

## No country should want a neighbor like China

Written by John Yu 余英時

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Earlier this month, Typhoon Jebi battered Japan's Kansai region. As a result of fake news created by the Chinese government in collaboration with pro-unification advocates in Taiwan, Su Chii-chen (蘇志誠), who was director-general of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office's Osaka branch, was pushed over the edge and took his own life — the only Taiwanese casualty of the typhoon.

However, not even Su's suicide put an end to the political war of words.

Su Hung-dah (蘇洪達), a professor in National Taiwan University's Department of Political Science joined the fake news attack on the government by publishing an article online, pretending to be "a professional diplomat."

This once again shows that Beijing's malevolent attitude toward Taiwan manifests itself in tangible political suppression and military saber-rattling, as well as through Chinese travelers in Taiwan making deliberate misrepresentations, spreading rumors to confuse right and wrong and repeating these untruths so often that people start to believe them.

In short, China is injecting the most poisonous parts of its culture into Taiwan.

China's fake news culture stretches as far as Sweden. Recently, a Chinese family of three, surnamed Zeng (曾), traveled to Stockholm and got into an argument with hostel staff after arriving a day early.

The son wrote to the Chinese Communist Party publication the Global Times, saying that the hostel refused to allow them to spend the night in the lobby and told them to "leave immediately."

He then accused Swedish police of violently pushing over his father, who has cardiovascular disease, dragging him out of the hostel and throwing him to the ground, causing him to convulse and lose consciousness.

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They were then dragged into a police car to be beaten, threatened and dumped at a graveyard, he said.

Zeng's submission sparked a diplomatic dispute between Sweden and China.

When Swedish media looked into the incident and reconstructed the events, it was found that the hostel staff called the police because they were intimidated and frightened by the Zeng family, who were loud and created a scene.

While the police tried their best to calm things down, the Zeng family kept shouting: "This is killing," and lay down on the ground on their own, "as if they were 'acting,'" an eyewitness said.

To avoid disturbing others, the police took the family to a nearby church, which is open around the clock and is next to a graveyard.

Although the truth has come to light, Chinese Ambassador to Sweden Gui Congyou (桂从友) and others continue to criticize Sweden, apparently as revenge for the Dalai Lama's visit to the country and the Swedish government's criticism of China's detention of Gui Minhai (桂民海), a Chinese-born Swedish citizen and publisher.

Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait collaborated to create fake news that hounded Su until he took his own life, and the Chinese government and media outlets have supported the Zeng family without regard for the truth.

The incidents show that China uses fake news to blacken its enemies and achieve its political goals, disregarding the gender, age, identity and political affiliation of the people involved and whether the incident occurs in China or abroad.

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In addition to being under constant political pressure from China, Taiwan is also suffering from China's toxic fake news culture, which is supported domestically by some people.

Taiwanese are unbelievably unlucky to have such a neighbor.

*John Yu is a civil servant.*

Translated by Chang Ho-ming

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