

An Earthquake Reveals a Distorted Country View by

Some Taiwanese

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A 6.4 Richter scale earthquake happened in Tainan, Taiwan, on the day of Chinese New Year Eve this year. So far, nearly 60 people are known to have died, more than 100 people were injured and 70 people remain missing. Since the earthquake, Taiwan's military has worked day and night on rescue. Some soldiers' homes also collapsed in the earthquake, but they cannot do anything for their family, being forced instead to return to duty and work on rescue by amilitary order.

However, not all of the Taiwanese are willing to cheer on the soldiers' efforts. One Taiwanese, called Aphrodite Hung (洪瑞璞), currently earning a Ph.D. in geopolitics at the University of Sorbonne, France, wrote on Facebook: "When the Republic of China (R.O.C.) is in difficulty, the Ministry of Defense is obligated to rescue. This is its responsibility to the Taiwanese, rather than a gift to them. If you let the R.O.C. Ministry of Defense recover its positive image, it can force the men of Taiwanese to do anything." In addition, this student suggested that Taiwanese, whether using the New Taiwan Dollar (NTD), holding an R.O.C. passport, participating in R.O.C.'s elections or serving the R.O.C. army, are forced. Of these things, the most terrible is serving in the army, as it robs people of their freedom. Therefore, people do not have to say that we appreciate the Ministry of Defense to send troops to rescue. The student continues, "We cannot refuse to serve the army, but we do not have to cheer for the Ministry of Defense, which can kill Taiwanese soldiers. We do not have to strengthen its positive image. If you love your children, you love your male relatives, please do not let the Ministry of Defense change its negative image by rescuing victims in the earthquake. Frankly speaking, public opinion is the only thing we can protect for the men who are forced to serve the army."

The comments have upset and offended soldiers. Some officers and soldiers have shared this post on the Internet, and said with emotion that they do not know how to

comment on this kind of remark. They also suggest that this woman did nothing for Taiwan, but was simply spreading her political creed. Compared to the people making a lot of effort on the frontline, they asked, what did she do for the disaster?

The student's thought is typical of Taiwan independence seekers. Recently, increasingly Taiwanese young people hold this view. In their opinion, the Republic of China (R.O.C.) should not be linked to Taiwan. Taiwan is Taiwan, and it is an independent country. This country's name is Taiwan rather than R.O.C. In their mind, the R.O.C. government is colonizing Taiwan. It forces the Taiwanese people to use NTD (the name of Taiwan's currency) and R.O.C. passports. Critics do not think the R.O.C. government has any legal basis to rule Taiwan, and note it is just a regime, defeated by the China Communist Party (CCP) in Mainland China that fled to Taiwan. Some people hold thought that is more radical. They not only think that the R.O.C government does not have any legitimacy but also consider that Taiwan is not a country. They are working hard to establish a country called "Taiwan "or "Republic of Taiwan". Their view is that currently Taiwan does not belong to any country.

Although the above view does not reflect the legal facts and truth, it has become very popular in Taiwanese student circles in Europe and America. Students holding this incorrect view introduce it to their foreign friends, and the misconception spreads. They are trying to create a perception that this view is mainstream in Taiwanese young people. As a student studying abroad, I cannot agree with them. I think as a responsible Taiwanese, I have to tell the truth to the international society.

The Qing Dynasty was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War, leading Taiwan to beceded to Japan for 50 years. It did not belong to China until 1945. The Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam for Advertisement, and the Japanese Instrument of Surrender, all confirm that Taiwan was returned to China at this time. However, in 1946, the Chinese Civil War happened. The ruling party, Kuomintang (KMT) was defeated by CCP in Mainland China, so it moved to Taiwan. Its scope of rule narrowed from the whole of China (Mainland China, Hainan Island, Taiwan, and its affiliated islands) to Taiwan and its affiliated islands (Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu).

On October 1, 1949, CCP announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.). At that time, the party already controlled the whole of Mainland China. It hoped to take Taiwan shortly thereafter and eliminate the R.O.C. Nonetheless, for several reasons, the R.O.C. continues to exist, and it has substantially ruled Taiwan and its affiliated islands until now. Even though the P.R.C. thought that it has already replaced the R.O.C. to become the "Real China" and that the R.O.C. had disappeared, this argument is clearly incompatible with reality, because the R.O.C. maintains its own troops, issues passports, and currency. P.R.C. has never ruled Taiwan.

Given the above controversy and some inappropriate ruling methods conducted by KMT, some Taiwanese gradually developed Taiwan independence theories. The core value of them is that "Taiwan is Taiwan, China is China, and Taiwan does not belong to China, no matter R.O.C. or P.R.C." To these Taiwanese, the R.O.C. is an exile government without any justification for ruling in Taiwan. Therefore, these people do not want to admit they have any connection to China. Nonetheless, this idea is completely ignorant of reality and is a kind of wishful thinking. The truth is that the Taiwanese's nationality is R.O.C. rather than "Taiwan" or "Republic of Taiwan." Actually, there is no country called "Taiwan" in the world. I use "Taiwan" in this article only because I do not want readers to mix it with P.R.C., which always claims that sovereignty of Taiwan.

The Constitution of Republic of China regulates the constitutional order, and according to its content, the territory of R.O.C. includes Taiwan and Mainland China. The real situation is that it only rules Taiwan and its affiliated islands. The R.O.C. has never given up its sovereignty of Mainland China. Due to the constitution of the P.R.C., its territory is the same as R.O.C., but it has never given up the sovereignty of Taiwan even though they have not ruled it.

In short, I will re-iterate that there is no country in the world called "Taiwan" or "Republic of Taiwan". Taiwan is just a geographic name. To say I come from Taiwan simply means that I am not from the P.R.C. It is not to say Taiwan is a country. Regrettably, some Taiwanese still do not understand the truth, and

others deliberately ignore the reality. They post such descriptions as the one the above Taiwanese Ph.D. student did. Taiwan's unique political status leaves it in political limbo, even as the natural disasters come. This is the Taiwanese' tragedy, and it is also the R.O.C.'s nightmare.