

# The politics of compassion: examining a divided China's humanitarian assistance to Haiti

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## Abstract

This article examines China's and Taiwan's humanitarian assistance to Haiti, as well as the extent to which China and Taiwan – as non-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors – adhered to the DAC-established humanitarian assistance architecture. It argues that China's and Taiwan's emergency aid was comparable with the DAC donorship in terms of its declaratory commitment to altruism and the pursuit of strategic objectives. Both Beijing and Taipei considered cross-Strait relations and domestic and international public opinion when strategizing emergency aid. The primacy of politics determined a divided China's modalities of aid, funding levels, and institutional framework. The article concludes that strategic considerations – including cross-Strait politics, a suspension of cross-Strait diplomatic rivalry notwithstanding – are at least as significant as altruism in driving China's and Taiwan's humanitarian assistance.

## 1 Introduction

Until the 1990s, humanitarian assistance – defined as rapid aid to populations temporarily needing support after destructive events, such as sudden natural disasters, famines, technological catastrophes, or military conflicts (complex emergencies) – largely escaped academic scrutiny. This inattention was conditioned by the assumed apolitical nature of disaster relief. Ever since emerging on the battlegrounds of Solferino in 1859, humanitarian aid has been believed to embrace the principles developed by the founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Jean Henri Dunant, namely humanity, neutrality, independence, universality, and impartiality. Thus, humanitarianism – whether governmental or non-governmental – has been seemingly guided by the need alone, addressed to all disaster victims, no matter where they lived and regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religious or political affiliation, or other considerations (Barnett and Weiss, 2008, p. 3). Today, all major governmental and non-governmental donors pledge to follow the Dunantist principles (Drury *et al.*, 2005, p. 544; Barnett and Weiss, 2008, p. 4), recently enshrined in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution on emergency assistance (UNGA, 1991), the 1995 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, and the 2003 Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative.

Scholars of humanitarian assistance have questioned donors' declaratory commitment to altruism. However, their analyses of the primacy of politics in humanitarian assistance focussed exclusively on major donors, grouped in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). They ignored non-DAC donors, including the People's Republic of China (PRC/China) and the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan), who are emerging as increasingly more visible actors in international relief aid. Similarly, the scholarship on China's and Taiwan's foreign aid has either paid no attention to humanitarian assistance or paid it passing attention, treating its objectives and procedures as indistinguishable from overall foreign aid practice (see, e.g. Lee 1993; Chan, 1997; Lin, 2002; Tubilewicz, 2007; Guilloux, 2009; Lun *et al.*, 2009). Only in 2005, due to their increased visibility during the Indian Ocean tsunami emergency, did non-DAC donors' humanitarian assistance attract some interest. The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) of the Overseas Development

Institute (London) examined humanitarian practice of selected non-DAC donors and suggested that non-DAC donors departed from the DAC-established humanitarian aid architecture (Harmer and Cotterrell, 2005; Haver, 2007; Harmer and Martin, 2010). Analyses of a large, heterogeneous group of donors, however, did not reveal much about individual donors' behavior. This is particularly conspicuous with regard to China, which received relatively little attention, and to Taiwan, which the HPG reports overlooked. Yet, the humanitarianism of both parts of a divided China deserves more than a passing mention due to their involvement in hundreds of relief operations, their impact on the Asian pattern of humanitarian aid (if not the possible shift in aid donorship in general) and their politicization of emergency assistance in the context of cross-Taiwan Strait relations or their broader foreign policy agendas.

While recognizing the limitations of broader conclusions derived from one case study of a divided China's emergency relief to Haiti, this paper questions the HPG analysts' thesis. It argues that neither China nor Taiwan challenged the DAC-established norms and practices of emergency relief. When the magnitude 7 earthquake hit Haiti on 12 January 2010, Beijing and Taipei offered instantaneous and high-profile humanitarian assistance. Like the majority of traditional donors, they both declared that compassion alone guided their relief efforts. To a large extent, their aid delivery was informed by humanity, neutrality, universality, and impartiality. At the same time, however, like most DAC donors, they strategized their emergency assistance to achieve broader political objectives.

Haiti provides a good test of the centrality of a political context in shaping a divided China's humanitarian assistance. For decades, Haiti – Taiwan's most populous ally in the Western hemisphere – featured prominently in Taipei's efforts to maintain its claim to *de jure* sovereignty and in Beijing's strategy to tighten diplomatic isolation of the rebel island. While Taipei relied primarily on foreign aid (including emergency relief) to maintain partnership with Port-au-Prince, Beijing developed a multifarious strategy, involving a threat of veto on Haiti-related issues at the UN Security Council (UNSC), participation in the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti and promises of economic assistance. In 2008, Taipei – convinced that, given China's deeper pockets and rising influence in global affairs, Taiwan was unlikely to win a cross-Strait diplomatic rivalry in Haiti and beyond – proposed a diplomatic truce, *i.e.* to

suspend competition for allies. A divided China's humanitarian response to the Haiti earthquake tested the strength of a diplomatic truce and the importance of political considerations to China's and Taiwan's aid decisions, allegedly no longer burdened by a diplomatic competition.

