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Beijing's growing reliance on gangsters to further its political aims sends a worrying signal to Taiwan.

Invited by Taiwan's New Power Party (NPP), three newly elected members of Hong Kong's Legislative Council — Nathan Law, Eddie Chu and Edward Yiu — as well as Demosisto Secretary-General Joshua Wong, probably the most recognizable student movement leader worldwide, arrived in Taiwan in the early morning of Jan. 7 to participate in a forum. Unexpectedly, suspected mobsters were waiting for them at the airport, and protesters who shouted their opposition to what they regard as “the confluence of Taiwan independence and Hong Kong independence” threatened physical violence against Wong and his companions, who were whisked away by activists.

This was not the first time that the 20-year-old Wong encountered unpleasant problems at airports. He has been detained and denied entry in Malaysia and Thailand, obviously under political pressure from China. As a globetrotter who recently met heavyweight U.S. politicians who would not bother to meet or even grant a meeting with Hong Kong's Chief Executive, this nevertheless was the first time that Wong faced such a threat to his safety when disembarking from a flight.

However, this was not the first time that Hong Kong opposition activists encountered the risk of mobster violence while traveling abroad. In December last year, a group of pro-independence Hong Kong National Party activists were threatened with physical attack during their three-day stay in Taiwan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ho Ming-sho

Ho Ming-sho is a professor at the Department of Sociology at National Taiwan University

depicting these events as resentment on both sides of the Taiwan Strait toward the independence (or localization) movements in Taiwan and Hong Kong. For example, Hong Kong's *Takunpo*, a Beijing-controlled media outlet, [described](#) the incident as "‘Hong Kong Independence Movement’ Was Chased Away." TVB, another pro-China media in Hong Kong, also [mischaracterized](#) the incident in its news report. These malicious news no doubt served Beijing's purpose of isolating the opposition in the special administrative region.

Such incidents also send a worrying signal to Taiwan. While pro-unification fringe groups protested against the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan more than two decades ago, they were not involved with mafia members. But today organized crime is clearly involved. During the 2014 Sunflower Movement, which opposed a controversial services trade agreement with China, pro-Beijing mobsters made their presence known by threatening to unleash violence against student activists who were occupying the legislature in Taipei. These recent developments clearly indicate an escalating assault upon Taiwan's fragile democracy.

Those incidents also suggest that Taiwan is sliding toward the "One Country, Two Systems" formula as framed by Beijing in the early 1980s. In recent years, high-profile mobster attacks upon the pro-democracy movement (and media) in Hong Kong have been on the rise. Many eyewitness accounts revealed that these assaults were perpetrated by triad members brought in from China proper. The rumors that China's public security officers were training Hong Kong police, meanwhile, were legion.

Knowing the delicate relationship between Taiwan and Hong Kong, nobody — especially not gangsters — should be allowed to dictate the nature and agendas of these exchanges. One year ago, when Taiwan was about to hold its presidential and legislative elections, many Hongkongers visited Taiwan, and most did so through the official channels set up by the Mainland Affairs Council. Tellingly, the invitees included pro-Beijing establishment elites *and* opposition politicians. Sadly, violence now threatens to disrupt the tradition of Taiwan-Hong Kong exchanges on many fronts.

Perhaps the most ridiculous aspect of this weekend's incident was that none of the visitors to Taiwan advocated for Hong Kong's independence from China, as the three Legislative Council members only uphold the right to self-determination for the people of Hong Kong (independence and other options were deliberately left open for the residents of the SAR to decide). If such moderate opinions cannot be tolerated and must be met with violence, then there is sufficient reason to doubt Beijing's tolerance on just about anything.



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during their visit, Taiwan should not panic over such incidents. Resolute action is certainly needed to monitor Beijing's use of gangsters to further its political aims, and there should be zero tolerance for violence by such groups against members of society. Mobsters are a sordid social ill, which is all the more nefarious when they become involved with certain political agendas. Chiang Kai-shek's China, Hitler's Germany, and Slobodan Milošević's Serbia are all examples of such opportunistic relationships between gangsters and politicians. And now Xi Jinping's China seems to have joined that club.

However, while we defend our society against the threat of violence, we should ensure that the right to voice one's opinions — those expressed without violence — are fully protected in Taiwan. Otherwise, if we fail to distinguish between free speech and threats to society and muzzle both, Taiwan will have betrayed its democratic principles and the values that serve to strengthen its society.

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Number one: Mainland China detests seperationists in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Number two, it is alerted these two stinky streams of scumbags may converge and more foul ordors. An open society tolerates differences, however, that differences shall not disrupt normal and orderly life of others in society.

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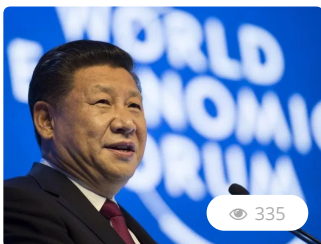
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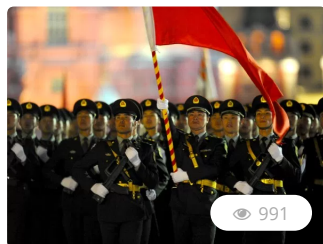
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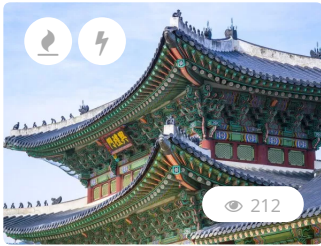




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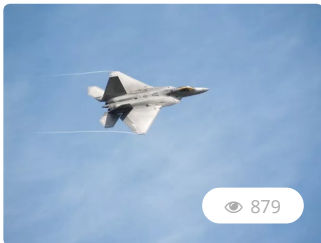
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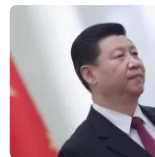
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No. 67, Lane 164, Songjiang
Rd., Zhongshan District, Taipei
City, Taiwan 104
Tel. : +886-2-2567-8808
Fax : +886-2-2567-0018
E-mail : info@twpeace.org.tw

Editor in chief: J. Michael Cole
E-mail : jmc@sentinel.tw

**Report typo/errors to
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tw**

No. 67, Lane 164, Songjiang
Rd., Zhongshan District, Taipei
City, Taiwan 104
Tel. : +886-2-2567-8808
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