

Ma still confusing values and action

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 22 May 2014 09:30

In the six years that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) has been in office, the political situation has deteriorated into turmoil and instability. The economy is weak, the wealth gap has expanded, and both Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and opposition legislators, as well as the public, are complaining.

Many of the reforms Ma pledged to implement during his presidential election campaigns have never been fulfilled. Here are a few examples of his broken promises: divesting the KMT of all its ill-gotten party assets, reforming the civil servant pension system, 6 percent economic growth, an all-volunteer military, a defense budget that amounts to 3 percent of GDP and streamlining the government.

Even the clean government policy that Ma promised to implement with such sincerity has failed.

Corruption continues as the scandals surrounding former KMT Taipei City councilor Lai Su-ju (賴素珠) and former Cabinet secretary-general Lin Yi-shih (林益世) show. Ma's attempts to claim clean government as one of his achievements are laughable.

Honesty is the basic qualification for anyone who wants to become a government official, but he seems incapable of enforcing even that. He also often takes pride in what he calls his cross-strait achievements, but the general public looks at his excessive pro-China stance with concern and apprehension.

The result was the Sunflower movement and the protests against the cross-strait service trade agreement and calls to halt talks with China.

Ma wants to continue the construction of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant in New Taipei City's Gongliao District (公寮) to maintain a stable power supply, but endless anti-nuclear demonstrations and former Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chairman Lin I-hsiung's (林錫山) hunger strike forced him to halt part of the project.

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Furthermore, his clash with Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) has created a constitutional crisis and because of Ma's improper handling of the issue, the public will not support his demands that Wang be disciplined for judicial interference, even if he was right to make that demand.

However, Ma still continues to feel good about himself and thinks that someone else is responsible for all these problems.

Although the public are critical of Ma, he did not address this issue in a speech marking his sixth anniversary in office, instead speaking of the importance of listening to the young.

Ma announced that the Cabinet would set up a youth advisory task force consisting mainly of people below the age of 35 and that their opinions would be included along with those of academics and experts. He said that this approach would be expanded to the ministries so that young people could be consulted on policy formation. In addition, he also proposed five programs to respond to demands to solve the discrepancy between the level of education and employment, youth entrepreneurship, residential justice, free-trade policy and participation in the decisionmaking process.

Ma wants to co-opt the young, but that may not have much of an effect because he is playing the same old tricks. He can make a pledge, but he does not have credibility when it comes to implementation.

As for the talk about a youth advisory task force, the KMT has had a youth union, a youth corps and a youth league. In the end, these have been of no help, which implies that the youth advisory task force will not be very successful either.

As the year-end elections draw nearer and the political pressure increases, the Ma administration will once again focus on votes and ignore the youth issue.

When Ma criticizes the student protesters for hurting the nation's competitiveness, while trying to co-opt the younger generation, he points to his administration's biggest problem —

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2014/05/22](#)