

China, which makes no secret that its ultimate goal is to annex Taiwan, has of late made engaging young Taiwanese a top priority in its “united front” strategy against Taiwan.

At the two-day “2015 Workshop on Taiwan Affairs” in Beijing that concluded on Tuesday, in addition to affirming the so-called “1992 consensus” and an anti-Taiwanese independence stance, officials made a point of stressing that measures would be taken to “actively promote cross-strait visits and expand exchanges among young people and members of the general public on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.”

The tone echoed the statement by China’s Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun (張志軍) last summer that Beijing wishes “to hear what Taiwanese people have to say,” in particular those Beijing has dubbed the “three middles and the youth” — residents of central and southern Taiwan; middle and low-income families; small and medium-sized enterprises; and young people.

In line with this so-called “three middles and the youth” policy, one may also recall that during China’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits Chairman Chen Deming’s (陳德明) visit to Taiwan last month, he emphasized that he wishes to promote more exchanges between young volunteers on both sides of the Strait.

China’s latest emphasis on engaging young Taiwanese came after witnessing the impact of the Sunflower movement in March and April last year, during which many of the young people who participated in the protests expressed concerns about finding decent jobs and anxiety over their futures being increasingly dictated by China.

Aside from repeating the same old rhetoric stressing the importance of “developing mutual trust” and that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to the Zhonghua minzu (Chinese ethnic group, 中華民族), it appears that Beijing is also employing economic means in its attempts to woo the hearts and minds of young Taiwanese.

And all these attempts are obvious.

China targets Taiwan's young

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 29 January 2015 07:18 -

Other than the ongoing offering of various kinds of attractive scholarships to lure elite Taiwanese senior high-school students to the other side of the Strait, founder of the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Jack Ma (馬雲) has also been seen of late touting to a Taiwanese audience, particularly the younger generation, the job opportunities in the Chinese market.

It is worth noting that former Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) Taipei mayoral candidate Sean Lien (連戰) also sang a similar tune last week, appealing to young Taiwanese to look to the other side of the Strait for more employment opportunities.

All these moves are not without their lure.

After all, there is no question that Taiwan is faced with high youth unemployment.

According to the latest information from the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, people aged 15 to 24 had the highest unemployment rate at 12.79 percent, compared with 4.02 percent for the 25-to-44 age group and 2.04 percent for the 45-to-64 age group.

Media reports are full of young Taiwanese either lamenting the notorious "22K curse" — which refers to the NT\$22,000 average starting salary for university graduates — or having to seeking entry-level employment overseas.

No one is against cross-strait exchanges among young people, because a healthy exchange promotes understanding of each other and helps improve competitiveness in the international community.

However, young Taiwanese must be vigilant if behind China's so-called cultural exchanges and rosy pictures of the business opportunities it can offer them lies a malicious political ambition.

China targets Taiwan's young

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Thursday, 29 January 2015 07:18 -

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/01/29](#)