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SARS, China, Taiwan and the WHO

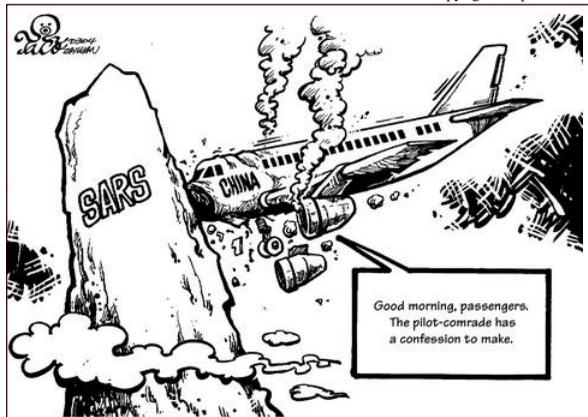
Much has been written during the past two months about the spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). It originated in China's southeastern province of Guangdong in November 2002, and was able to spread rapidly due to the habit of Chinese officials of suppressing information, so that countermeasures could not be taken in time. By the time it became a known phenomenon in mid-March 2003, it had spread widely to Hong Kong, Vietnam, and the rest of China. It was only a matter of time before it would reach other countries such as Canada and Taiwan.

Because it is affecting travel in such a major way, it is highly likely to have a significant effect on the region's economy. On the following pages we will focus on three other aspects: 1) the effect on China's political system itself, 2) the effect on relations between Taiwan and China, and 3) the reluctance of the WHO to assist Taiwan in the fight against SARS.

China's Chernobyl?

In an excellent article on 24 April 2003, the London-based **Economist** suggested that SARS may be equivalent to Chernobyl, the 1986 nuclear accident in the

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Chinese captain: "Good morning passengers. The pilot-comrade has a confession to make."

Ukraine that helped precipitate the disintegration of the old Soviet Union. While it may be too early to tell, there are certainly important parallels: in China, SARS is leading to widespread skepticism about the government and in particular the Communist Party.

SARS may also turn out to be the needle that burst the economic balloon: while more sober foreign observers have long argued that China's economy was not growing anymore, the authorities in Beijing tried to keep the locomotive going by inflating growth figures, and even now are misleading the rest of the world that the economy is growing by some 9%. SARS is bringing this all back down to earth, and will put the brakes on the overblown expectations of China by foreign investors.

We must quarantine China

This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 26 April 2003

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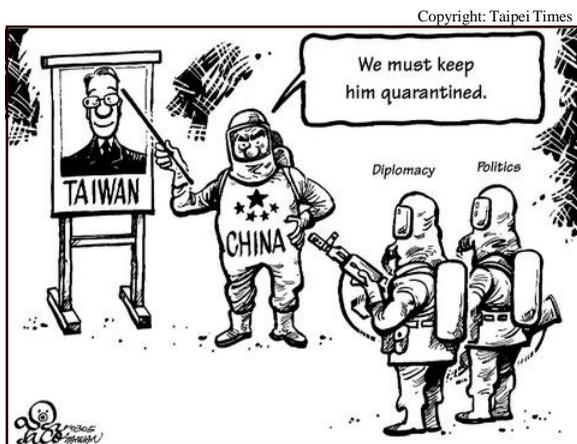
Taiwan's health authorities have worked hard to prevent the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), but unfortunately the country lost its "zero community-acquired infection, zero death, zero export" record after a mass infection occurred at the Taipei Municipal Heping Hospital.

The nation's fight against SARS has now entered a new phase, as the previous approach of simply screening individuals entering the country is no longer effective. President Chen Shui-bian has announced that Taiwan is raising the seriousness of the fight against SARS by responding to it as a "national security" problem. Taiwan must build new defenses against SARS at hospitals, within communities and in public venues. Large-scale or community quarantine measures will become inevitable in the all-out effort to stop the spread of the disease.

Taipei Municipal Heping Hospital was shut down after a mass infection was detected among medical personnel. All the patients and medical personnel at the hospital have been quarantined. Venues suspected of having been visited by possible SARS carriers are being sterilized. People suspected of having come into contact with SARS patients are being put under home quarantine. Such measures, coming without warning, have caught many people off guard. Some medical personnel at the hospital are finding these actions unacceptable. They have staged protests by putting up placards on the hospital's windows.

The unhappiness of those quarantined is understandable and we must thank them for the sacrifice they are making for the public's welfare. By having their freedom of movement temporarily curbed, they are making it possible to limit the SARS infection within specific areas. Confining both healthy people and suspected SARS patients in the same building may increase the possibility of healthy people being infected, but the risk is one that must be taken for the greater good.

In China, where SARS originated, the authorities lost the best opportunity to prevent the outbreak when they covered up the situation and rejected the World Health Organization's offers to help. Now SARS has become a public-health crisis in many countries. In March, we suggested that any contact with China be curtailed, in an effort to crank up international pressure to force China to face the outbreak. Now we make the same suggestion again, this time for self-protection.



China: "we must keep him quarantined"

Twelve countries have given travel warnings about Taiwan as a SARS-affected area. The SARS situation in China is a thousand times more serious than it is here. It is imperative and understandable for the government to adopt quarantine measures against China.

