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## TAEF UPDATES

The 2020 April Issue of TAEF Quarterly Has Recently Published



This issue focuses on the 550,000 strong new immigrants in Taiwan who account for 1/23 of the country's population. Titled "1/23: The Southeast Asian Faces that Enrich the Taiwanese Society," the cover story of this issue captures how the new immigrants change the social and cultural landscapes in Taiwan. The new immigrants, nonetheless, had experienced the indifference and discrimination in the last two decades, which is also a prevalent phenomenon in other societies facing clashes between local residents and newcomers. In recent years, the role and contribution of the new immigrants have been fairly recognized. The government and civil society take action to promote mutual respect and inclusiveness across all members of society. As President Tsai once said, "No matter where you came from, we later became a family and Taiwan became your motherland soon after you landed on the Taiwanese soil."

*Read more in Chinese*

## TAEF COMMENTARIES

*The Diplomat*

### How China Is Remaking the UN In Its Own Image

- Tung Cheng-Chia, Assistant Research Fellow, TAEF

-Dr. Alan H. Yang, Executive Director, TAEF

*Tuesday, April 9, 2020*

The optimism of neoliberalism has been challenged by rising concerns about China playing a more active role in the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies. Currently, four of the 15 UN specialized agencies are headed by Chinese nationals, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDP), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). And with its contribution rising to 12 percent of the UN regular budget, passing Japan at 8.5 percent, China is currently the second-largest monetary contributor to the UN.

China's greater leadership role in the United States has triggered the suspicion that it might take advantage to transform the organizations in ways that fit its interests. The suspicion about China's expanding role in the UN has solid foundations, as Beijing has been assimilating its grand geopolitical agenda, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), into the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), silencing the critics of its human rights record, providing monetary incentives to secure the support of other member states, and bringing more of its nationals into the UN.

China's attempts to make the UN a tool for achieving its hegemonic ambition would erode the institution's trustworthiness from within and render international cooperation parochial. As a consequence, China's approach to international cooperation would defeat the UN's purpose to settle distributional conflicts since, very soon, other stakeholders would realize that cooperation is a cloak for advancing China's national interests.

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## NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY NEWS

### *Focus Taiwan*

## Taiwan to Donate over 1 Million Masks to New Southbound Countries

*Tuesday, April 7, 2020*

Taiwan is planning to donate another round of surgical face masks overseas, this time with over a million pieces going to several countries targeted by the government's New Southbound Policy (NSP), as well as other countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) announced Tuesday.

At a press briefing in Taipei, the head of MOFA's Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Baushuan Ger, said the masks will be sent to about seven to eight NSP countries that have recently asked for help from Taiwan, as well as countries outside of the Asia-Pacific region.

The surgical masks will be provided primarily to healthcare workers in these countries to assist them in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, Ger said.

An official familiar with the matter, who asked not to be named, told CNA that the countries will include Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Myanmar and Indonesia.

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### *The ASAN Forum*

## Second Chance to Boost Ties in Tsai's Second Term

*Monday, April 6, 2020*

**T**sai Ing-wen's return to power in Taiwan in January 2020 means that her flagship New Southbound Policy (NSP) is here to stay. President Tsai's long-term vision to integrate Taiwan with the most dynamic countries in Asia, extending all the way to South Asia, and her comeback, offers a renewed opportunity to boost Indo-Taiwan relations. Her previous stint showed the potential of cooperation especially in economics. With India's recent disappointing economic growth news, the country stands to gain even more from a deeper relationship with Taiwan's economy since the two economies hold important complementarities.

Taiwan's NSP also offers a range of cooperative areas beyond trade and investment, including human capital, smart cities, agricultural development and health care, all high on Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's agenda. On healthcare, Taiwan is proving to be a standout model in the way the current coronavirus pandemic has been handled and seemingly abated on its soil. While geopolitics and foreign policy mindsets continue to limit New Delhi, India's prospects to boost relations in Tsai's second term may be higher as historic obstacles seem to be loosening.

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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

*The Diplomat*

**What's Next for US-ASEAN Cooperation Amid the Global Coronavirus Pandemic?**

*April 8, 2020*

**T**he United States and countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held a high-level conference on the global

*Nikkei Asian Review*

**Coronavirus Challenges Southeast Asia's Fragile Democracies**

*April 2, 2020*

**T**he pictures on social media showed three men armed with assault rifles guarding the entrance to a convenience store in the Thai beach resort of

*South China Morning Post*

**Coronavirus Tsunami Could Drown Southeast Asia, with its Effects Rippling across the Globe**

*March 30, 2020*

**I**n Southeast Asia, a region of some 655 million people, a humanitarian catastrophe looms as the

coronavirus pandemic on April 1. Though this was just one of several interactions between the two sides in this regard, it nonetheless spotlighted one area on which Washington and Southeast Asian states have been looking to advance collaboration amid a crisis and the opportunities and challenges in this respect.

While U.S.-ASEAN relations have continued to functionally advance over the past few years under the mechanism of a strategic partnership institutionalized during the presidency of Barack Obama, multilateral engagement has encountered some challenges under U.S. President Donald Trump, despite occasional advances made bilaterally. The coronavirus pandemic has served as a test for how Washington and Southeast Asian states can cooperate amid a crisis.

U.S. assistance with coronavirus has focused on longstanding areas of emphasis that are still continuing amid COVID-19, including assistance to individual countries and ASEAN covering preparedness, diagnostic

Pattaya after thieves were reported to have stolen cash from a similar store. This is a scene that could become more common around Southeast Asia as strict measures aimed at combating the COVID-19 virus start to impact on employment and livelihoods.

Understandably, the focus of governments in the region is on stemming the spread of the virus, which has infected more than 7,000 people in the 10 ASEAN states, with many more cases likely to be confirmed.

There are two trends already evident in how the health crisis may impact on the politics and governance of the region over the longer term: the undermining of centralized authority and the increasing influence of the military.

In Indonesia, strains have appeared between central government in Jakarta and the provinces. In the province of Papua local authorities came under pressure from the community to close the airport, which they have

Covid-19 pandemic advances and economies falter.

As China – the region’s largest trading partner – shut down in January and February, inputs for the region’s manufacturing and construction industries dried up. Factories and projects slowed or stopped, laying off thousands of workers. Exports have been stuck in Chinese ports.

Tourism is also a major source of jobs and wealth – 20 per cent of national income, for example, in Thailand and the Philippines. China is the region’s largest source of inbound tourists.

These supply and external demand shocks for Southeast Asia’s export-oriented industries will ease over time if China is able to restart its economy. But it remains far from clear whether China’s recovery will be V- or U-shaped, and demand elsewhere in the global economy will surely remain subdued for some time to come.

Southeast Asia’s partners need to be speaking up now, adding their voices to that of the World

capabilities, and exchange programs; the provision of expertise, training, and human capital via a range of agencies such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and prior support for regional organizations such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization which have also been involved in managing aspects of the pandemic.

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now done.

Hard-pressed to deploy the machinery of civilian government effectively, Widodo has turned to the military. The new head of the country's COVID-19 task force, Doni Monardo, is a retired special forces general. In Jakarta, the city's military commander is leading the medical care effort. As the Jakarta Post wryly observed: "Having clung to power or revolved around it for most of the nation's history, former military figures are able to tap into the ample resources of a well-established network of influence."


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Health Organisation and urging regional governments to move more quickly and more aggressively to contain the spread of the virus and strengthen frontline medical responses.

Wherever possible, Southeast Asia's development partners must continue to work with regional countries and the World Health Organisation to identify and respond to critical medical shortages. Expert advice on containment measures and support for public health bodies will be valuable.

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