

Beijing fueling anti-China sentiment

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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With the Jan. 11 elections right around the corner, public anger toward China has been running high due to a couple of attempts this week by Beijing to oppress Taiwanese. China has long meddled in Taiwan's affairs and has gotten its way in many high-profile debacles over the past few years, but this time, both incidents ended in Taiwan's favor.

First, it was reported on Friday that the World Bank's employee guidelines required Taiwanese employees to submit Chinese passports. This sparked an online outcry and the bank immediately announced that it has remedied the guidelines. It was probably an easy decision for the bank, given the implausibility of asking Taiwanese to submit Chinese passports just to work there.

Then again, international organizations are known for placing ludicrous restrictions on Taiwanese just to appease China, such as a UN ban on ordinary Taiwanese entering its premises.

Thankfully, the latest incident ended in favor of Taiwan — as it should have — all the while highlighting how malicious China can be toward the very people it claims to be its “compatriots” and “family.”

The second incident involves YouTuber Potter King (鄧紫棋), who had his contract with a Chinese agency canceled and his Weibo account closed after he refused to delete online videos in which he addressed President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) as “president.”

King's business partner, Mars Lee, told the local media that while the incident would cost their company “millions of New Taiwan dollars ... what we stand for is democracy.”

King made the right call, given what happened to Yifang Taiwan Fruit Tea in August, when it voiced support for the pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, but, following an outcry in China, was forced to condemn the demonstrators and express support for Beijing's “one country, two systems” framework.

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Yifang's business has since taken a nosedive, the *Liberty Times* (the *Taipei Times*' sister newspaper) reported last month.

King is known for videos in which he delivers cheesy pickup lines to women. Imagine what would have happened to his channel had he caved in to the Chinese agency's demands and sparked a boycott in Taiwan: Not only would he lose his main fan base, but it would also become nearly impossible for him to make videos.

His defiance won him more supporters, as Internet users widely voiced approval of his actions.

The incident is reminiscent of what happened to Taiwanese K-pop singer Chou Tzu-yu (周子瑜) right before the 2016 elections, when she was apparently forced to apologize on camera for waving a Republic of China flag in a South Korean TV show. Although all three presidential candidates at the time spoke out against the incident, the incident ultimately contributed to Tsai's election.

King's refusal to cave in to Chinese demands, his willingness to lose money and his declarations of support for democracy could have an even stronger effect on voters.

Beijing is shooting itself in the foot by meddling in Taiwan's entertainment business, as even politically apathetic young people would listen to what King has to say.

Tsai, who is seeking re-election, and Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜), the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT) presidential candidate, voiced support for King, but their tones differed greatly: Tsai lauded Taiwan's free and democratic society, while Han said that politics and economics should remain separate and cross-strait exchanges should be conducted in a peaceful manner. People are free to interpret their reactions however they want.

It will be interesting to see how the incidents will affect the outcome of the elections, which are less than a month away.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2019/12/18](#)