This article contends that China's and Taiwan's strategic concerns were at least as significant as their selfless humanitarianism when aiding Haiti. For China, the Haiti relief showcased its material and organizational capacity as a responsible power, and strengthened the nationalistic credentials of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For Taiwan, assistance to Haiti symbolized a continued support for its diplomatic partners, increased the island's international visibility, and premiered its new foreign aid regime as an entry ticket to international respectability. Above all, the Haiti relief operation exposed the persistence of the China–Taiwan diplomatic rivalry and its continued relevance for a divided China's modalities of aid, funding levels and institutional framework, the ongoing cross-Strait reconciliation process and diplomatic truce notwithstanding.

## 2 Haiti's 'Taiwan problem'

Given its geography and history, Haiti is an odd actor in a diplomatic drama starring China and Taiwan. Yet, once Port-au-Prince and Taipei established diplomatic relations in 1956, Haiti featured prominently in the ROC's efforts to maintain its claim to *de jure* sovereignty and in Beijing's 'one China' policy, according to which Taiwan is China's province. In the 1990s, Haiti's prominence in cross-Strait relations further increased, when Beijing – exploiting Haiti's domestic instability – began using its UNSC veto power to coerce Haiti into de-recognizing Taiwan. By delaying the extension of the UN peacekeeping missions' mandate, shortening the length of the mandate period, downsizing the peacekeeping troops and, occasionally, complicating funding for their deployment, Beijing left Port-au-Prince with a dilemma: namely, whether to stick with Taiwan and face the recurring threat of UN peacekeepers' withdrawal or desert Taiwan and secure the UNSC's steadfast support.

In 2004, when insurgents took over northern Haiti, China seemingly abandoned its obstructionism. It supported the establishment of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and contributed 125 riot police to MINUSTAH, its first peacekeepers' deployment in the US

backyard and the first dispatch of a self-contained peacekeeping force. Beijing insisted that its participation in MINUSTAH had nothing to do with Taiwan, but instead aimed at restoring peace in Haiti and exhibited China's 'peace-loving and responsible image' (AFP, 2004; MFA, 2004). The subsequent pattern of the PRC's voting at the UN, however, validated suspicions that Beijing's change of mind regarding UN peacekeeping in Haiti was not merely motivated by its desire to fulfill its international responsibilities (*The Washington Times*, 2004). When in 2005 (and thereafter) China reverted to its better-known policy of obstructing UN-led missions, it became apparent that one of its objectives in joining MINUSTAH was to exert an even greater pressure on Port-au-Prince to de-recognize Taipei.

Beijing's obstructionism, which caught Haiti in a cross-Strait 'war of attrition' and complicated international efforts to bring stability to the Caribbean nation (Erikson and Chen, 2007, p. 82), proved to be partially effective. While it failed to terminate Haiti's diplomatic relations with Taiwan, it succeeded in forcing Haiti to distance itself from Taiwan. In 1994, Port-au-Prince offered to exchange commercial offices with China, which – when established in the late 1990s – acted as informal embassies. In 2002, Haiti de facto banned Taiwanese leaders from visiting the island and, five years later, no longer supported Taiwan's bids to reenter the UN (Dorneval, 2011).

Given the high geopolitical cost involved in sustaining relations with Taiwan, Haiti's commitment to the ROC is puzzling. Analysts explain this puzzle in terms of Taiwan's foreign aid (Li, 2005, p. 98; Erikson, 2010). Overseen by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and partially implemented by the island's quasi-aid agency, the International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF), Taiwanese aid included agricultural technical assistance, grants and loans, food and medical aid, infrastructure projects and scholarships (Bohning, 1999; Huang, 2009; Lin, 2010a,b). Its distinguishable feature was not its exceptional generosity (it probably amounted to US\$12 million a year in the 2000s [Taiwanese diplomat, 2010; Dorneval, 2011]), but rather its non-conditionality (albeit with the expectation of Haiti continuing diplomatic relations with Taiwan), reliability and high responsiveness to Haitian leaders' requests.

There is little doubt that Beijing – directly or indirectly – promised Haiti economic assistance as well. China's aid offers convinced four

Caribbean nations – namely St. Lucia (1997), Bahamas (1997), Dominica (2004), and Grenada (2005) – to desert Taiwan. Port-au-Prince either ignored such promises or found them unattractive. It is likely that Beijing schemed to use the peacekeeping issue to force Haiti to cut ties with Taiwan, rather than reward Haiti financially for a diplomatic recognition. Yet, Chinese aid promises proved sufficient to prompt Taiwan to increase its assistance for Haiti and the entire Caribbean region. In 2007, Taipei celebrated St. Lucia's return in exchange for a confidential aid package.

