

ATT: MICHAEL HAYES

## LETTERS

## Independence

As publisher of the independent newspaper, *Cambodia Daily*, I was pleased to read (belatedly) your article highlighting our efforts to create a free press in Cambodia [Muzzled, Dec. 24]. I must note, however, one serious error that might imply we are not as independent as we are.

You state that the newspaper "receives financial help from various Japanese concerns" and was "started with the support of two non-government organizations." I would like to point out that the only financial assistance we receive from Japanese organizations comes in the form of advertising. We have never solicited, received nor accepted any cash from anyone. All financial income is derived from advertising and circulation. The losses, which currently range between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a month, are cheerfully absorbed by myself—out of lifetime savings aimed to establish just such a newspaper. The two "non-government organizations" you mention, American Assistance for Cambodia and Japan Relief for Cambodia, are small foundations directed solely by my wife and myself. Funds donated to these foundations are used only to support a charity hospital, orphanage and training programme at the University of Phnom Penh.

The Cambodian government has not recognized *Cambodia Daily* as an NGO, and so it does not derive any benefit that may come from such status. Our staff are not considered NGO personnel; we pay for their visas. A printing press we brought in was taxed \$40,000, which I paid myself. We do receive, and accept, the generous support of various news organizations to publish their news in our newspaper, and we have not refused occasional gifts of old computers, printers and software—goods in kind. But that's it. This keeps us totally independent and able to print the news without fear or favour.

BERNARD KRISHER  
Publisher  
*Cambodia Daily*  
Tokyo

## Taiwanese Intervention

I strongly agree with the description of Taiwan's current economic policy you provided in *Tunnel Vision* [Mar. 11]. Nevertheless, I wish that you had made more explicit the fact that the Kuomintang's economic policy has been driven substantially by considerations of election results.

Taiwan suffers from what I call the

"election trap" in its economic policy-making—a trend whereby before and during an election the ruling party becomes fixated on short-term benefits at the expense of long-term ones. Thus, the party doles out favours to special interest groups and implements voter-pleasing measures.

To be sure, Taiwan's economic woes have been caused by the regional economic crisis. But problems certainly have been aggravated by the KMT's short-term political consideration. This argument is supported by the nature and timing of the government's recent policies. For example, just before the December elections the government attempted to prop up the share market with a stabilization fund. If I am right, the KMT will implement more of these kinds of policies in the run-up to the presidential election. But the problem with such policies is that ultimately they may seriously damage the economy in the medium to long term, because piecemeal interventionism does not address Taiwan's structural problems.

JIN-KYU JOUNG  
Chicago

## Organizers

In *Time Out of Mind* [Intelligence, Mar. 18], you state that "the conservative Heritage Foundation" will hold a conference on the 20th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act in Washington on April 14. This important meeting, at which the current United States administration will be represented, along with a wide range of other participants, is in fact sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute as well as the Heritage Foundation.

ARTHUR WALDRON  
Director of Asian Studies  
American Enterprise Institute  
Washington

## Corrections

*Tunnel Vision* [Mar. 11] incorrectly stated that Taiwan's insider-trading law has been abolished.

*The Same Old Dreams* [Focus, Mar. 25] should have identified Sino-Infrastructure as a British construction and investment company.

All letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number and are subject to editing. By mail: Review, GPO Box 160, Hong Kong; By fax: (852) 2503 1530; By e-mail: letters@feer.com

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