

“Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen” and the U.N. have a new rhyme

By Mari Yamaguchi
The Associated Press

TOKYO — “Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen” (PPAP) and the U.N. are rhyming.

Japanese comedian Pikotaro has adapted his catchy song to promote the United Nations’ sustainable development goals. The original went viral last year after pop star Justin Bieber tweeted that it was his favorite video.

Pikotaro, in his trademark leopard-lizard design outfit, was a bit reserved at an appearance alongside the more conservatively dressed foreign minister Fumio Kishida.

The PPAP star beamed at the invitation to accompany the diplomat to New York and pledged to do his utmost for the awareness campaign. The U.N. version, “SDGs,” debuted in mid-July.

At first, Pikotaro seemed unconvinced. “Do you mean the U.N., one that is in New York? Me? Are you sure?” he asked half-jokingly. Kishida reassured him it was a Japan-hosted reception at the U.N.



headquarters where he would be performing.

The U.N. action plan sets goals for

fighting poverty, climate change, and other global challenges. Kishida said he needs to boost awareness for the project in

PIKOTARO PROMO. Japanese comedian Pikotaro greets journalists before meeting with Japan’s foreign minister, Fumio Kishida, at the ministry in Tokyo. Pikotaro, who gained global fame with his “Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen” (PPAP) song, debuted a new version of PPAP to promote sustainable development at the United Nations. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

which every citizen needs to help. “Pikotaro-san’s popularity would be extremely effective to boost public recognition,” Kishida told him.

Pikotaro said it would be a challenge to achieve all the goals, but he was happy to accept the Foreign Ministry’s appointment to the promotional role and help by doing what he does best. “Something easy that encourages people to watch and follow [the] example.”

He also gave Kishida a brief posing lesson, demonstrating hand gestures showing 17 development project areas as the minister struggled to copy Pikotaro.

There was no dancing lesson, however. In the PPAP song, Pikotaro mimics stabbing a pen into an apple and a pineapple while singing simple English lyrics and dancing to a catchy beat.

China says U.S. has apologized for Taiwan name gaffe

By Didi Tang
The Associated Press

BEIJING — The United States has apologized for mistakenly describing Chinese President Xi Jinping as the leader of Taiwan, China said. Chinese scholars said the error shows a lack of competence in the White House that is not conducive to healthy U.S.-China relations.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China asked the United States for an explanation of the mistake, and the U.S. said it was a technical error. Washington apologized and corrected the error, Geng said at a daily news briefing.

In a statement issued about a meeting in Germany between Xi and U.S. President Donald Trump, the White House press office described Xi as president of the Republic of China, the formal name for Taiwan. Communist China, led by Xi, is called the People’s Republic of China.

The issue is particularly sensitive because Beijing insists that Taiwan is part of its territory.

“It is basic knowledge for those working in diplomacy, yet this isolated incident shows how incompetent the White House staff are, how casual they are, and how poorly coordinated they are,” said Shi Yinong, a professor of international relations at China Renmin University. “It will only make the Chinese people look down upon the American government for it to make such a low-level mistake.”

The gaffe has gone largely unreported in China because the local media have no motivation to mock Trump, Shi said.

Wang Dong, an associate professor in the school of international studies at elite Peking University, said he believes the error was not intentional, but still reveals a lack of capacity in Trump’s foreign policy team while key positions remain unfilled.

“It shows the deficiency in the professionalism on the part of the White House staff in terms of diplomacy,”



Wang said. “The mistake itself may not affect China-U.S. relations, but the White House should draw a lesson from it to improve its work flow. It’s a politically sensitive mistake that should not have occurred.”

The mistake occurred in the introduction to the statement and was not in the actual text. Within two days, the White House had altered the statement to read simply “President Xi of China.”

During a 2006 state visit to Washington by

LOW-LEVEL MISTAKE. U.S. President Donald Trump, left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping, right, arrive for a meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Hamburg, Germany. The United States apologized for mistakenly describing Xi as the leader of Taiwan, China said. Chinese scholars say the mistake shows a lack of competence in the White House that is not conducive to healthy U.S.-China relations. (Saul Loeb/Pool Photo via AP)

then-Chinese President Hu Jintao, a White House announcer said the national anthem of the Republic of China would be played, instead of the People’s Republic of China. The correct anthem was used.

Other actions by Trump toward Taiwan have drawn Beijing’s ire.

Upending long-standing diplomatic protocol, Trump accepted a congratulatory phone call from Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in December and questioned the wisdom of the “one-China policy” under which Washington maintains only unofficial relations with Taiwan. Then in June, to Beijing’s indignation, his administration approved a \$1.4 billion arms sale to Taiwan, which separated from mainland China in 1949 during a civil war.

Almost six months into office, Trump has yet to fill thousands of government positions. His White House staff in particular has been faulted for poor organization.

Project Updates

The Oregon Department of Transportation invites you to provide input on amendments to projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

On the 1st and 16th of each month, ODOT will post for review changes made in the previous 15 days to projects in the STIP; we invite you to check in regularly and provide comments.

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