### 3 China, Taiwan, and the politics of humanitarian aid

Taiwan's aid competition with China in the Caribbean constituted a part of its economic statecraft, designed to raise or maintain the level of its diplomatic recognition. In the 1990s, this aid diplomacy was praised for helping Taiwan sustain its claim to de jure sovereignty (see, for example, Kim, 1994; Yahuda, 1996). Such praise, however, ended in the 2000s. The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) – having lost presidential elections in 2000 – became a vocal critic of Taipei's foreign aid administered by the rival Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration. Having observed a progressive loss of diplomatic allies and increasing hostility across the Taiwan Strait during the DPP era (2000–8), the KMT considered aid competition with China as unaffordable and ineffective given Beijing's financial capacity and determination to buy out Taiwanese allies. The KMT also thought of it as damaging the prospects of cross-Strait reconciliation. Following 2008 presidential elections, which KMT leader Ma Ying-jeou won, the KMT administration proposed a diplomatic truce (*The China Post*, 2008). To help normalize economic and cultural relations with China, a truce was to usher in an era of cross-Strait mutual non-denial in international arena. In exchange for suspending efforts to seek de jure independence and actively challenge the 'one China' principle, Taipei expected Beijing to stop poaching its diplomatic partners. PRC President Hu (2008, p. 24) conceded that 'unnecessary strife' in external affairs was not conducive to the 'interests of the Chinese nation' and implicitly embraced the truce in order to strengthen the Taiwanese public's support for President Ma's policy of cross-Strait rapprochement.

The cessation of cross-Strait competition for allies allowed Taipei – President Ma believed – to return its foreign aid (including humanitarian assistance) to ‘purity’, that is, no longer subordinate it to diplomatic objectives. In May 2009, MOFA released the island’s first White Paper on foreign aid, which promised to align Taiwan’s foreign economic assistance with Millennium Development Goals and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The White Paper singled out humanitarianism as the ‘core value of Taiwan’s foreign aid initiative’ and spoke of ‘developing humanitarianism’ as a goal of Taiwan’s foreign aid. While failing to reference the Dunantist principles, it nonetheless declared Taiwan’s humanitarian assistance to be driven by compassion ‘toward fellow human beings in distress’ and to be given to ‘countries in need of assistance’, irrespective of their policies toward Taiwan (MOFA, 2009, pp. 1, 34 and 44).

The White Paper proposed a revolution in Taipei’s relief aid practice, institutionalized since the establishment of the International Humanitarian and Relief Fund in 1990. Although before 2008 Taipei routinely claimed that – ‘as a conscientious member of international society’ – it considered the provision of emergency aid as its duty ‘to contribute to world welfare and fulfill its international responsibilities’ (Chan, 1997, p. 39; ICDF, 2001, p. 68), MOFA is believed to have politicized humanitarianism. Thus, relief assistance to allies (and ‘friendly countries’) symbolized Taiwan’s commitment to their welfare and solidarity with the governing regimes that supported diplomatic (or substantive) relations with the ROC. Taiwanese disaster relief to non-allies either demonstrated Taipei’s support for the United States, constituted an effort to gain stature (or membership) – as an independent actor – in the international community (or intergovernmental organizations), or signaled interest in establishing diplomatic relations with aid recipients (Lee, 1993, pp. 65–66; Chan, 1997, p. 40; Lin, 2002, p. 199; Chen, 2006a,b; Tubilewicz, 2007, p. 96, 140–144 and 157–158). Since the 1990s, Taiwan has also provided humanitarian assistance to China if not as a means of political reconciliation, then at least as a vehicle to promote the positive views of Taiwan in China.

Beijing claimed that its emergency aid – more systematic since the 2004 introduction of a Response Mechanism for Emergency Relief in Foreign Countries – was motivated by a desire to prevent or relieve human suffering. This was consistent with the principles guiding its foreign aid policy, namely equality, mutual benefit, non-conditionality,

and noninterference in aid recipients' domestic affairs (IOSC, 2011). Its first White Paper on disaster prevention and reduction restated China's commitment to 'work unremittingly to reduce the risks and damage posed by natural disasters together with the rest of the world for the development and progress of human society' (IOSC, 2009). Similarly, China's first White Paper on foreign aid emphasized the nonpolitical nature of its emergency aid, which served 'to reduce losses of life and property in disaster-stricken areas and help the victim country tackle difficulties caused by the disaster', as well as to fulfill Beijing's international obligations (IOSC, 2011).

Beijing maintained that its altruism – seemingly derived from 'traditional Chinese virtues' of generosity and friendliness – demonstrated China taking responsibility for the welfare of the international community and was its 'contribution to the common development of the international community and the creation of harmonious world' (Chen, 2006a,b). Although failing to scrutinize it rigorously, commentators questioned Beijing's self-proclaimed selflessness, arguing that China's humanitarian assistance served to enhance friendly relations and cooperation, gain support of recipient governments and peoples, and garner the approbation of the international community (Harmer and Cotterrell, 2005, p. 27). More specifically, the PRC's food aid to North Korea, for example, was found to have been motivated by geostrategic and security objectives (Kim, 2012). China's post-tsunami aid in 2004–05 is believed to have been driven by rivalry with Taiwan, by the desire to secure access to raw materials, an effort to raise China's international profile and a wish to strengthen its relations with countries of economic and strategic significance (Chan, 2005; Dillon and Tkacik, 2005/2006, p. 1; Haver, 2007, p. 12; Hirono, 2010). Similarly, Beijing's humanitarian assistance to Sudan, Myanmar, and Pakistan is thought to have served geopolitical and economic interests (Martin, 2010, p. 21; Willitts-King, 2010, p. 34). China is also known to have resorted to relief aid to tighten the diplomatic isolation of Taiwan. Its emergency assistance helped it secure diplomatic recognition of Grenada (Erikson, 2005) and symbolized concern for the welfare of Malawi, a prospective ally (Davis, 2008, p. 56). Furthermore, China exploited Taiwanese allies' complex emergencies in Macedonia, Liberia, and Chad to 'persuade' them to switch diplomatic recognition to the PRC (Tubilewicz and Guilloux, 2011, p. 332). Finally, Beijing interfered in international relief assistance offered to Taiwan



without China's prior consent, implying that Chinese virtue of friendliness did not apply when the 'one China' principle seemed undermined (Tubilewicz, 2007, p. 214).

