

Taiwanese not fooled by Xi

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Saturday, 26 August 2017 08:33

The pragmatism of Taiwanese has been highlighted by a poll released on Thursday, which found that despite China's increased bullying of the nation and its citizens, an overwhelming majority of Taiwanese support the government's push for cross-strait peace and reject Beijing's efforts to suppress Taiwan on the world stage.

The survey, conducted by Taiwan Real Survey and released by the Mainland Affairs Council, found that 87.8 percent of respondents support the government's efforts to get both sides to work to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

That is commendable.

However, what Taiwanese must never lose sight of is that while the government is promoting peace, stability and mutual understanding, Beijing, in its usual ham-fisted way, says that it is, but in reality is doing everything it can to sabotage such efforts.

And not just for Taiwan. Hong Kong, which Beijing once planned to use as a model to deceive Taiwanese with its "one country, two systems," has actually become something of a lighthouse, warning Taiwanese to stay well away from the sharp rocks, underwater reefs and whirlpools that constitute the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) political system.

"Do not try to get any closer," the beams of light and foghorns that are the news flashes from the Hong Kong lighthouse warn, you will only crash and be torn to bits, leaving only flotsam drifting on the waves.

Much has been reported and opinioned in this newspaper and other media about Chinese President Xi Jinping's (习近平) economic and political reform efforts and crackdowns since he became CCP general secretary on Nov. 12, 2012, and Chinese president the following March. His broad smile and supposed "common touch" were initially good camouflage for his ruthless efforts to eliminate potential rivals and consolidate his grip on power.

Taiwanese not fooled by Xi

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Saturday, 26 August 2017 08:33

In 2013 and 2014, experts who thought Xi might be the great reformer who would lead China toward greater democracy told the world to be patient, that Xi was just trying to ease out the dead wood that would have hindered his efforts to reform the party and the corrupt officials who had corroded its image.

However, the following two years and Xi's crackdown on human rights and other civil advocates, and then the lawyers who defended them, made it clear that Xi sees anyone who does not adhere to his vision as an enemy, and has no interest in democracy.

Starting last fall and continuing into this year, we have been told — for example about the farce that was the Hong Kong leadership election — that Xi is just trying to maintain order ahead of the CCP's National Congress this fall, the all-important twice-a-decade gatherings that set the party, and therefore China's, leadership.

No, it is clear that Xi is primarily interested in maintaining his role at the top of the pecking order.

Each little nudge, every step that he takes is about centralizing power, not toward listening to what the people want or need — from broadening censorship of the old media, new media and everything in between to pressing for more technology transfers from foreign firms that want to do business in China.

Reuters on Thursday reported about the CCP's efforts to exert more influence over the operations of foreign companies through the party's organizations in privately owned firms.

These offices have traditionally helped with paperwork and relations with government bureaucracy, but the article said that some foreign firms are coming under pressure to revise the terms of their joint ventures with state-owned partners to give the CCP final say over business operations and investment decisions.

Nothing direct, nothing overt: That is not the CCP's way, but scary nonetheless, another nudge toward a slippery slope of no return.

Taiwanese not fooled by Xi

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Saturday, 26 August 2017 08:33

It makes one wonder what kind of pressures Taiwan's manufacturing giants with their factories and plants in China — which Beijing sees of course as “compatriot,” not foreign ventures — might come under.

Pragmatic Taiwanese might want to keep those kinds of stories in mind as well when thinking of how to improve cross-strait ties.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2017/08/26](#)