

Beijing's sugar-coated lies

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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The Chinese government has once again demonstrated that it is not sincere about “putting politics aside” in cross-strait exchanges. Politics might be its priority, even for the entertainment business.

Last week, Taiwanese director and actor Leon Dai (戴立忍) — who was to play the lead role in the Chinese movie No Other Love (没有别的爱), directed by Chinese director and actress Zhao Wei (赵薇) — was accused of being pro-Taiwanese independence because of his participation in social movements in Taiwan.

At first, Dai said that he has never been a supporter of Taiwanese independence, with the movie's production team backing him.

However, due to overwhelming public pressure, the production team and investors had Dai replaced, forcing him to issue a statement detailing his family background, explaining why he has taken part in social movements and declaring that he has always considered himself Chinese.

However, the Chinese audience did not believe Dai and even started attacking his girlfriend, Taiwanese actress Gwei Lun-mei (郭书彤), as the girlfriend of a pro-Taiwanese independence actor.

This is not an isolated incident.

Earlier this year, Chou Tzu-yu (周子瑜), a Taiwanese member of South Korean pop group TWICE, was accused of sympathizing with the Taiwanese independence movement and was forced to apologize on camera for waving a Republic of China (ROC) flag on a South Korean TV show.

Taiwanese pop singer A-mei (阿妹) was banned from China for several years for singing the ROC national anthem at former president Chen Shui-bian's (陈水扁) inauguration ceremony in

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2000.

The witch hunt is not limited to Taiwanese entertainers.

On Friday, actress Kiko Mizuhara was forced to apologize on camera because she “liked” a photograph on Instagram of Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei (艾未未) making an inappropriate gesture at Tiananmen Square — a national symbol of China.

Zhao herself has also fallen victim to extreme nationalism in China.

In 2002, she became a target of public criticism — and even physical assault — when she was photographed wearing a dress with a Japanese rising-sun symbol on it.

Zhao was accused of sympathizing with Japanese imperialism and was forced to apologize under threat from numerous TV stations to boycott her.

Has China not been saying, “let politics be politics and let entertainment be entertainment,” and that China and Taiwan should put aside political differences while enhancing cross-strait exchanges?

Has China not been pressuring President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) to recognize the so-called “1992 consensus,” a supposed understanding between the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese government that both sides of the Strait acknowledge there is “one China,” with each side having its own interpretation of what “China” means?

If China was sincere about what it has been saying, no entertainers would have been subjected to a political witch hunt, especially when the social movements that Dai took part in did not even involve Taiwanese independence.

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If China is sincere about the “1992 consensus,” then Taiwanese entertainers should not be boycotted for singing the ROC national anthem or waving the ROC flag in public, as the ROC is just a different interpretation of “one China.”

The examples show that China is never sincere about what it says and its so-called “concessions” are just sugar-coated poison pills that no one should take seriously.

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