Neither Taiwan nor China was alone in their uses (or misuses) of humanitarian assistance for political ends. Some scholars argue that politics was always a part of relief assistance either because of (a) the challenge humanitarian assistance posed to the authority of governments (Seybolt, 1996; Cutts, 1998), (b) a political environment in which relief activities occurred (Weiss, 1999; MacFarlane and Weiss, 2000; O'Brien, 2004; Middleton and O'Keefe, 2006), or (c) the very definition of politics (MacFarlane and Weiss, 2000). Others claim that a fusion of humanitarianism and political action occurred after the Cold War, when underdevelopment became perceived as a threat to security due to its impact on drug trafficking, terrorism, and refugee flows (Curtis, 2001, p. 5; Duffield, 2001; Macrae and Leader, 2001; Macrae, 2002, p. 10; Barnett, 2005, p. 724). As a result, major donors – notwithstanding their declared commitment to the Dunantist principles – are believed to have turned humanitarian assistance into an instrument for conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in the context of complex emergencies (Duffield, 2001; Macrae and Leader, 2001; Olsen *et al.*, 2003; Barnett, 2005, p. 724). Recent quantitative research demonstrates that politics also informed DAC donors' humanitarian response to natural disasters (Drury *et al.*, 2005; Stromberg, 2007; Fink and Redaelli, 2010). In sum, while disagreeing on the factors conditioning politicized relief, scholars agree that major DAC donors' embraced emergency assistance as part of their geopolitical agenda and that politicization of relief aid became the norm of contemporary humanitarianism.

In 2009, Taipei pledged to break with the practice of subordinating humanitarian aid to serve diplomatic objectives. Concurrently, having released the White Paper on disaster prevention and reduction in 2009, Beijing reaffirmed its compliance with the norms of apolitical relief aid. The Haiti earthquake put to test a divided China's declaratory commitment to the Dunantist principles.

#### 4 Taiwan's relief aid to post-quake Haiti

Taipei's response to the quake, which leveled Port-au-Prince (including the Taiwanese embassy building), killed over 220,000 (including a Taiwanese

girl) and injured 300,000 (including the Taiwanese Ambassador), was instantaneous. Within 12 h, Taipei offered US\$200,000 and dispatched a 23-member National Fire Agency search and rescue team. The team reached Haiti on 16 January and – directed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – scouted rubble at the collapsed Haitian Foreign Ministry building and its vicinity. Before leaving Haiti two days later, it rescued a Haitian security guard and helped locate a French survivor (Huang and Wu, 2010). On 17 January, Taiwan's second rescue group – assembled by the Taiwanese Red Cross – arrived. Having found no survivors, it left Haiti on 21 January.

On 21 January, a 64-member Taiwan medical team, organized by the Taiwanese non-governmental organization (NGO), the Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps (TRMPC), arrived in Port-au-Prince, where it set up a field hospital, 'Taiwan Medical Team'. It returned to Taiwan a week later after treating 3,542 victims (TRMPC, 2010). Taiwan's second and third medical teams – assembled by Taiwan International Health Action, the Medical Affairs Bureau of the National Defence Ministry, and the ICDF – continued the work of 'Taiwan Medical Team'. By March, among the 590 registered field hospitals in Haiti, 'Taiwan Medical Team' had stayed the longest and treated over 15,000 patients (Chang, 2010).

Taiwan also provided Haiti with medicines and relief goods. Its first shipment of supplies reached Haiti in 20 January and the second reached a week later. The third one, transported by a ROC Air Force C-130 carrier, was officially handed over to the World Health Organization's (WHO) representative in Haiti. In late January, President Ma personally delivered the fourth shipment of relief supplies.

Taipei's other aid initiatives included the expansion of a cash grant in 14 January by US\$300,000. A day later, Taipei raised its cash donation to US\$5 million, and then – during President Ma's visit to the Dominican Republic in late January – to US\$10 million. From January to August, Taipei also donated – directly or via the TRMPC and Food for the Poor – 1,000 metric tons of rice (Lin, 2010a,b). It also funded vocational training programs, subsidized Mercy Corps' cash-for-work program and co-funded World Vision Taiwan's (WVT) temporary housing project. By 31 March, Taiwan had provided Haiti with US\$18.5 million in aid, with US\$1.17 million coming in the form of government-funded relief goods, US\$5.33 million as cash grant, US\$2.7 million as

private sector's relief goods and US\$9.3 million as private sector's cash donation (MOFA, 2010; see Table 1).

