

2014 Elections: Green Camp Unbeatable in the South, Blue Camp Struggles to Defend Northern and Central Taiwan

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Island-wide local elections for mayors and county magistrates are only a few months away. As the major political parties complete their candidate nominations and campaign planning, the election trend becomes increasingly clear. Everywhere people's attention focuses on how many counties and cities the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) could win. Can Ko Wen-je, who runs for Taipei City mayor as an independent, beat Sean Lien, the candidate for the ruling Kuomintang (KMT)? Will the KMT be able to hold its defense line along the Chuoshui River in central Taiwan? How will the KMT deal with rebellious factions?

Strongholds - The Six Municipalities Ruled by the DPP

The DPP currently rules six municipalities, including four (Kaohsiung City, Tainan City, Ilan County, Chiayi County) where the incumbent mayors or magistrates seek reelection and two (Yunlin County, Pingdong County) where the incumbents will not or cannot run again. Judging from the current big lead the DPP candidates have over their KMT challengers, the DPP will easily pass the election test in all six municipalities. Among these, Yunlin County deserves particular attention. On the surface, this is a race between DPP candidate Lee Chin-yung and KMT candidate Chang Li-shan. Yet in reality, the two are, first of all, fighting a proxy war on behalf of outgoing Yunlin County Magistrate Su Chih-fen [who cannot serve another term] and former county magistrate Chang Jung-wei, [who is also Chang Li-shan's brother]. In this election

battle, Lee enjoys air supremacy thanks to Su's resources and backing. However, on the ground, the organizational force of the Chang Jung-wei faction [which supports Chang Li-shan] must not be underestimated. Along the overall situation is not favorable for the KMT.

Three KMT-ruled Municipalities Where the DPP Leads the Polls

Based on recent opinion polls, the DPP stands a chance of winning the local elections in three KMT-ruled municipalities, namely Penghu County, Taichung City and Keelung City. The DPP candidates in these three municipalities have one point in common: they were defeated in their previous attempts to become local government leaders but remained active in local politics. Moreover, they all face the concern and conundrum of local KMT factions possibly joining hands. The local KMT faction in Keelung has been openly rebelling against the KMT headquarters and in Penghu County it took two rounds of public opinion polls to nominate incumbent Magong City Mayor Su Kun-hsiung for the county magistrate post. Will Su be able to unite the supporters of the incumbent county magistrate, the head of the county assembly and former lawmaker Lin Pin-kuan whose constituency is Penghu County? Aside from external and internal factors that affect the election prospects of incumbent Taichung City Mayor Jason Hu, cooperation between the local red and black factions, long the dominant forces in former Taichung County, is seen as crucial for a KMT victory.

Municipalities Where KMT and DPP are Competing Neck and Neck

In three municipalities, namely Changhua County, Nantou County and Chiayi City, the DPP faces a neck and neck race with the KMT. In Chiayi City, the KMT has access to administrative resources and benefits from its strong position in neighboring Chiayi County where the urban renewal of a military dependents village boosted its public support. On top of this, the KMT successfully talked independent mayoral hopeful Hsiao Shu-li, who belongs to the locally influential Hsiao clan, into withdrawing from the election. As a result, KMT candidate Chen Yi-chen, who was initially trailing his DPP challenger Tu Sing-jhe, has now made up Tu's lead. In Nantou County, KMT candidate Lin Ming-chen enjoys a small lead in the opinion polls thanks to the rallying efforts of Vice President Wu Den-yih. Nevertheless, the election bids of People First Party (PFP) nominee Chen Chen-sheng, a former lawmaker, and Chien Su-tuan, the wife of incumbent Nantou County Magistrate Lee Chao-ching, who has been suspended from his post over bribery charges, could have a decisive minority influence in this tight race even though they will not affect the DPP's overall election prospects. In Changhua County, the faction of incumbent County Magistrate Chuo Po-yuan still refuses to concede defeat to KMT candidate Lin Tsang-min, who won the primary elections and belongs to an anti-Chuo faction. Since Chuo's anointed successor, incumbent vice magistrate Ko Cheng-fang, who belongs to the white faction, does not rule out fighting the election to the end, the local election situation has become quite complex and complicated.

Room for Independent Candidates

In Hualien County, Taipei City, Kinmen County and Hsinchu County we have election races between KMT candidates and their independent challengers as the DPP has refrained from nominating any candidates. In Hualien County, the reelection bid of incumbent Magistrate Fu Kun-chi, an independent, is not at risk. In Kinmen County, former independent lawmaker Chen Fu-hai is challenging the reelection bid of incumbent KMT County Magistrate Li Wo-shi. Chen has been nominated by the Chen family clan, the largest clan on the offshore isle. Li and Chen are direct opponents in the dispute over the county government-owned Kinmen Kaoliang Liquor Inc's controversial change of distributor in 2010. For both candidates the stakes involved in this case are the driving force for rallying voter support. In Hsinchu County, incumbent KMT County Magistrate Chiu Ching-chun seeks reelection in a race against his predecessor Cheng Yung-ching who runs as an independent. In the three municipalities listed above, local KMT factions are openly defying party headquarters. The most particular and most important race is the Taipei City mayoral race between independent candidate Ko and the KMT's Lien. Presently, Ko enjoys a minor lead over Lien. The battle between Ko and Lien breaks the mold of green-blue confrontation, has opened up a new political era and highlights class differences.

