiwan's people." Taklha described the visit as "completely ... non-political."

A writer for the British *Guardian* newspaper observed that "Beijing usually objects strongly when overseas governments admit the Dalai Lama. But the case of Taiwan is particularly sensitive because China still claims sovereignty over the self-ruled island, which split from the mainland when the defeated Kuomintang (KMT) fled there at the end of the civil war in 1949.... At the same time, Chinese officials have little desire to play into the hands of anti-Beijing opposition politicians — perhaps explaining the decision to blame the DPP rather than the president."

Though the *Guardian* and most mainstream news organs refer to the long-ago break between Beijing and the ROC as a "civil war," it was much more than that. In 1951, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R.-Wis.) reminded Americans of George Marshall's infamous role as President Truman's envoy in abandoning mainland China to the communists:

When [George C.] Marshall was sent to China with secret State Department orders, the Communists at that time were bottled up in two areas and were fighting a losing battle, but that because of those orders the situation was radically changed in favor of the Communists. Under those orders, as we know, Marshall embargoed all arms and ammunition to our allies in China. He forced the opening of the Nationalist-held Kalgan Mountain pass into Manchuria, to the end that the Chinese Communists gained access to the mountains of captured Japanese equipment. No need to tell the country about how Marshall tried to force Chiang Kai-shek to form a partnership government with the Communists.

Ever since the relocation of the free government of the Republic of China to Taiwan in 1949, following its betrayal to the communists by Marshall, the mainland communist regime has attempted to assert its hegemony over free Taiwan.

In 1954, only a few years after the communists consolidate their power in China, Chinese forces invaded and annexed Tibet. Since then, the Dalai Lama has traveled from country to country gently seeking justice for his country and his people. Over a million Tibetans were slaughtered during the first few decades of Chinese occupation, as the forces set in motion by Mao Zedong and his successors worked relentlessly to destroy Tibetan culture.



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It is gratifying that the Dalai Lama was able to secure a welcome on Taiwan, in exchange for his prayers for the many victims of Typhoon Morakot.

Photo of Dalai Lama: AP Images



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