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The Growing Effect of the Chinese Communist Party's Propaganda Campaign Strategy

By SUZUKI Keisuke

On January 6, Financial Times published Gideon Rachman's editorial headlined "The Time to think more about Sarajevo, less about Munich." To put it shortly, the article says that the "lesson of Sarajevo" is more suggestive than the "lesson of Munich" in the current international situation. The lesson of Munich means that when Nazi Germany was rising with military ambitions in 1938, Britain and France failed to properly evaluate its threats, shelved the situation and did not take a resolute action against Hitler in the initial stage, which eventually led to the outbreak of World War II. The lesson of Sarajevo means that after the assassination of an Austrian archduke in Sarajevo in the summer of 1914, countries around the world failed to make serious efforts for peace amidst nationalism and international stratagems and drifted to war, which triggered the outbreak of World War I.

The article also mentions Syria and other topics, but mainly focuses on the situations surrounding East Asia. I do not think I need to make a fuss about one newspaper's editorial. However, I would like to write about my concern about the article for the following reasons. First, Financial Times is a fairly influential newspaper. Second, it is clear that the article is based on a mistaken recognition of the current situation. Third, this columnist who covers diplomatic issues has also ever written editorials that are based on the viewpoint of the Chinese Communist Party. To put it briefly, the recognition that it is the time to think more about Sarajevo, less about Munich, in the current East Asian situation turns out just as what Nazi Germany wanted and what the Chinese Communist Party and the North Korean Workers' Party want today. I have to say that this way of thinking may end up slipping this region into war.

With regard to the mistake of Munich, though it was quite clear that Nazi Germany was rapidly beefing up its military muscle with a political intention to grab European hegemony by war, other European nations mistakenly thought that the Nazis was fundamentally not evil and were irrationally optimistic about their analyses of the situation. Above all, other European nations lacked the strong political will to stop the Nazis from becoming uncontrollable and missed the perfect timing for handling the situation. Meanwhile, for the mistake of Sarajevo, it seems that with each player accelerating military build-ups against the background of nationalism, the situation

automatically escalated with no will for either war or peace.

It may be considerably clear which case the current East Asian situation, especially the Chinese Communist Party's actions and the actions taken by Japan, the United States, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines and Australia against China, are closer to. Unless you swallow the "Chinese strategic logic" that Japan's actions is the one that cause instability in the region, it will be unthinkable that the situation is similar to post-Sarajevo.

As a matter of fact, Japan's actions in the East China Sea have always been reactions against China's actions and Japan's action levels have never exceeded those of China (e.g. when the China Coast Guard came in, the Japan Coast Guard reacted) . China's military actions in the East China Sea derive from its unstable domestic situation, Sinocentrism and its history of repeated military aggressions against neighbors. This is clear from the following facts. You can see similar things in the South China Sea as well as in the East China Sea. China remarkably deviates from the international rules in other areas, such as environment and intellectual property rights, and the country is also trying to change the rules. All of China's actions are based on its strategy for creating an environment in which China can force its self-interest on other countries by removing the presence of U.S. forces in East Asia and by establishing hegemony in Asia. The presence of U.S. forces in the region can almost be regarded as public goods because they have contributed to maintaining regional peace for many years.

For armaments, Japan does not have any military capacity to attack neighboring countries on the basis of its strictly defensive defense policy. In contrast, China is rapidly developing the deployment of intercontinental ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons, aircraft carriers and submarines capable of launching nuclear warhead missiles. This contrast between the two nations clearly shows the reality of "escalation."

If the columnist can just analyze the situation objectively and knows the journalistic basics of focusing on facts, that is, what the Chinese Communist Party is "doing," not what it is "saying," he will definitely not argue that the current East Asian situation is closer to Sarajevo, not Munich.

Conversely, judging from the fact that even the quality paper with world-class reputations ran such an article, you can say that the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda campaign strategy, similar to that of Nazi Germany, is spreading around the world. The story does not end with Financial Times. Chinese tycoon Chen Guangbiao's failed attempt to buy the New York Times and biased articles of the Wall Street Journal's Tokyo branch suggest that information warfare may be being manipulated according to the Chinese Communist Party's scenario. Japan's future peace and

security are based on its alliance with the United States and depend heavily on how Japan can communicate truths to international public opinions. Especially, this is the timing when the Obama administration is facing the shaken determination for military commitment to world peace. In this sense, Japan has no time to lose for its diplomatic rollback.

(This is an English translation of the article written by Mr. SUZUKI Keisuke, Member of the House of Representatives, which originally appeared on the e-forum “Hyakka-Somei” of CEAC on January 15, 2014.)