



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

JAN 27 2006

Dear Mr. Andrews:

Thank you for your letter of December 16, 2005 regarding Taiwan's participation in international efforts to combat avian influenza.

Consistent with our close but unofficial relations with Taiwan, the U.S. Government has made every effort to include Taiwan in the international battle against highly pathogenic avian influenza and a potential influenza pandemic. We have engaged with representatives from Taiwan in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum – where Taiwan, as a member, has participated fully in a number of meetings on the subject – and have supported Taiwan's bid to obtain observer status in the World Health Assembly. With strong U.S. backing, Taiwan was able to send its CDC director, Steve Kuo, and other experts to represent Taiwan at WHO meetings on avian influenza in Geneva (November 7-9, 2005) and in Tokyo (January 12-13, 2006). Regrettably, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rebuffed our attempts to include Taiwan at this week's International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza in Beijing, maintaining that only foreign states, multilateral organizations and NGOs would be invited.

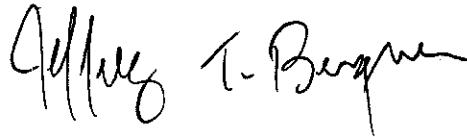
Regarding the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI), the Department of State determined that the Partnership could most effectively meet U.S. objectives by ensuring the participation of countries most affected by avian influenza, including the People's Republic of China. However, the United States ensures that Taiwan is fully briefed on all Partnership activities, and we cooperate with Taiwan to identify other areas in which Taiwan can bring its considerable public health resources to bear in the fight against pandemic influenza.

The Honorable
Robert E. Andrews,
House of Representatives.

The U.S. Government will continue to support Taiwan's participation in key international meetings dedicated to fighting avian influenza and to engage with Taiwanese officials through bilateral meetings and workshops. Events such as a meeting between senior staff members of HHS and Steve Kuo to discuss continuing U.S.-Taiwan cooperation on influenza research, as well as a workshop currently under discussion on poultry farming and veterinary aspects of avian influenza to be sponsored jointly by USDA/APHIS and Taiwan's quarantine authorities, attest to the ongoing nature of our commitment.

We share your resolve to ensure that Taiwan is included in the international effort to halt the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey T. Bergner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" being the most prominent part.

Jeffrey T. Bergner
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs