

One of the most frequently heard criticisms regarding President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) is his “detachment” from the public and not knowing where his problems lie — judging from his Double Ten National Day address, he apparently has not learned his lesson.

In the address yesterday, Ma was eager to defend himself, saying that criticisms of his administration and its policies might be due to a “misunderstanding.”

They might have been due to a misunderstanding if only a few people were suspicious about his policies, but when a large number of people are critical of them, he should contemplate where the problem is.

According to a poll conducted by the Chinese-language Apple Daily newspaper for the seventh anniversary of Ma’s inauguration in May, only 28.74 percent of respondents said they were satisfied with Ma’s overall performance, while 64.67 percent said they were not satisfied. As for the cross-strait policies that Ma has been so proud of, only 21.79 percent of respondents said they were happy about them — which was a setback from about 30 percent support he had for his cross-strait policies in previous years.

Yet, Ma defended himself by saying that his cross-strait policies have led to a decrease in tensions across the Taiwan Strait and helped the number of Chinese tourists grow by more than 10 times compared with seven years ago.

He even said that, thanks to the easing cross-strait tensions, the image of the Republic of China (ROC) has improved and therefore the number of nations and territories granting visa-free entry to Taiwanese has increased from 54 in 2007 to 153 this year.

However, Ma’s attribution of the increase in nations granting visa-free entry to Taiwanese to improved cross-strait ties is absurd, as such privileges have been granted due to efforts by Taiwan’s immigration authorities to combat human trafficking.

Ma still detached from reality

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Cross-strait tensions of course have eased, because Ma has been giving Beijing whatever it wants.

China has always claimed Taiwan as its territory and Ma agreed to its terms by saying that Taiwan is a province of China, and by law, the relationship between Taiwan and China is not a nation-to-nation relationship, but rather an area-to-area relationship under the framework of “one China.”

Ma even went so far to say that the difference between Taiwanese and Chinese is the difference in “household registration” — meaning, it is similar to the difference between people who register their home addresses in Taipei and Kaohsiung.

Cross-strait tensions would certainly be eased if Ma has such ideas, but it is really nothing to be proud of, because such “improvement” in cross-strait ties is based on the sacrifice of the nation’s sovereignty.

Ma likes to talk about how fiercely the Chinese fought against Japanese invasion before and during World War II. Maybe he should be reminded that during China’s War of Resistance Against Japan, then-ROC leader Wang Jingwei (汪精衛) — who took a more collaborative attitude toward the Japanese and kept areas of the ROC under his administration away from conflict — was often branded as a traitor by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), while the Chiang Kai-shek-led KMT government, which held a more belligerent attitude toward the Japanese, was heralded as truly patriotic.

As Ma is so proud of his “achievements” in improving cross-strait relationships, maybe he should consider whether he is acting like the so-called traitor Wang, or maybe he should revise the textbooks and make Wang a national hero since he made concessions to the Japanese to keep regions of China free of war?

Ma certainly has failed to deliver on his promises, which he repeated throughout the years, to reflect on himself and to listen to people more. After so many years, he is still a narcissistic, egoistic, self-centric politician living in an ivory tower.

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