The fact that the civil society accounted for over two-thirds of Taiwan's overall funding for relief assistance to Haiti speaks volumes about Taiwanese citizens' empathy. The Taiwanese donated money through the 7-Eleven chain of convenience stores and the MOFA-designated account. They also contributed money at fundraising campaigns organized by ad-hoc citizen groups and NGOs, such as WVT, the Red Cross Society, the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation, and the Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society (Her 2010; Hsu, 2011). While the ROC government assisted the Taiwanese NGOs' aid delivery through logistics and token financial support,<sup>1</sup> NGOs guarded their autonomy and only reluctantly were co-opted into the government-designed relief activities. Some of them were familiar with Haiti, Tzu Chi's aid programs dating back to 1998, the TRMPC's to 2004, while WVT sponsored thousands of Haitian children. This familiarity facilitated their operational efficiency, which – together with their expertise, dedication, and cash-filled coffers – ensured their centrality in Taiwan's humanitarian assistance to Haiti.

Taiwanese civil society's response to the Haiti tragedy revealed its vitality and organizational competence. While it was informed by compassion, compassion alone did not guide the Ma administration's humanitarian relief to Haiti. This is not to say that the Ma government did not present its relief aid as its fulfillment of 'humanitarian responsibilities' (Ong, 2010). Yet, it made no effort to conceal its scheme to utilize the Haiti relief aid to (a) exhibit its commitment to an ally (Ko, 2010a), (b) increase the visibility of Taiwan as a 'member of the global village' and 'an independent and valuable contributor to the global system' (Lee and Kuo, 2010), and (c) showcase President Ma's 'honest diplomacy' that transformed Taiwan from a troublemaker issuing cheques to corrupt foreign leaders to a 'major contributor to relief efforts worldwide' (Ong, 2010; Ko, 2010c). *Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in San Francisco (2010)* succinctly summarized the Ma government's intentions by stating: 'Taiwan went the extra mile to help Haiti. [...] Perhaps now is the time to acknowledge just how much more

1 In early February, MOFA flew representatives of the Red Cross and WVT to Haiti for a reconnaissance trip (Hsu, 2011).

**Table 1** Taiwan's assistance to post-quake Haiti, 2010–11

| Time                  | Form of aid   | Funding (in US\$) | Description  |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| January 2010          | Financial   | \$10 m            | The ROC government's uncommitted pledge of financial assistance (raised three times from initial \$200,000) for relief assistance in Haiti   |
| January 2010          | Rescue missions   | Unknown           | 23-member rescue team from National Fire Agency and 33-member rescue team organized by Taiwanese Red Cross   |
| January–March 2010    | Medical missions  | Unknown           | Three medical teams, including a 64-member team organized by the TRMPC   |
| January 2010          | Medical and relief supplies                             | Unknown           | Four shipments; the first valued at US\$340,000  |
| January 2010          | Food aid  | \$50,000          | Taiwan ICDF-funded purchase of 50 tons of Haiti-grown rice   |
| January–August 2010   | Food aid  | Unknown           | 1,000 tons of rice, provided by the Council of Agriculture   |
| January 2010          | Financial   | \$650,000         | Funded by the ICDF: \$100,000 donation to WVT for the purchase and transport of 357 tents, a \$125,000 contribution to support a TRMPC medical team, and \$165,000 to Food for the Poor to cover the cost of transporting 200 tons of rice |
| February 2010–present | Housing   | \$5.5 m           | Construction of a Hope Village, co-funded by the Taiwanese Red Cross and the ROC government, expected to accommodate 200 families  |
| January 2010–present  | Housing   | \$2.7 m           | 500 wooden shelters co-funded by WVT and the ROC gov.  |
| February–April 2010   | Housing   | Unknown           | 1,000 large tents donated by the Taiwanese Red Cross   |
| January 2010–present  | Vocational training programs                            | Unknown           | Funded by the ICDF   |
| February 2010         | Cash-for-work program                                   | \$110,000         | The ICDF-funded and managed by the Mercy Corps   |
| January–August 2010   | Children sponsorship                                    | Unknown           | WVT increased the number of sponsored Haitian children from 7,500 in January to 10,000 in August   |
| January–April 2010    | Relief and medical supplies; food aid; medical missions | Unknown           | Aid extended by the Tzu Chi Foundation via its numerous international chapters, including Tzu Chi USA  |
| February 2010–present | Medical aid   | Unknown           | The Taiwanese government's donation of medical equipment and training of Haitian medical staff in Taiwan   |
| February 2010         | Debt reduction  | \$12m–13m est.    | The Taiwanese government exempted Haiti from repaying the principal on the US \$88m loan for five years  |

|                    |   |           |   |
|--------------------|---|-----------|---|
| April 2010–present | Housing; food aid; educational aid; work program; medical aid | Unknown   | Aid extended by the Tzu Chi Foundation  |
| June 2010          | Post-relief aid   | \$121.37m | The Taiwanese government's uncommitted 10-year pledge to support Haiti's reconstruction               |
| November 2010      | Financial and medical supplies                                | \$200,000 | Donated by ROC gov to help Haiti fight cholera  |
| November 2010      | Financial   | \$150,000 | Donated by the Taiwanese Red Cross to help Haiti fight cholera  |
| May 2011           | Financial   | \$300,000 | The ROC government's donation to the Pan American Development Foundation to support its work in Haiti |

