

Dirty gifts from China to the US

Written by Winston Dang ☐☐☐
Monday, 23 April 2018 07:00

This month, a dust storm blowing out of China — the strongest in five years — brought PM2.5, toxic pollutants (SO₂, NO_x, O₃) and microorganisms flying through the atmosphere not only in Asia, but also the western portion of the US and British Columbia. In all, 4,000 tonnes of dust will reach North America.

These toxic pollutants have all been identified as sources of respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Such storms are having a substantial impact on human health, the environment, ecosystems, weather and the climate. They have affected the health of Taiwanese, Japanese, Koreans and Americans, and it has been estimated that 3.6 million tonnes of Asian dust particles fall in Japan annually.

In the American Cancer Society's 2016 estimate of deaths for selected cancer by state, California was No. 1 for lung cancers. Statistical studies in 1996 showed that 64,000 Americans died of respiratory disease and lung cancer that year. In 2016, the number jumped to more than 158,080, the society said.

Many scientists suspect that these numbers could be correlated with Chinese pollutants and dust storms, corresponding to China's GDP jump over the past 20 years. They suspect that PM2.5, together with these dust storms, caused Americans to sicken and later die of lung cancer.

China's prioritization of economic growth with relaxed environmental regulations has created tremendous volumes of pollutants that spread to its neighbors and then onward to the US.

Americans should be very angry about being victims of China's moneymaking process over the past 20 to 30 years.

The US Environmental Protection Agency has in past decades tried to help China minimize industrial pollutants to improve the air quality globally. These issues involve environmental justice and the human rights of Taiwanese, Americans, Japanese, Koreans and Chinese.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2018/04/23](#)