On Thursday (24 April 2003), the Mainland Affairs Council announced control measures on travel across the Taiwan Strait based on the principle of "minimal control." This is the beginning of cross-strait quarantine measures. In light of the rapidly deteriorating situation in China and Hong Kong, "minimal control" measures are not enough. The government must adopt tougher controls and make it a rule to stop personal travel from China, allowing passage in exceptional cases only. It must do this to effectively implement all necessary preventive measures inside this country. If we do not nip SARS in the bud, all preventive measures may be futile.

The dubious role of the WHO

As the world body responsible for health, the WHO has a prime responsibility to ensure that all countries are adequately informed and advised in the case of new outbreaks like SARS. However, in the case of Taiwan the WHO has been negligent and impotent: in March and April 2003, when SARS could still have been contained in Taiwan, the world body refused to adequately inform Taiwan medical authorities who were requesting assistance and information from the WHO. It wasn't until SARS was starting to spread rapidly at the end of April 2003, that the WHO sent two of its staff to Taiwan to consult with the island's medical officials.

The reason of the WHO's reticence is of course the fact that China is insisting that it has sovereignty over Taiwan, and that the island therefore cannot be a member of an international organization.

Since 1997, the Taiwan authorities have mounted a campaign for WHO membership at the occasion of the annual gathering of the WHO World Health Assembly. This year, the SARS epidemic provided a new urgency to the campaign: President Chen Shui-bian repeatedly spoke out on the issue of Taiwan's unfair and unjust exclusion from the WHO, and on 9 May 2003, the **Washington Post** published an OpEd article by the President, forcefully arguing the case of Taiwan's participation in the WHO.

A few days later, on 16 May 2003, the Paris-based **International Herald Tribune** published an article by Taiwan's foreign minister in which he urged the WHO and its member states to "...stop allowing political expedience to dictate WHO policy." He stated that "*Taiwan needs the WHO just as much as the WHO needs us in fighting SARS and future epidemics.*"

However, on 19 May 2003, the member states attending the annual WHO World Health Assembly in Geneva, the WHO caved in to China's bullying, and decided not to put the issue of Taiwan's membership on the agenda of the organization's annual meeting.

In a strongly-worded editorial on 20 May 2003 titled "*Shutting out Taiwan*", the **Washington Post** criticized the WHO and those countries which supported China's position. It stated: "*For the U.N. system to be taken seriously, it ... has to junk some of the political baggage it has acquired over the years. The WHO needs to recognize that China's musty objection to Taiwanese independence is no longer a good reason to deny Taiwan the help it needs to combat the health problems of the future.*"

The following is an editorial on the matter by the **Taipei Times**, written when the issue just started to develop in early April 2003.

The WHO should live up to its name

This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 6 April 2003

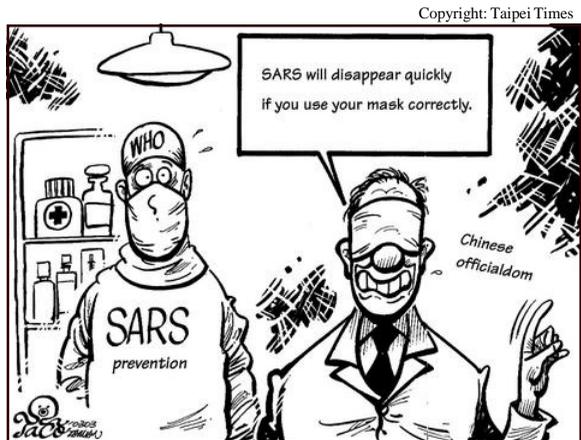
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As if it didn't already have its hands full fighting the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Taiwan also has to deal with the appalling way it is treated by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO's disregard for the health and welfare of the people of this country for political reasons is no better than China's deliberate concealment of the epidemic. At least the Chinese government has finally managed to muster a long-overdue and now meaningless apology for its shameful conduct. When will the WHO correct its own mistake?

The WHO has consistently referred to this country as "Taiwan, China" or "Taiwan Province" of China, totally disregarding the nation's sovereignty. Perhaps in the eyes of the international community the statehood of Taiwan continues to be a question open to debate. But, as a supposedly non-political international organization, it is entirely out of place for the WHO to take sides in this debate. The least it could do is to remain neutral on the issue by simply referring to this country as "Taiwan," without making any further interpretation of the country's status.

When asked by the media about the issue, WHO officials have replied that what Taiwan is called is a "political question" about which they cannot comment. But by reducing Taiwan to a mere Chinese province in its lists and news releases, the WHO is clearly "commenting" on the issue.

Worse yet, in the global battle against SARS, Taiwan is excluded from all WHO assistance. The only outside help it has received thus far is from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Chinese officialdom to WHO: "SARS will disappear quickly if you use the mask correctly."

WHO officials have openly conceded it is “difficult” to offer Taiwan any assistance since it is not a WHO member. But doesn’t this demonstrate the need to allow Taiwan to join the organization, or at the very least let it be an observer? If Taiwan was truly a Chinese province, then it should be able to receive WHO assistance via China, which is already a WHO member. In reality, that is entirely impossible, because China and Taiwan are ruled by different governments.

