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MEDICAL SUPPLIES FROM CHINA BEGIN ARRIVING IN NEW YORK

The first planeload of health care supplies to fight the coronavirus has arrived in New York from Shanghai. The shipment, which included 130,000 N95 masks, 1.8 million other face masks and gowns, 10.3 million gloves and 70,000 thermometers, was the first of about twenty that will land in the U.S. from China through early April. The flights are part of a public-private partnership dubbed Project Airbridge in which private American health care companies purchase the supplies and the Federal Emergency Management Agency pay for the flights. Most of the supplies will go to FEMA in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut and other hot spots. (NPR, March 29, 2020)

TAIWAN DONATES TWO MILLION HOSPITAL MASKS TO U.S.

Taiwan has donated two million hospital masks to the U.S. to help fight the coronavirus; half for the federal government, and the rest to be divided among the states. "These supplies will go to medical workers on the front lines who are working around the clock to save lives," said Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen. Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO) said: "I would like to thank all of Taiwan on behalf of the medical professionals in Colorado who desperately need the masks that Taiwan is graciously donating. Taiwan is more than willing to help the world beat the COVID-19 pandemic, and this incredible act of generosity is further reason that Taiwan should be granted observer status at the WHO."

For its part, China's Foreign Ministry warned Taipei that: "If the Taiwan region can and wants to help, I believe we are all glad to see it. But if anyone in Taiwan seeks to politicize the pandemic, I would advise them to think twice." Taiwan launched a rapid-response plan in January, when its officials began suspecting that their counterparts in Beijing were not being candid about the virus. "They didn't let us see what they didn't want us to see, but our experts sensed the situation was not optimistic," said Taipei's government spokesperson. (*Washington Examiner*, April 1, 2020)

TRUMP SIGNS TAIPEI ACT

President Trump has signed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act (the TAIPEI Act) into law. The bipartisan legislation, which passed both chambers of the U.S. Congress unanimously, aims to discourage Taiwan's diplomatic allies from cutting ties under pressure from Beijing. The act was championed in the Senate by Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Chris Coons (D-DE), and in the House by John Curtis (R-UT). The law: (1) requires the State Department to encourage foreign governments to maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan; (2) requires the U.S. to supplement its diplomatic presence in countries that support Taiwan and reduce it in those that recognize Beijing; (3) gives the Secretary of State the power to expand, reduce, or terminate U.S. aid to countries based on whether they improve or sever ties with Taiwan; (4) calls for increased U.S. support for Taiwan's participation in international organizations; (5) requires the U.S. to provide weapons to Taiwan to meet "existing and likely future threats;" and (6) encourages high-level U.S. officials to visit Taiwan. (*Taiwan News*, March 26, 2020)

WUHAN DEATH TOLL ESTIMATES FAR HIGHER THAN OFFICIAL FIGURE

Wuhan residents are skeptical about the accuracy of the city's official figure of some 2,500 deaths due to the coronavirus. At the epidemic's peak, cremation workers were transferred from around China to Wuhan to cremate bodies around the clock, leading many to estimate the actual death toll to be in the tens of thousands. The true number of deaths in Wuhan is a very sensitive matter, because many people died at home without being diagnosed or treated for COVID-19, explained a source at the provincial civil affairs bureau. "Every funeral home reports data on cremations directly to the authorities twice daily. This means that each funeral home only knows how many cremations it conducted, but not the situation at the other funeral homes," s/he said. Wuhan city officials are handing out 3000 yuan in "funeral allowances" to the families and the local party committees are handling funerals. (Radio Free Asia, March 27, 2020)

TAIWAN ATTRACTS ITS COMPANIES BACK HOME

Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs has started a three-year program to incentivize overseas Taiwanese companies to invest at home. Among them is Good Way Technology Co., which applied to invest \$23.1 million to set up a manufacturing facility producing docking stations in New Taipei City. Good Way, which has a R&D facility in Taiwan and a manufacturing plant in Kunshan, Jiangsu, decided to expand its Taiwan operations to lower its exposure to U.S. and China trade tensions. The ministry also approved three other companies: mechanical parts maker Chenming Electronic Tech Corp., golf club manufacturer Juming Co., and storage furniture maker Huei Tyng Enterprise Co. Chenming will invest an unspecified amount to set up a new automated plant in northern Taiwan. Juming and Huei Tyng will invest \$26.4 million and \$29.7 million, respectively, to expand their production capacity on Taiwan. (*Taipei Times*, March 27, 2020)