

Taiwan Under Ma Ying-jeou, More Smoke and Mirrors as the Cross-strait Sell Out Continues

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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As Ma Ying-jeou works his shady cross-strait deals, he tries to flash the carrot of how China will save Taiwan. Forget the fact that the Chinese dumped poisoned milk products etc. on Taiwan. Forget the fact that the great China tourist influx failed. There, not only did the numbers not materialize, but even the few tourists that came, how shall we put it, were cheap. They did not spend much. Certainly not as much as the Japanese or even the Koreans whose tourists Ma should have promoted more in the first place. But let us return to the cross-strait promises. Again, the reality is proving the opposite. Opposite, unless you want to say that under Ma the rich will get richer, but the poor will get poorer. Examine the recent housing news.

The news media have been full on how cross-strait economic deals with China are going to push the market price of housing up around the island, but especially in Taipei. This sounds good right? Good if you have property to sell. But what if you don't?

For example in the Da-an area (one of the richest areas of Taipei) the peak price of housing last year was NT\$828,000 per ping. This year with the anticipation of Ma's promised blind and non-transparent ECFA (soon to be signed) the price has moved up to NT\$908,000 per ping and next year it is anticipated to be NT\$1 million per ping. Prices are going to rise all around the island as well. All well and good if you have property to sell, but what if you don't? What if you want to buy? Other questions follow.

Once you sell, where do you move to? A smaller city on the island? The countryside? Or perhaps, you could move to the USA or Canada where housing is cheaper. Then too, who will you sell to?

Who is going to be able to afford the high-priced housing? Not your average Taiwanese, no it will be the rich Chinese from across the Strait. Now the rub begins to be felt and the shallowness of Ma's promises of wealth begins to come clear. Read further and look to Hong Kong where the rich Chinese made property too high-priced for the average Hong Kong resident.

Another recent item in Taiwan's news was a list of the top ten complaints that Taiwanese had against their current economy. Guess what number one complaint in the survey was? The high cost of housing, say what? The top complaint of Taiwanese who are already feeling the pinch of the economy is the high cost of housing. This is all the more so for a young couple, wanting to

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get their first home. It does not take a rocket scientist or a smart economist to put these recent facts together.

As Ma works his great deals to make Taiwan dependent on China, where is the benefit? The few rich will get richer. But the average person or the poor? Sorry the average Taiwanese will only get poorer. So what is there to hope for under Ma? Well you can hope that your new Chinese landlord will be nice and not charge you too high a rent.

Source: [Jerome F. Keating's writings](#)