The message is loud and clear: Unless Taiwan reduces itself to become a Chinese province, no WHO help will be forthcoming, however badly needed this assistance may be. China naturally did not miss the chance to highlight this point by offering to help Taiwan combat the SARS epidemic. In view of China’s disastrous handling of the epidemic so far, only a fool would accept that kind of offer.

Much to the comfort of Taiwanese, some true friends have expressed their support. In the past few days, both the Canada-Taiwan Parliamentary Friendship Group and the US Congress’ Taiwan Caucus have criticized the WHO and called for Taiwan to be allowed to be a WHO observer. Furthermore, on Thursday, the Canadian Parliament passed a resolution supporting Taiwan’s WHO bid. The US House of Representatives has also passed legislation requiring the US secretary of state to help Taiwan join the organization.

On the other hand, there is Thailand, which treats travelers from Taiwan the same as those from China by requiring them to undergo physical checkups upon arrival and wear surgical masks for the first 14 days of their visits. This is obviously because Thailand thinks that Taiwan is part of China. It is very likely that Thailand was influenced by the WHO’s attitude.

The WHO should live up to its name and truly serve as the health organization for the whole world, including Taiwan.

Presidential elections in 2004

The Lien-Soong blues

At the end of March 2003, the Kuomintang Party and the People's First Party (PPF) announced that they would field a joint ticket in the upcoming Presidential elections: the leaders of the two parties, the KMT's Lien Chan and the PFP's James Soong will be the Presidential and Vice-presidential candidates in the "blue camp" attempt to wrestle the presidency away from the "green camp" – President Chen Shui-bian of the DPP, supported by the Taiwan Solidarity Union.

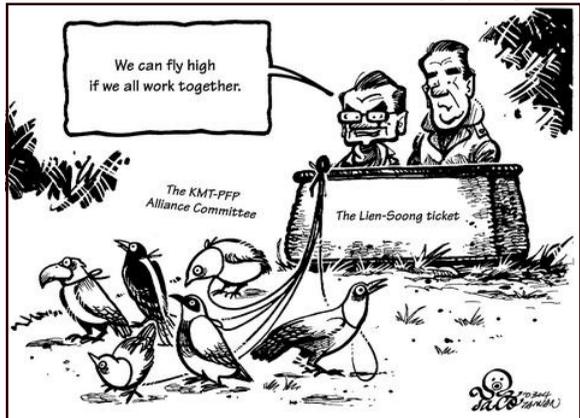
While on paper, the Lien-Soong combination looks strong – the KMT and PFP together have a majority of some 114 seats in the Legislative Yuan (against some 100 seats for the DPP and TSU together), the ticket has major weaknesses:

First, Mr. Lien Chan himself: he is a most boring politician, who lacks any charisma: in the 2000 elections he came in a distant third with only some 23% of the

vote, in spite of the fact that he was the appointed successor of former President Lee Teng-hui and the fact that the KMT had ample financial resources. In addition, Mr. Lien Chan has alienated himself from the Taiwanese mainstream by steering the KMT away from the "Taiwan First" policy of former President Lee, towards a policy of kowtowing to China.

Second, Mr. James Soong: while Mr. Soong has ample charisma – at some 36% of the vote he came in a close second in the 2000 Presidential elections – he has several major skeletons in his closet. Firstly, the Chung Hsing Bills Finance scandal, and secondly, the even more recent indications that Mr. Soong was the recipient of some US\$ 400 million in connection with the sale of four Lafayette-class frigates in the early 1990s.

Copyright: Taipei Times



The Lien-Soong hot air balloon: "We can all fly high if we work together."

The Chung Hsing scandal referred to the Chung Hsing Bank, where some US\$ 36 million were found in account of Mr. Soong and his family, reportedly stashed away KMT Party funds and election campaign donations. Part of the funds apparently found its way to the United States, where Soong's family had purchased expensive real estate in the San Francisco Bay area. The matter came to light during the 2000 election campaign. Prosecutors did charge Mr. Soong, but the case got bogged down in political wrangling.

Mr. Soong's second major skeleton came to light very recently: in an interview with the French newspaper **Le Figaro** on 2 March 2003, former French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas stated that in 1991, US\$ 400 million was paid to the "secretariat-general of the party in power in Taipei" and US\$ 100 million to the central committee of the Chinese Communist party in Beijing – the latter amount presumably to reduce Beijing's opposition to the sale.

When the news of Mr. Dumas' statement received front-page attention in Taipei, Mr. Soong of course played innocent, and started to accuse the news media of slandering him.

Below are two editorials from the Taipei Times, one on Mr. Lien Chan and the other on Mr. Soong.

Lien Chan more quisling than quixotic

This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 2 April 2003

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During the KMT's national congress on Sunday, 30 March 2003, Chairman Lien Chan said that if he were elected president next year he would embark on a "journey of peace" to China, which would result in "equitable interaction" and "win-win cooperation" between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. During the last presidential campaign, Lien said he would like to go back to Xian, his birthplace, to revisit his childhood memories. Now that he has reiterated his wish to visit China, he should not be afraid of being labeled as a "unificationist" during the election campaign. But why does he have to wait to visit his birthplace. He could go now.