Source: *Lianhe bao*, 14 January 2010, 'Gov't Ups Aid to Haiti to US\$5 Million', *The China Post*, 17 January 2010; 'Taiwan Rescue Team Finds Earthquake Survivor', *Taiwan Today*, 18 January 2010; Jenny W. Hsu, 'Taiwanese Rescuers Shine in Haiti', *Taipei Times*, 19 January 2010; Lin Shen-hsu and Y.L. Kao, '3rd Taiwan Relief Team Arrives in Santo Domingo en Route to Hawaii', *The China Post*, 21 January 2010; 'First Taiwanese relief supplies reach Haiti', *Taipei Times*, 27 January 2010; S. H. Lin and Flor Wang, 'Taiwan Buys Rice to Aid Haitian Quake Refugees', *The China Post*, 27 January 2010; Lin Shen-hsu, Sunrise Huang and Y.F. Low, 'Taiwan's ICDF Provides US\$650,000 to Help Haiti', *The China Post*, 28 January 2010; Garfie Li and Sofia Wu, 'President Arrives in Los Angeles en Route back to Taiwan', *The China Post*, 29 January 2010; Ko Shu-ling, 'Ma lauds Rescue Efforts in Haiti, Meets Howard', *Taipei Times*, 2 February 2010; Tony Ong, 'Taiwan's Relief Efforts in Haiti', [Worldpress.org](http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/3496.cfm), 9 February 2010, <http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/3496.cfm> 10 December 2010. 'Taiwan Helps Haitian Quake Survivors Rebuild Homes, Livelihoods', *Central News Agency*, 28 February 2010; Tzu Chi Foundation, 'Updates on Tzu Chi's Haiti Relief Operation (3 April 2010)', <http://www.us.tzuchi.org/usa/home.nsf/30a14f42fce629de852570f30006b05d/220230657b8aa7b6882576fd0064b743?> 13 December 2010. Kelly Her, 'A Helping Hand for Haiti', *Taiwan Review*, 1 May 2010, <http://taiwanreview.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xitem=97944&ctNode=1446> 2 December 2010; Shih Hsiu-chuan and Mo Yan-chih, 'Haiti debt payment suspended', *Taipei Times*, 29 May 2010; Lilian Wu, 'COA Head Speaks at Haiti Aid Summit about Aid', *Central News Agency*, 3 June 2010; TaiwanHA, 'Taiwan Participates in Relief Efforts Following Haiti Earthquake', 11 July 2010, <http://www.taiwanha.org.tw/enehome43.html> 2 December 2010; Jenny W. Hsu, 'Taiwan Offers "Hope" to Haitian Quake Survivors', *Central News Agency*, 30 August 2010; Hsieh Chia-chen and Kendra Lin, 'Taiwan Donates Money, Supplies to Help Cholera-Stricken Haiti', *Central News Agency*, 19 November 2010; Interview with a Taiwanese diplomat, Taipei, 24 November 2010; Chen Li-ting and Maia Huang, 'Taiwan's Red Cross Donates US \$150,000 to Haiti', *Central News Agency*, 25 November 2010; Interview with Annie Feng, Assistant Program Officer, International Ministry, World Vision Taiwan, Taipei, 1 December 2010; Email communication with Daphnie Liu, Haiti Project Coordinator, World Vision Taiwan, 4 January 2011; Interview with Lisa Hsu, Deputy Director, The Red Cross Society of the Republic of China (Taiwan), Taipei, 7 January 2011; Jorge Liu and Sofia Wu, 'Taiwan Donates Funds for Haiti Reconstruction, Cholera Prevention', *Central News Agency*, 13 May 2011.

Taiwan could do if it were a fully fledged participating member of the international community’.

Taiwanese assistance did not go unnoticed in Haiti, and Taipei – through press statements, contributed articles and letters to editors – made sure that it would not go unnoticed elsewhere either. Its efforts paid off. The Obama administration and the New York State Assembly commanded Taiwan for its relief activities in Haiti (Liao and Huang, 2010; Shear, 2010). The US media appeared equally impressed; it considered Taiwan’s aid ‘a good showcase for [Taiwan’s] capabilities’ (Tharoor, 2010; see also Tsai, 2010) and called its diplomatic isolation ‘an anachronism’ (The Wall Street Journal (Asia), 2010).

Striving to further increase Taiwan’s visibility at the time when global media focussed on Haiti, President Ma decided to add a stopover in Haiti during his third Latin American visit, which otherwise would have taken him only to Honduras. Security concerns and logistic problems reportedly convinced him to land instead in the neighboring Dominican Republic on 28 January 2010. There, he met Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive to discuss Taiwan’s post-relief aid program in order to secure a prominent role for Taiwan in the post-quake reconstruction of Haiti. Ma outlined Taiwan’s post-relief aid projects, most of which were subsequently co-funded and implemented by Taiwanese NGOs (see Table 1).

