

Doubts over Chinese entry permits

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 18 June 2015 07:22

The Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) silence in the face of Beijing's announcement that Taiwanese visitors no longer need to apply for entry permits to China has many left wondering whether President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) administration still exists.

On Sunday, National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Chairman Yu Zhengsheng (俞正聲) announced that Taiwanese travelers to China may now enjoy visa-free privilege, adding that the form of the existing "Taiwan compatriot travel document" (台胞證) — a permit issued by Chinese authorities allowing Taiwanese to travel to China — is to be changed to an IC card.

According to the prospective changes, Taiwanese travelers will no longer have to apply for an entry permit when they plan to take a trip to China as the IC card allows the holder automatic entry.

Granted, this new measure would certainly prove more convenient for China-bound Taiwanese travelers and save money (the permit costs applicants NT\$300 each entry), but factoring sensitive cross-strait political relations and the fact that China has never renounced its ambition to annex Taiwan, the proposed privileged treatment for Taiwanese travelers ought not be taken lightly.

Skeptics have reason to doubt China's intentions.

Hong Kongers and Macanese initially visited China via a booklet travel document named the "Hong Kong and Macau resident travel permit to enter the neidi" (港澳居民來內地旅遊許可證), which were also termed "home visit permits" (回乡證). The paper document was changed to an IC card in 1999, the design of which was later adopted for the second-generation of resident ID cards the Chinese government introduced in China in 2004.

Given that both Hong Kong and Macau are special administrative regions of China, Chinese wanting to travel to Hong Kong and Macau do not need a visa, only a permit.

Doubts over Chinese entry permits

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 18 June 2015 07:22

Critics have good reason to suspect that this so-called visa-exemption program “to give convenience to Taiwanese students studying in China or people doing business there” is merely an attempt to downgrade Taiwan’s sovereign status, all the while ensuring Taiwan is “Hong Kong-ized” (香港化), creating an international impression that Taiwan is part of China.

In view of the likelihood that Beijing is using the pretense of supporting exchanges between people on the both sides of the Taiwan Strait and offering visa-free treatment to make life easier for Taiwanese visitors as a tactic to further its political agenda in Taiwan, the whole matter certainly warrants a careful assessment by the government as it relates to national security and sovereignty.

The government has said it would keep a close eye on the matter as Beijing has yet to release any details.

Mainland Affairs Council Minister Andrew Hsia (夏立言) yesterday finally made the government’s first public comments on the proposal, saying: “What we care more about is whether it gives consideration to current cross-strait relations and the dignity of Taiwan.”

It is hoped that the government will review the matter to ensure it upholds the nation’s dignity and make it clear that Taiwan is not subordinate to China.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/06/18](#)