

A spate of “fake news” believed to be fabricated by Chinese netizens has prompted the Presidential Office and the Executive Yuan to call a meeting to discuss countermeasures, a government official said.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Presidential Office, the Cabinet and national security agencies held a meeting to discuss countermeasures after suspected intervention from China in many of the government’s policy proposals.

For example, on Dec. 16 the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Air Force uploaded a photograph of a Xian H-6K bomber flying over mountain peaks on its Sina Weibo (微博) social media account.

Chinese media said that the peaks appeared to be Yushan (玉山) and that the photograph could have been taken when the bomber circled Taiwan on Nov. 25 last year.

The news quickly went viral on social media, in the news media and on the Professional Technology Temple, the nation’s largest academic online bulletin board.

However, the image was dismissed by the Ministry of National Defense, which urged the public not to circulate erroneous information.

The government’s plan to relax an import ban on food products from five Japanese prefectures near the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant is another target of rumors, the official said.

An article alleging that the US Food and Drug Administration can confiscate food imports from 14 Japanese prefectures without physical examination has been circulating on the Internet, the official said, adding that China is believed to be the source of the false information.

Government to crack down on ‘fake news’ sites

Written by Taipei Times

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“Although the information circulated on the Internet or social media is written in traditional Chinese characters, its vocabulary and grammar are different from Taiwanese. It is clearly the work of the Chinese online army,” the official said.

The official said the false information is aimed at unnerving and unsettling Taiwanese, and is a clear threat to national security.

Such actions are detrimental to cross-strait ties and are not a show of benevolence, the official said, urging China to stop spreading unsubstantiated stories.

The government plans to set up a rumor rebuttal section on concerned agencies’ Web sites, but it would also explore other measures, the official said.

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