

Idiom by Lon Yan

自尋死路

zi4 xun2 si3 lu4

Donald Trump turned a bridge-building first visit to CIA headquarters into an airing of grievances about “dishonest” journalists who dared to understate the size of the crowd at his inauguration.

And when he declared at the CIA headquarters “I am so behind you,” high-level CIA brass were said to be not particularly impressed. Former CIA director John Brennan issued a statement later to express his anger at Donald Trump’s “despicable (卑鄙的) display of self-aggrandizement (自我擴張) in front of CIA’s Memorial Wall of Agency heroes.”

Everyone who has watched cloak-and-dagger movies knows that you do not want the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States of America to be your enemy. Conspiracy theorists would also point to JFK

to illustrate how it is really a bad idea to mess with the CIA, even for a president.

And anyone in public life would tell you the best way to commit political suicide is to antagonize the media. So it was quite a feat that Trump managed to antagonize both the CIA and the media, in a single stroke, on his first day as president.

Well done, Trump. What you are doing is “自尋死路” (zi4 xun2 si3 lu4).

“自” (zi4) is “self,” “尋” (xun2) “to look for,” “to seek,” “死” (si3) “death,” “to die” and “路” (lu4) “a road,” “a path,” “a route.” “自尋死路” (zi4 xun2 si3 lu4), literally, is “self look for death route,” “looking for a way to die.”

The idiom means “to bring about one’s own destruction,” “to seek one’s own destruction,” “to sign one’s own death warrant.”

Terms containing the character “尋” (xun2) include:

找尋 (zhao3 xun2) – to search for; to seek after

追尋 (zhui1 xun2) – to pursue; to track down

尋求 (xun2 qiu2) – to seek, to go in quest for

尋寶 (xun2 bao3) – treasure hunt