Iceland Prime Minister Temporarily Steps Down Because of Information from Panama Papers.

([Iceland’s Prime Minister Steps Down Amid Panama Papers Scandal](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/06/world/europe/panama-papers-iceland.html)). - 4/5/16 (NY Times)

By: Varin Sikand

The Panama Papers are a group of about 11.5 million documents detailing some financial almost-scandals of high ranking government officials around the world. One such man is Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, the Prime Minister of Iceland. Basically, these almost scandals are acts that are maybe morally and ethically wrong, but not exactly illegal. For example, David’s wife here was proven to have a company (providing financial benefits for him) set up on the British Virgin Islands without properly disclosing this information. This location is important as it allows him & his wife to “enjoy tax advantages”. Because of this, he has stepped down, but no real consequences can happen as technically, these documents need to be investigated further before declaring it true.

* Long story short: The Prime Minister of Iceland (and his wife) are accused of using an offshore island (that gives illegal tax advantages) to host a company that allows him to basically dodge taxes, and therefore make money. However, since the documents that accuse him of this haven’t been technically proven, he has only stepped down from his position (without taking any actual punishment, like arrest or fines) because people in Iceland now don't like him.

My Opinion:

Scandals have always been a staple of this world, and therefore, and staple of our stories and fables. A high ranking official that has secretly done things to better himself (at the cost of his people) is a lot like how Macbeth takes from others to better himself (both wrongly and secretly)

Japan takes advantage of Panama Papers to “Skewer” China

([For Japan, Panama Papers are tool to skewer China](http://nvs24.com/news/world/For-Japan-Panama-Papers-are-tool-to-skewer-China-4839225.html)) - 4/8/16 - USA Today

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For those who don’t know, the Panama Papers are a group of about 11.5 million documents detailing some financial (tax-haven) almost-scandals of high ranking government officials around the world. Japan was (technically) one of the countries that was involved in this incident, however they managed to avoid the brunt of it. Yes there were plenty of people (in Japan) named in the papers, but, luckily for Japan, none were very important. No government people, or very significant citizens either, so Japan is more or less off the hook. However, their political rival, China, did not go unscathed. And Japan hopped on the bandwagon. See, since they didn’t get affected by the tax avoidance accusations, they decided to suddenly make it a huge deal - *“Japan's Mainichi Shimbun newspaper reported that the administration of Japanese President Shinzo Abe is considering raising the issue of offshore tax havens during the Group of 7 summit, or G-7, which Japan will host in May. Enhanced measures to combat tax avoidance by multinational companies were included in a joint statement at a G-7 meeting in Germany last year”* Probably hoping to point out their neighbor, China, they are using this opportunity to its fullest.

Opinion and Connections to Shakespeare:

I feel like Japan is doing well (as far as capitalizing on a potential scandal goes) and is simply using an opportune moment to snatch a sneaky victory. And, to me, there isn’t anything wrong with that. If an opponent makes a major blunder (Like many Chinese officials did) then you should take advantage of that, and that is exactly what Japan did.

There really isn’t a solid connection with any of the 3 plays (Macbeth, Twelfth Night, and King Lear) however, it can be said that this is much like King Lear, in that the 2 evil daughters took advantage of a certain mistake that the King made; so as to take his throne. The same way that Japan took advantage of China’s blunder to gain an advantage socially, economically, and politically.

China Striking Down on Panama Paper Accusations.

([China Plans A Single, Chilling Response To The Panama Papers](http://china-underground.com/2016/04/11/china-plans-a-single-chilling-response-to-the-panama-papers-forbes/))

4/10/16 - NY Times

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As in the other two papers I wrote, the Panama Papers are a bunch of documents talking about certain Tax-Haven scandals that officials worldwide have (assumingly) been a part of. China was also a part of this. In my summary of Japan’s involvement, I touched on China, but after more research, I give you China’s side of this incident.

China was not immune to the effects of the Panama Papers. The brother in law of the Chinese President (Xi Jinping) was one of the people accused of taking advantage of some places that you can use to avoid taxes (called tax-havens). Now, China is being super protective and, while denying all claims of Xi doing anything wrong, is also full-on rejecting the Panama papers completely. As NY Times said, “In China, Web postings are taken down, foreign publications blocked, Communist Party media blames the West, and leaders act as if nothing had happened,”

Long story short:

China, since their president’s brother was accused of illegally avoiding taxes, is now being really strict about the spread of this information, limiting all that can be said about this scandal.

My opinion

China seemed to have made a mistake, and is now desperately trying to cover it up. I haven’t read enough Shakespeare to properly relate this to something though.