

## PRC swine fever threat cannot be overlooked

Written by Martin Oei 000

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On Friday last week a dead pig was found washed up on Siaociou Islet (000) in Kinmen County (00). This followed the discovery on Monday last week on a beach in Jinsha Township (00) of a pig carcass that has since been confirmed to be infected with African swine fever.

Since there are no pig farms in the vicinity, the carcasses probably floated across from China. The flow of currents suggests that they came from areas where China has not reported any outbreaks of the disease, which in turn suggests that China is covering up the situation.

This is not the first time that China has harmed neighboring nations by hiding the truth about an epidemic. In 2003, it suppressed reports about severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which is caused by the SARS coronavirus and infects humans and certain other animals.

On that occasion, doctors and nurses in Hong Kong treated a Chinese visitor without taking strict protective measures, because they did not know that the patient had SARS. The virus then spread and killed 299 people in Hong Kong, including many healthcare workers.

The greatest share of the blame for that incident lies with Zhang Dejiang (000), then-secretary of the Chinese Communist Party's Guangdong Provincial Committee. Zhang studied economics at Kim Il-sung University in North Korea and later became chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress.

Zhang never apologized, instead turning the truth on its head by saying that China had helped Hong Kong fight the SARS outbreak. That was when quite a lot of Hong Kongers started to hate China.

Returning to current developments, it appears that China has not honestly informed Taiwan about the swine fever situation, so many parts of China that Taiwan has been led to believe are free of the disease might actually be heavily affected by it.

Premier William Lai (000) has rightly instructed local authorities across the nation to set up

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emergency response centers. If China is unwilling to tell the world the truth about the extent of the disease's outbreak, Taiwan might have to protect itself by suspending the "small three links" with China, as well as visits to Taiwan by Chinese travelers, and to stipulate that all goods and mail from China must undergo quarantine inspection at specified offshore locations before being delivered to Taiwan proper or Kinmen.

Only by such measures can China be definitely prevented from destroying Taiwan's pig-farming industry by transmitting the disease to Taiwan proper.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army has been following the theory of "unrestricted warfare" since it was proposed in 1999, meaning that it will use any means, fair or foul, to defeat its opponents.

Taiwan cannot afford to be too kindhearted. Travelers who bring Chinese pork products to Taiwan must without exception be deported back to their nations of origin and banned from entering Taiwan for five years.

If Chinese spouses of Taiwanese try to bring in pork products, their resident status should immediately be revoked and they should be deported to China.

If certain media or politicians go on serving as mouthpieces for China, the authorities should look into whether such malicious talk, which threatens public health and security, can be dealt with under the provisions of the National Security Act (國安法).

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Translated by Julian Clegg

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