Even if Lien wins next year's election, we are curious about what kind of "equitable interaction" and "win-win cooperation" his proposed visit can bring to the people of Taiwan. Is Beijing likely to interact equitably with Taiwan?

Beijing has long made it clear since the days of Deng Xiaoping that, in the “one country, two systems” framework, Taiwan’s leaders could only become the PRC’s deputy heads of state or vice chairmen of the Chinese Communist Party. Former premier Hau Pei-sun, during his term in office, even used the idea of “one country, two governments” as a trial balloon to test Beijing’s attitude toward equitable interaction with Taiwan. Beijing immediately rejected the proposal, putting the Greater China advocate Hau in an embarrassing position. No one has ever mentioned the idea since.

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Remember, Beijing has always been willing to sacrifice Taiwanese lives. After the 921 earthquake, Beijing insisted that international aid and rescue teams could only go to Taiwan with its approval. Chinese authorities have not only tried to hide its cases of what is now called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) from its own people and the outside world, but continues to obstruct World Health Organization personnel from going either to Kuantung Province — the suspected ground zero of the disease — or to Taiwan.



Pan-blue political marriage: "Now we just have to wait for the auspicious hour to lift the bridal veil."

In fact, within Beijing’s “one China” framework, it is impossible for it to allow the two sides of the Strait to coexist as two equal governments — because this means there will be two Chinas. Beijing has always opposed the “two Chinas” model and the “one China and one Taiwan” model.

Therefore, Lien’s talk of Taiwan and China getting along with each other on an equal basis is just wishful thinking.

Lien said that a “division-of-labor” structure is now gradually forming between the two sides, as local businesses keep their management and headquarters in this country while moving their production and operations to China. He also claimed that the government can create a win-win situation if it upholds its policy of “active opening, effective management.” But where do Taiwanese workers fit into this picture? Who can be sure that rising unemployment will ease after Taiwanese industries relocate to China en masse?

Nobody could blame Lien if he were simply stating his personal views about China. He would merely be ridiculed as a modern-day Don Quixote. But he will certainly be suspected of carrying out a “journey of surrender” if he claims to represent the Taiwanese people when visiting China. After all, when a president full of unrealistic ideas visits Beijing and claims to represent mainstream opinion in talks with Chinese, who would not be worried that he would be selling out his own country?

James Soong: follow the money

*This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 03 March 2003
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The latest accusations about James Soong claim he was the recipient of US\$400 million in kickbacks from the French company Thomson CSF in return for Taiwan’s purchase of six Lafayette frigates in 1991. This paper has never made any secret of its doubts about Soong’s honesty; there are still far too many unresolved questions concerning the Chunghsing Bills Finance scandal for that — the property investments in California, why Soong told so many different stories, why he would put money in a bank account in his son’s name ...

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But we do not expect that even Soong is capable of pocketing US\$400 million himself. If the allegations by former French foreign minister Roland Dumas turn out to be true, then it is a fair assumption that Soong was simply the bagman, the man who picked up the kickback money to then spread it around among the many outstretched sweaty palms of the KMT. The frigate scandal was a scam on such a huge scale that there are probably few in the upper echelons of the KMT at the time who did not have their snouts in the Thomson trough.



People's First Party: "Help, the Dumas missile has locked onto our chairman Soong."

In this sense then, the Dumas allegations do not so much impugn Soong's good name -
- partly of course because he doesn't have one, but we will let that pass for the moment
-- as much as they remind us that the Lafayette scandal has still never been fully dealt with.

Almost a year ago Minister of Defense Tang Yao-ming told the legislature's defense committee that the ongoing rumors, suspicions and allegations were a burden for the military and that this issue needed to be settled. We also saw, last year, some navy officers charged with corruption over the Lafayette deal. But these were small fry, certainly not the main recipients of US\$400 million of French largesse.

A Control Yuan report was released almost exactly a year ago. At the time we were told that it was comprehensive and was being forwarded to the Supreme Court Prosecutor General's Office. We looked forward to some major indictments being handed down. What we saw last year were a number of lower-level officers accused of not following the proper bureaucratic procedures. This seems to be putting the flimsy cart of how paper pushers pushed paper before the rather muscular equine of, as Deep Throat so memorably advised, following the money.

The Lafayette scandal is not a military scandal, it is a political scandal. The decision to buy the frigates was taken at the highest government levels. The money paid by Thomson was not given to obscure military officers. It was given to a very senior official; the secretary-general of the ruling party, says Dumas, thereby fingering Soong. Perhaps he means the secretary-general of some other branch of government — the Cabinet or the Presidential Office, says the PFP. After all, they reason with nauseating condescension, he's French, maybe he doesn't know Taiwan's system.

Well, maybe he doesn't, which is why it is important now to send a team to France to interview Dumas and find out exactly what he knows and how he knows it. But it is clear from his remarks that the payments were funneled through a very senior official and were destined for the highest levels of government. And remember, this is not French money, it is our money.