Since voter support is stable in the six municipalities the DPP currently rules, the party should be able to win nine municipalities with relative ease. On top of that, it should be able to win at least one of the three municipalities where its chances are fifty-fifty. As it seems, the

DPP can be sure to be on the winning side. In contrast, the KMT might not be able to defend its rule in all municipalities north of the blue-green divide along the Choshui River in central Taiwan. Repeatedly there have been rumors that the KMT has lost control in its traditional strongholds as local factions are rebelling, either by publicly challenging the party line or by covertly obstructing it. The fact that a victory of independent mayoral candidate Ko seems possible in Taipei City shows that the blue-green political framework has already been successfully deconstructed. **BT**

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Prediction of Municipalities Won in the 2014 Municipal Elections				
	KMT	DPP	Independents (IND)	Total
Currently held seats	15	6	1	22
Predicted number of future seats	Keelung City, Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Hsinchu City, Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, Taichung City, Nantou County, Changhua County, Chiayi City, Penghu County, Taidong County, Kinmen County, Lienchiang County	Ilan County, Yunlin County, Chiayi County, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City, Pingdong County	Hualien County	
	10	9	2	undecided
	New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Hsinchu City, Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, Nantou County, Changhua County, Taidong County, Kinmen County, Lienchiang County	Ilan County, Yunlin County, Chiayi County, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City, Pingdong County, Keelung City, Taichung City, Penghu County	Hualien County, Taipei City	Chiayi City

Source: xfuture.org, Aug. 11, 2014, 9 a.m.

Trading Prices for Predicted Winning Candidates in the 2014 Municipal Elections				
	KMT	DPP	Independents (IND)	Remarks
Keelung City	35.0	62.0	14.0 (Huang Ching-tai)	DPP leading
Taipei City	42.5		60.4 (Ko Wen-je)	IND leading
New Taipei City	94.5	8.9		KMT leading
Taoyuan City	72.0	25.0		KMT leading
Hsinchu City	88.0	11.0		KMT leading
Hsinchu County	89.8	8.9	9.0 (Cheng Yung-ching)	KMT leading
Miaoli County	90.1	7.7	0.6 (Chiang Min-hsiu)	KMT leading
Taichung City	41.8	62.2		DPP leading
Nantou County	69.0	34.7	0.1 (Chien Su-tuan)	KMT leading
Changhua County	55.0	46.8	1.6 (Huang Wen-ling)	KMT leading
Yunlin County	34.0	64.1		DPP leading
Chiayi City	49.2	50.4		No clear lead
Chiayi County	15.8	85.0		DPP leading
Tainan City	2.2	97.0		DPP leading
Kaohsiung City	9.0	91.5		DPP leading
Penghu County	22.1	77.1	10.9 (Lin Pin-kuan)	DPP leading
Pingdong County	7.0	92.0		DPP leading
Taidong County	75.0	28.1		KMT leading
Hualien County	11.5	5.0	88.1 (Fu Kun-chi)	IND leading
Ilan County	2.9	98.0		DPP leading
Kinmen County	75.0	1.1	24.6 (Chen Fu-hai)	KMT leading
Lienchiang County	97.0	2.0		KMT leading

Source: xfuture.org, Aug. 11, 2014, 9 a.m.
Note: "leading" means the candidate of the said political party leads others by a price difference of NT\$5.

Trading Prices for Predicted Vote Share of Political Parties in the 2014 Municipal Elections				
	KMT	DPP	Independents (IND)	Remarks
Keelung City	38.1	53.5	21.0 (Huang Ching-tai)	DPP leading
Taipei City	46.9		48.9 (Ko Wen-je)	IND leading
New Taipei City	58.0	43.2		KMT leading
Taoyuan City	53.0	43.5		KMT leading
Hsinchu City	59.4			KMT leading
Hsinchu County	60.0		33.9 (Cheng Yung-ching)	KMT leading
Miaoli County	62.0	27.0	6.9 (Chiang Min-hsiu)	KMT leading
Taichung City	45.7	54.9		DPP leading
Nantou County	50.0	47.1	3.0 (Chien Su-tuan)	KMT leading
Changhua County	52.8	45.2	7.4 (Huang Wen-ling)	KMT leading
Yunlin County	46.0	52.5		DPP leading
Chiayi City	48.7	49.0		No clear lead
Chiayi County	39.0	56.0		DPP leading
Tainan City	36.0	63.2		DPP leading
Kaohsiung City	45.0	55.0		DPP leading
Penghu County	42.3	55.0	16.4 (Lin Pin-kuan)	DPP leading
Pingdong County	39.0	60.0		DPP leading
Taidong County	57.6	43.0		KMT leading
Hualien County	23.5		54.0 (Fu Kun-chi)	IND leading
Ilan County	42.0	56.0		DPP leading
Kinmen County	60.1		27.8 (Chen Fu-hai)	KMT leading
Lienchiang County				KMT leading

Source: xfuture.org, Aug. 11, 2014, 9 a.m.