

## **Divide and rule: The blue eight for Beijing**

Written by James Wang 王健

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A delegation of six Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) local government leaders and two independents traveled to Beijing to offer their acceptance of the “1992 consensus” and request that the cities and counties under their administration be given preferential tourism treatment by China.

The “blue eight” might be moving in the gray areas of Taiwanese legislation, but the issue of whether they are living up to their political responsibility must be looked into.

### **DISTANCE**

President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and her administration do not accept the “1992 consensus” and its claims that Taiwan is a part of China, but the blue eight completely ignore their local government roles and try to distance themselves from all other cities and counties by relying on China as if they were part of it.

In doing so, they are at the same time publicly disregarding the central government’s mandate and Taiwanese public opinion.

The KMT has praised the blue eight for surrendering to Beijing. The party has clearly forgotten how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) used calls for “regional peace” to sow division by accepting the surrender of local warlords and politicians only to throw Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and what was left of his rule out of China.

### **POWERLESS**

Most people do not take an optimistic view of the blue eight. Discounting Kinmen and Lienchiang counties and the three cities and counties that were represented by unelected deputy leaders, the whole exercise looks very weak.

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Local governments have no visa issuing rights and they do not have the right to sign agreements, so all they can really do is criticize the central government.

The blue eight have made it clear that they are in favor of urgent unification and they will end up in the same place as the KMT — spurned by the public.

The blue eight hide behind claims that they are working hard for the economy and for the tourism industry, but this has already been proven false.

### **ONE DRAGON**

Early in former president Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) first term in office, he authorized someone to ask China to help his administration get over an economic hump.

One solution was to send more tourists to Taiwan, sell more Taiwanese products and encourage Chinese to invest in Taiwan.

The result was the harmful “one-dragon” service — the unified management of Chinese tour groups controlled by Chinese and Hong Kong companies that control the consumption of Chinese tourists in Taiwan. It did nothing to improve the Taiwanese economy.

### **SOLIDARITY**

The requests submitted to Beijing by the blue eight are a copy of the requests Ma submitted during his presidency. They give China a political lifesaver that it can offer or withdraw at will and use to tie Taiwan's hands, using the same tricks as a con artist to cause trouble for the Tsai administration.

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As KMT mayors and county commissioners play political games, there is nothing stopping the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government from responding to the blue eight by increasing resources and improving the quality of the tourist experience in cities and counties run by DPP members.

This would perhaps teach them a lesson about solidarity and unity toward the outside world and about recklessly overstepping their bounds to help China divide Taiwan.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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