Last but not the least, the Haiti crisis created a situation, where – for the first time since its walkout from the UN in 1971 – Taiwan included its rescue and medical teams as part of the UN’s rescue system and donated relief goods to the WHO. Although Taiwan was not invited to the UN-sponsored ‘International Donors’ Conference toward a New Future for Haiti’, held in March 2010 in New York, it did attend the Dominican Republic-hosted ‘World Summit for the Future of Haiti’ in June. Finally, the Ma administration’s choice of a C-130 carrier to deliver relief supplies to Haiti helped the ROC Air Force complete a transoceanic voyage and land in the US territory for the first time since Taipei and Washington broke diplomatic ties in 1979. The mission reportedly demonstrated a combat readiness of the Taiwanese armed forces (Lee and Kao, 2010).

## 5 Taiwanese parsimony

Taipei’s relief assistance to Haiti was calculated to reassure Taiwanese allies of its continued concern for their welfare and its generosity, a

diplomatic truce with China notwithstanding. Inadvertently, however, it revealed the limits of Taipei's charity.

Realizing that Haiti would be unlikely to succeed at reconstruction if it was to finance repayment of its massive foreign loans, France, Canada, Britain and the United States urged Haiti's major creditors – including Taiwan and Venezuela, Haiti's biggest bilateral debt holders – to forgive Haiti's outstanding debt. While the international pressure forced Venezuela and multilateral donors to cancel Haiti's debt, Taipei remained noncommittal. Instead, it settled on a debt reduction package, which provided for MOFA repaying the interest on the Caribbean ally's US\$88 million loan for five years, exempted Haiti from repaying the principal during that period and allowed Port-au-Prince to settle the debt with a repayment plan it would agree upon after five years (Shih, 2010). MOFA did not reveal the amount needed to cover the interest payments (the press estimated it at US\$12–13 million), but Foreign Minister Timothy Yang emphasized that the debt repayment plan was the 'maximum amount' that Taiwan could afford (Shih and Mo, 2010). The Ma administration's resistance to debt cancellation was conditioned as much by financial calculations as it was by a concern that debt forgiveness posed a moral hazard, whereby other allies might make similar demands, which Taiwan – given its rising national debt – allegedly could not afford. The decision to restructure, rather than to cancel, Haiti's debt also served to encourage Haiti to remain in the partnership with Taiwan so that its debt repayment terms could be restructured in its favor.

The debt cancellation saga brought to light the inconvenient truth that Taiwan's aid to Haiti was not as generous as the Ma administration would have liked the world to believe. Excluding the cost of emergency aid, Taiwan's total post-relief aid package amounted to US\$121.37 million over the next decade (Wu, 2010a,b), which included US\$10 million Taipei had pledged for immediate relief assistance, as well as the cost of the interest repayments. Assuming that Taiwan's annual aid before the quake did not exceed US\$12 million, Taipei did not plan to increase substantially its aid disbursements to facilitate Haiti's reconstruction.

The parsimony of Taipei's relief and post-relief aid packages is glaring when contrasted with Taiwan's post-tsunami assistance to Indonesia in 2004 (US\$120 million), post-earthquake relief to Sichuan in 2008 (US \$65.5 million) and post-quake and tsunami aid to Japan in 2011 (US \$202 million). The size of Taiwan's aid packages to Haiti also paled in

comparison with other donors' commitments. Taiwan's overall contributions and commitments to Haiti in 2010 placed it outside the group of 15 largest bilateral and multilateral donors, and constituted about 0.5% of all relief funding for Haiti in 2010 (OCHA, 2011). The size of Taiwan's offer of post-relief aid also appeared rather minuscule given the massive financial cost of the post-quake rebuilding and US\$10 billion 50 donor countries pledged at the UN conference in March to support Haiti's reconstruction.

Some analysts have hypothesized that Taiwan did not seize the Haitian earthquake as an opportunity to substantially surpass China's response, because of a diplomatic truce with China (Erikson, 2010). Others appeared concerned that a low-key response to the Haiti tragedy – conditioned by a diplomatic truce – sent a distress signal to Taiwan's remaining allies. Still others have argued that the Haiti relief action illustrated the effectiveness of President Ma's foreign policy as it demonstrated Taiwan's and China's 'mature and practical attitude in offering humanitarian assistance' (Ko, 2010d).

## 6 China's Haitian dilemma

Did a diplomatic truce play a role in Taiwan's financial calculations? And if it did, did it stop Taipei from showing more generosity in order to prevent a cross-Strait aid competition in Haiti? Or did it convince Taipei that greater largesse was unnecessary, because Beijing – adhering to a truce – would not outshine Taiwan? While answers to these questions are at best speculative, there is no evidence that the Ma administration was aware of Beijing's Haiti strategy or had consulted China. Prior to the earthquake, a cross-Strait diplomatic truce had made no difference to Beijing's policy toward Haiti (or the Caribbean) or to Port-au-Prince's China policy. In 2008 and 2009, Haiti did not sponsor the UN resolutions advocating Taiwan's participation in the UN specialized agencies. Beijing, for its part, planned to apply renewed pressure on Port-au-Prince to terminate diplomatic ties with Taipei, a plan it abandoned only in early 2009 (Dorneval, 2011). Meanwhile, in the regional context, Beijing continued to emphasize and enforce the 'one China' principle as the basis of Sino-Caribbean relations, while deepening diplomatic and economic co-operation only with those Caribbean countries that no longer recognized the ROC (MFA, 2008; Erikson, 2009; Sanders, 2011).