The cost of the bribes were simply appended to the bill for the frigates to be paid by Taiwan taxpayers. What it involves is a breach of trust at the highest level. Yet no officials have even been named let alone charged as a result of the so-called investigation. Why is the DPP government so averse to pushing this case? We can understand why the KMT wouldn't want a real investigation. But who exactly is the DPP trying to protect?

VP Annette Lu bowing out?

While the dust was still being kicked up in the “blue-camp”, on the DPP-side a possible change in the ticket was indicated by Vice-President Annette Lu, who announced on 23 March 2003 that she would be bowing out of a second term, “... if the President can find a candidate who is more qualified.”

The president subsequently stated that a decision on a vice-presidential candidate would not be made until the Fall of 2003, and that priority should be given to discussions on the economy and fighting SARS.

In the following days, several possible candidates were mentioned in the press: Ms. Tsai Ing-wen, the eloquent and highly capable head of the Mainland Affairs Council is reportedly the favorite of the DPP’s New Tide faction, while the charismatic Taipei County Commissioner Su Chen-chang is reportedly also making a good chance.

Also mentioned is Prof. Chen Shih-meng, the former secretary-general to the President, who is himself of mainland-Chinese descent but at the same time a strong supporter of Taiwan’s full and equal membership in the international community.

DPP officials said the vice presidential candidate would only be announced some time in autumn.

China relations

During the past few months, the Taiwan Strait has been relatively quiet. International attention was focused on developments elsewhere. China itself was going through a significant leadership change, had its 16th People’s Congress of the Communist Party, and fell into the grip of the SARS epidemic.

In the meantime Taiwan — although not untouched by SARS and the economic doldrums – started to become much more self-assured in its international outlook. President Chen himself took a much firmer position vis-à-vis China on a number of issues: China’s military threat, its attempts to isolate Taiwan internationally, economic

ties, and SARS. The Foreign Ministry in Taipei under the new foreign minister Eugene Chien took a much more activist approach than his lackadaisical predecessor Tien Hung-mao, and mounted a strong campaign for Taiwan's membership in the WHO.

Below are two articles, which reflect the new approach: one of Taiwan's name, and one on the dangers of investing in China.

Why not call this nation "Taiwan"

*By Ng Chiau-tong, chairman of World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI).
This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 11 April 2003
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The name of a nation is a symbol of that nation, which is why every nation exerts great effort to find a representative name.

Some nations, however, have chosen both long and cumbersome names, which is the reason why the international community simply uses the geographic part of the name to designate such nations. "Venezuela" is short for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, "Guyana" for the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, or "Brazil" for the Federative Republic of Brazil. Of course, the names of some nations with already short names get further abbreviated, like "Peru" for the Republic of Peru. The Japanese name for its nation is "State of Japan," three characters in Japanese, but when taking an English name, the Japanese themselves abbreviated it to only one word, "Japan."

Regardless of a nation's domestic political situation, the most common addition to national names throughout the world is the word "Republic." Even if the common word "Republic" is the only addition to a geographical name, making it very easy to pronounce, the international community still finds it too long and cumbersome and only uses the geographical name. Sometimes these names are geographical names that have become national names, and sometimes it is the other way around.

Many nations have used a single word as the name of their nation from the day they were founded. Not only does this make it easy for them to pronounce the name of their own nation, but it also provides them with a high level of international name recognition. India and Malaysia are two examples of a total of 23 nations around the world that have adopted this approach.

There was almost immediate controversy over the union of states known as “Serbia and Montenegro” because it is unabbreviateable and therefore quite unwieldy for writers and governments. What if the disputed territory “South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands” were to become independent by some twist of fate? Such an island-state would have the world’s longest name.

Some countries call themselves republics, but are actually dictatorships, such as the Republic of Iraq. Leaving out the word “Republic” from the national name, simply using a geographical name, does not harm national dignity, which is well exemplified by such proud nations as Canada, Singapore, Australia and Ireland.

Even though the question of a nation’s name is a solemn and serious issue, there is nothing shameful in changing the name of a nation. Ceylon, for example, changed its name to Sri Lanka, and Burma changed its to Myanmar. Mongolia has changed its name from Greater Mongolia to the People’s Republic of Mongolia, before, in 1992, becoming Mongolia.

“China” is used as the abbreviation of both the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and

the Republic of China (ROC), while both sides reject the idea of two Chinas, saying that there is only one. Suppose that we could advance to the point where the idea of “two Chinas” becomes acceptable to both sides. Which of the “two China” would be larger? The ROC today still includes Mongolia in its territory! The fact that both the PRC and the ROC are called China in English corroborates the fact that there is only one China. The former has a people, the latter doesn’t, i.e., the ROC is a people-less China.

So how should we deal with the Chinese republic on Taiwan? The ROC on Taiwan, the Republic of China on Taiwan, the ROC (Taiwan), or Taiwan ROC? There are in fact quite a few different names that would be appropriate for Taiwan. Why not the “Republic of Taiwan?” Or just “Taiwan?”

