

Government should stop firms selling out Taiwan

Written by Chang Kuo-tsai 張國才

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According to news reports, multinational hotel chain Marriott International Inc listed Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and Tibet as “separate countries” in an online customer questionnaire and this triggered the Chinese government to order that Marriott shut down its Chinese Web site and mobile application for a week as punishment. The hotel giant has by now issued three apologies for its mistake.

The US’ Delta Air Lines was also called out by the Chinese government for listing Taiwan and Tibet as separate countries. However, after its executives were summoned, the airline continued to list Taiwan, Thailand and Japan as separate countries in the Asia-Pacific region on its official Web site.

This time, there was no China in the country list, as the country’s name was instead replaced by the Chinese word for “porcelain” (瓷). Was Delta Air Lines making an American-style joke or was it just a careless mistake that surely will further infuriate China? It makes one curious to see what is going to happen next.

Seeing foreign airlines and other businesses that make their livings in China listing Taiwan as a separate country makes China hopping mad as it urges these companies to publish apologies, alter their content and make immediate amendments. Is China going nuts? The answer, of course, is no.

The territory of China — which claims to have a 5,000-year-long history — has been subject to constant changes throughout the different dynasties. Dynasties aside, the demarcation of its territory has also undergone significant changes even within single dynasties. Taiwan was Chinese territory for only 211 years — under the rule of the Qing dynasty — and China’s claims over the Diaoyutai Islands (釣魚台) and the South China Sea are even weaker.

Even though this is a historical fact, China keeps lying through its teeth by claiming that Taiwan, the Diaoyutai Islands and the South China Sea have belonged to China since ancient times. Such claims show that China is not crazy, but dull and a scoundrel.

It is undeniable that it places Taiwan in a difficult situation internationally, as foreign airlines

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and other businesses one after the other bow to the Chinese yuan. There is very little that Taiwan can do about this. However, as the saying goes, “a noble man makes his fortune in a noble way.”

The University of Texas at Austin, for example, afraid that its campus was being infiltrated by the Chinese government, knew to reject a proposed donation from the Hong Kong-based China United States Exchange Foundation, whose chairman, former Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa (董建華), also serves as vice chairman in the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

Some food manufacturers in Taiwan that export their products to China, on the other hand, are absolutely undignified in marking their products as “made in Taiwan, China” as long as they can make a profit by selling their merchandise to China. Now, China has drawn another red line, requesting that Taiwanese manufacturers mark their products as made in the “Taiwan Area” or in “Taiwan Area, China.”

If President Tsai Ing-wen’s (蔡英文) government does not set its own red lines and chooses to turn a blind eye to those businesses, such firms will not only sell their products, they will also sell out Taiwan’s sovereignty and national dignity.

Chang Kuo-tsai is a retired associate professor at National Hsinchu University of Education and a former deputy secretary-general of the Taiwan Association of University Professors.

Translated by Chang Ho-ming

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