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Bankrupt Taiwanese business: *"This miracle lake doesn't seem to answer my prayers, no matter how many coins I toss in."*

Only losers still think of investing in China

By Prof. Chen Lung-chu, chairman of the Taiwan New Century Foundation

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 16 April 2003

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As the world's economies become increasingly interdependent, Taiwan has now established a partnership with the international economic system. Maintaining competitiveness and employing relatively cheap Chinese labor have therefore become crucial for many Taiwanese businesspeople.

In recent years, the number of Taiwanese businesspeople doing business in China has risen inexorably. Taiwan has become one of the major sources of China's foreign capital. As the Chinese economy rapidly grows, we should not ignore the trend that China is gradually replacing Taiwan's role in the international community.

In particular, since Taiwan entered the WTO last year, it has experienced the pressures of globalization even more acutely. The country also faces political localization, industrial transformation and changes to the external environment. Moreover, the local media have excessively glorified China, making quite a few Taiwanese lose confidence in their nation's economy. They think highly of the rise of a Chinese economic superpower and look down on the economic development of Taiwan.

A lot of foreign capital that had been flowing into Taiwan is now going to China as a result of the changes to the world economic system. But this does not mean that this country has no chance to further prosper. We should not lose confidence in ourselves because of short-term economic phenomena. It would be wrong to judge the nation's future based on short-term economic prosperity and ignore other elements of social development — such as freedom, democracy and the popularization of knowledge — which can take a long time to achieve.

Taiwan and China are two different societies in terms of social development. Taiwan's society today is a free, diverse and open one, and people have the "right to know." Many structural problems can be solved through democratic mechanisms. Its social development is therefore relatively stable.

China is not yet a democratic country. The Chinese government can still control the dissemination of news and restrict the circulation of information through the state

apparatus. No news is not always good news. The future development of China is unpredictable. The people of Taiwan should never be fooled by its beautiful illusion.

Taiwan has to know both itself and its major competitors to face the challenges from China and of globalization. Competition is now for capital, technologies and talent rather than for traditional products. In other words, the nation needs to keep up in the race for global resources to en-sure its economic development.

Taiwan should not covet China's relatively low production costs. Instead, it has to strive to upgrade its industries and technologies, and to cultivate more talent. This is the best way to ensure the nation's sustainable development. The current economic downturn is just temporary. Taiwan's economy will find its way if we have hope and confidence, and strive for it with one heart.

The Iraq war

A retrospective

When our previous issue of Taiwan Communiqué went to press in early March 2003, the Iraq war had not even started yet. It eventually erupted around March 20th and was finished by April 10th. Within some three weeks, the United States and Britain showed the world their military might and removed Saddam Hussein from power.

From the Taiwanese perspective, we voiced two concerns: that China might take advantage of the confusion and move against Taiwan, or that the US – in an attempt to get Chinese support in the UN for its position in Iraq – might trade away part of the existing security guarantees for Taiwan. Neither concern was warranted: China was too busy with its power transition and with SARS, and the Bush Administration specifically stated in mid-March that it would not sacrifice an inch of its support for Taiwan in exchange for any support from China for the military campaign against Iraq.

As it happened, China strongly opposed the US-British intervention in Iraq, arguing that it could only take place if approved by the UN Security Council. This is rather ironic, because China itself is threatening Taiwan, and is not waiting for any approval by the UN. In fact it consistently refuses to submit its long-running political feud with Taiwan to any international body.

The Iraq war also brought to light that the two pro-unification parties in Taiwan, the Kuomintang and the Peoples First Party, slavishly toed the Beijing line and suddenly became very “anti-war” and anti-US. Indeed, they started to accuse Chen Shui-bian’s DPP administration of being a puppet of the United States. Like many other nations in Europe and Asia, Taiwan had expressed its political support for the US-British campaign to root out one of the prime sources of international terrorism.

Below are two articles related to the Iraq war.

Recognizing China for what it isn’t

By Prof. Parris Chang, member of the Legislative Yuan

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 10 April 2003

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The strong suspicion among pan-blue politicians of the government’s support for the US’ military action to liberate Iraq is an echo of Beijing’s concerns.

The Chinese government’s stance has consistently been to oppose the US. It didn’t support a UN Security Council resolution by the US, the UK and Spain proposing military action against Iraq, and even hinted at using its veto. On March 20, after hostilities began, Beijing demanded that the US cease its military action at once.



Pan-blue camp in Taiwan toeing the China line.

There are two main reasons why Beijing is opposed to US military action. First, it does

not want to see the US become exceedingly powerful, a single strong power in control of the whole Middle East. Second, it worries that the US will use its neo-interventionist policies as an excuse to intervene in any future Chinese military action against Taiwan.

Particularly noteworthy, however, is that, even though China opposes the US, it does so gently, without working against the US as fiercely as do France or Russia. China is

clearly straddling the fence in the hope that it will be able to maintain a friendly relationship with the US. It is also restricting anti-war demonstrations by university students and foreigners. As a result, US President George W. Bush has called former president Jiang Zemin — now chairman of the Central Military Commission — and Chinese President Hu Jintao to express his gratitude.

Some people in Taiwan worry about the US taking military action against Iraq without UN authorization, since China might follow its example and invade Taiwan. They equate China with the US and discuss Taiwan and Iraq in the same breath, which is a very strange kind of logic. Did Mao Zedong and Jiang obtain UN agreement when Mao bombarded Kinmen in 1958 and when Jiang ordered missiles to be fired at Taiwan in 1996?

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has used all his armed might to invade another country and he has used biological and chemical weapons against his own people. What could be the motives of Taiwan's intellectuals and media when they discuss this nation in the same breath as the extremely evil Saddam? In fact, if China opposes US use of military force to solve this conflict, how could it justify its unwillingness to give up the option to use military force against Taiwan?

China also differs from the US in its approach to the North Korean nuclear issue. Washington has pressed China to use its influence with Pyongyang in order to stop it from manufacturing nuclear weapons. Until now, however, it seems China does not want, or is unable, to do so, something which has created deep disappointment and resentment in Washington. Beijing insists on bilateral talks and negotiations between the US and North Korea, and has even used its veto power in the UN Security Council to block debate regarding Pyongyang's violations of international treaties and its expulsion of the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors, thereby rendering the world body totally ineffective.

Beijing is pressing the US to handle the Iraq issue through the Security Council. So why doesn't it want to go through the UN when it comes to North Korea? Isn't it contradictory to merely want bilateral negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang?

Some people in Taiwan constantly worry that Washington will lean towards China because the US is in great need of Chinese assistance when it comes to the Iraqi and North Korean issues, and that this would be disadvantageous to this nation. Such worries are unnecessary, since there is currently no way in which Beijing could assist the US in these issues to the extent that the US, apart from being grateful, would sacrifice Taiwan to reward China for its help.

In an interview with Taiwanese media on March 25, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Randy Shriver said that regardless of whether it was a matter of public support, substantive contributions or participation in future reconstruction work in Iraq, he was grateful for Taiwan's straightforwardness and friendship with the US.

He also said, "Even if China tries to pressure the US, we will not give in. The US will continue to respect the promises made to Taiwan in the Taiwan Relations Act. This isn't something that China can change."

When Shriver gave this interview, the US government had already sent the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier battle group to the East Asian seas. This is a very important signal to Pyongyang and Beijing that the US is not neglecting security in the East Asia.

Beijing's biggest headache is whether the US will adopt strict measures towards North Korea (including use of military force) after the war in Iraq has ended if Pyongyang does not heed Beijing's exhortations and instead continues to produce nuclear weapons and conduct missile tests, thus further heightening international tension.

What would Beijing do should the US decide to take military action against North Korea? Sit by and watch as its formerly close ally is subjected to military sanctions, thus losing a buffer country? Or will it once again oppose the US, assist North Korea and engage the Americans in war, as it did in the 1950s?

Having a willful rogue nation as neighbor and friend is a burden that China could do without.

Time to think of alternatives to the UN

By Paul Lin, a political commentator based in New York

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 27 March 2003

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War is never a good thing because it causes extreme privation and damages material and spiritual civilization. Yet there are times when war is unavoidable. The Iraq problem didn't develop overnight but has dragged on since 1991 because Iraq has frequently violated UN resolutions and has secretly developed weapons of mass destruction.

Every time a problem arises, the UN depends on the US to act as a “global policeman” before Iraq will begin to toe the line. But Iraq always reverts to its former behavior. This time they were cooperating with UN weapons inspectors only because they had been squeezed like a tube of toothpaste by intense US military pressure.

Without completely disarming the country and changing President Saddam Hussein’s regime, there will be no solution to the problem. The UN has been powerless to solve the problem for over a decade. Now, is it not turning a blind eye on Saddam’s evil-doing by hindering US actions? Moreover, the US declared war on terrorism after Sept. 11. Naturally, rogue states that fail to turn over a new leaf will become targets. Iraq is just one of these states.

The powerlessness of the UN is hardly limited to its performance on the Iraq problem. Does the UN really love peace so much? When China fired missiles into the Taiwan Strait, threatening to first destroy Taiwan and then rebuild it, did the UN step up and make any statements? Why didn’t they urge Beijing to patiently use political means to solve the problem? What has the UN done to safeguard the rights of Taiwan’s 23 million people or ensure that they

are free of the terror stemming from China’s military threat?

The UN has drafted two international human rights treaties, but what measures has it ever taken against those signatories that subsequently violated the treaties? China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and has long trampled on human rights. What can the UN do? In recent years, China has intensified its efforts to suppress religion, especially by brutally handling Falung Gong practitioners, yet after a visit to Beijing, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he understood Beijing’s actions. Is the UN not thus aiding a tyrant?

Even more strangely, the US, a country founded on principles of human rights, was once expelled from the UN Commission on Human Rights, while Libya, a country with



PRC government preventing Chinese people from seeing how dictators can be toppled.

an abysmal human rights record and numerous ties to terrorists, is the current chairman of the commission.

Confronted with Slobodan Milosevic's genocidal atrocities in Kosovo, the UN was also unable to act. In the end, it was necessary to depend on NATO, and NATO depended on the US, to apply military force to stop Milosevic and send him to the war crimes tribunal at The Hague.

The UN's indifference toward and even suppression of Taiwan is a well-known fact. Annan must bear some of the responsibility for this. Refusing to allow Taiwanese media organizations to report from within the UN completely disregards the principle of press freedom. If there is any representative of the Taiwanese media at all, it is only the World Journal, which is registered in the US. These restrictions weren't just imposed after the DPP came to power. It was like this early on in the KMT era and it stems from China's animosity toward Taiwan.

Since the UN is so impotent, its functions grow less relevant by the day. It is going the way of the League of Nations. Countries that uphold the universal values of freedom and human rights should step forward to form a new international organization to replace the UN and create a new world order. The US should lead this movement. Of course, at the beginning, the UN need not be discarded completely. It can be replaced gradually.

Report from Washington

US Congress supports Taiwan into WHO

On 01 May 2003, the US Senate unanimously passed legislation supporting Taiwan's participation in the WHO, "authorizing the U.S. Secretary of State (1) to initiate a United States plan to endorse and obtain observer status for Taiwan at the annual week-long summit of the World Health Assembly in May 2003 in Geneva, Switzerland; and (2) to instruct the United States delegation to Geneva to implement that plan."

The bill, originally introduced in the House on 29 January 2003, by Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), with 29 co-sponsors presses the Bush Administration to strengthen its efforts to obtain meaningful participation by Taiwan in international organizations. It unanimously passed the House on 11 March 2003 in a 414-0 vote.

The legislation (S.243) also notes Taiwan's achievements in the field of health — including “one of the highest life expectancy levels in Asia, maternal and infant mortality rates comparable to those of western countries, [and] the eradication of such infectious diseases as cholera, smallpox, and the plague.”

S. 243 also credits Taiwan with being the first country in Asia to “eradicate polio and provide children with hepatitis B vaccinations.”

Chinese spy in the FBI

On 9 April 2003, the US authorities in California arrested Chinese-American businesswoman Katrina Leung. She was charged with possession of classified documents and working as a spy for the Chinese Ministry of State Security, the prime foreign intelligence service.

She had been working as an informant to the FBI, but turned out to be a double agent, passing on highly sensitive documents to Beijing. She and her FBI contact, James J. Smith, had a 20-year affair, during which time Leung accessed the classified information. The FBI paid Leung about \$1.7 million for her 20 years of service. Her intelligence asset code-name was “Parlor Maid.”

For many years, Mrs. Leung had been active in American politics, ingraining herself in the Republican party and in the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, where she even served as a director and board member. She lived in San Marino, one of the wealthiest suburbs of Los Angeles. During visits of high Chinese officials, such as Premier Zhu Rongji or President Jiang Zemin she often acted as coordinator, and during official luncheons or dinners sat at the head table with the Chinese visitors.

The **New York Times** reports that Leung apparently compromised the highly sensitive nuclear espionage investigation into nuclear scientist Peter Lee by exposing the identities of two FBI agents working on the case to Beijing.

In an editorial on 1 May 2003 titled “*Another Spy Fiasco*”, the **Washington Post** asks if Mrs. Leung also played a compromising role in the famous case against Los Alamos scientist Lee Wen-ho, who was charged with illegally removing nuclear weapon secrets from his Los Alamos computers, and providing information to China. The case against Mr. Lee eventually got bogged down, and he was released in October 2000.

A farewell to our readers

We regret to inform our readers that *Taiwan Communiqué* will suspend publication after the current issue. But from time to time, we will do special issues on occasions of new developments that warrant additional attention.

When we started publishing *Taiwan Communiqué* in 1980, we did not expect that it would last for the next 24 years.

Taiwan Communiqué was born in the wake of the Kaohsiung Incident. In December 1979, when the news reached us in Seattle that all leaders of the democratic opposition were arrested, we were galvanized into action and decided to put out an English-language publication. The driving force behind our action was our concern for the political prisoners in Taiwan, and the urgent need to inform the American Congress and the international community that Taiwan was essentially a police state under martial law and the KMT authorities trampled human rights.

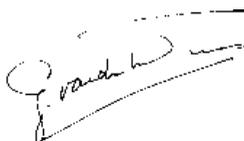
In the course of the 1980s and early 1990s, we were pleased to see that Taiwan underwent a gradual transformation into a democracy. And we shifted our focus to Taiwan's international position by calling attention to the military and political threat from China, and urging the international community to accept Taiwan as a full and equal member in the family of nations.

While this task has by far not been accomplished because Taiwan is still politically isolated, there is now a fully democratically elected government that speaks for the island's 23 million people, and strives for international recognition. There is also a vibrant English-language press on the island -- such as the **Taipei Times** and the **Taiwan News** -- which speak eloquently about current events.

Finally we want to express our sincere thanks to friends and supporters who made our publication possible through their generous donations during the past 24 years. The most rewarding experience for us was the opportunity to get to know so many close friends, who have offered encouragement and moral support throughout the years.

We no longer accept donations and will use the remaining funds for the above-mentioned special issues.

Gerrit van der Wees and Mei-chin Chen
Editors



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Taiwan Communiqué supports a free, democratic, and independent Taiwan, and campaigns for full and equal membership of Taiwan in the international community, including a seat in the UN.

Please support our activities with your contributions.

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