When a 68-member Chinese rescue team arrived in Port-au-Prince on 14 January 2010 as the first international rescue team, politics seemed irrelevant to Beijing's humanitarianism (Li and Luo, 2010; Yan, 2010). The Chinese team searched the collapsed UN building for survivors, where it found the bodies of UN Mission Chief Hedi Annabi and eight Chinese policemen (four were visitors from PRC Ministry of Public Security and four were peacekeepers). Together with a medical team, the PRC rescuers saved and offered medical treatment to more than 2,500 people (People's Daily Online, 2010b). The UN commended it for its 'remarkable efficiency' (Wu, 2010a,b), Haitian leaders publicly thanked it (Song and Man, 2010), while others considered China's timely assistance as manifesting the country's 'soft power' (Holmes, 2010).

China also donated – via its Red Cross Society – US\$1 million to Haiti, sent a cargo plane with 90 tons of humanitarian aid, which arrived in Haiti before US Navy vessels reached the country, and in 15 January announced additional US\$4.41 million relief package (China Daily, 2010a). In late January and early February, Beijing sent two more shipments of emergency supplies (90 tons), as well as a 40-member medical team (Yan, 2010). It also donated funds to selected UN agencies to support their relief activities in Haiti. All in all, China's humanitarian assistance to Haiti amounted to 100 million yuan (about US\$15 million) (Ministry of Commerce, undated; see Table 2).

While a comparable relief package offered by Taipei drew praise from the international media, some observers considered Beijing's assistance as more than modest (Fallows, 2010; Yaffe, 2010). Furthermore, the PRC rescue team was criticized for departing Haiti as soon as the bodies of the missing Chinese were identified (Erikson, 2010). Finally, when at the UN donor conference in New York China pledged only US\$1.5 million in aid for a post-relief reconstruction, China's credentials as a 'good global citizen' were questioned (Oppenheimer, 2010).

Indeed, China's assistance to Haiti compared unfavorably not only with the relief aid offered by other donors, but also with humanitarian aid it extended to countries affected by Indian Ocean tsunami (over US \$80 million), to Pakistan (US\$26.73 million and US\$50 million in 2005 and 2010, respectively), and to the Horn of Africa region (US\$55.3 million in 2011). Was Beijing's smaller assistance to Haiti motivated by a diplomatic truce or was it an expression of displeasure over Haiti's diplomatic loyalty to Taiwan? President Ma was convinced that it was a

**Table 2** China's assistance to post-quake Haiti, 2010

| Time                  | Form of aid                     | Funding (in US\$) | Description   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| January 2010          | Rescue team and relief supplies | Unknown           | The PRC government-funded 68-member relief and medical team and 10 tons of food, equipment, and medicine  |
| January 2010          | Financial                       | \$1m              | Donation by China's Red Cross Society   |
| January-February 2010 | Relief aid                      | \$4.41m           | Three shipments of relief goods, funded by the PRC government   |
| January 2010          | Relief supplies                 | \$1.47 m          | Funded by the PRC government  |
| January 2010          | Medical aid                     | \$2.6 m           | The PRC government-funded 20 tonnes of medical supplies & a 40-member medical team  |
| January 2010          | Financial                       | \$2.6 m           | The PRC government's donation to Khalid Malik, the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Development Program Resident Representative in China: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$500,000 to the UN Development Program's 'Cash for Work for Early Recovery and Stabilization</li> <li>• \$500,000 to the World Food Program's provision of air services</li> <li>• \$500,000 to the UN Children's Fund to restore education and ECD services in Haiti &amp; 'WASH Emergency Response' to the affected people in Haiti</li> <li>• \$100,000 to the UN Population Fund</li> </ul> |
| January 2010          | Housing                         | \$2.94m           | The PRC government's donation of 10,000 tents   |
| March 2010            | Financial                       | \$1.5m            | The PRC government's uncommitted pledge to support Haiti's reconstruction   |

Source: 'China Sends Aid, Rescue Team to Quake-Hit Haiti', *Xinhua*, 14 January 2010; 'Chinese Rescuers Rev up Aid in Haiti', *China Daily*, 17 January 2010; Cara Anna and Annie Huang, 'Haiti Aid a Telling Test of China-Taiwan Relations', *The China Post*, 17 January 2010; 'Weighting US and China's Responses to Haiti Quake', *China Daily*, 20 January 2010; 'China Announces More Assistance to Haiti', *China Daily*, 22 January 2010; Yan Wei, 'Assistance From A Distance: China Joins International Relief Efforts in Haiti with a Powerful Sense of Mission', *Beijingreview.com.cn*, 28 January 2010, [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/print/txt/2010-01/25/content\\_241789.htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/print/txt/2010-01/25/content_241789.htm) 5 December 2010; 'China Contributes More to UN for Haiti Quake Relief', *People's Daily Online*, 27 January 2010, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6880202.html> 27 December 2010; Yang Yang, 'China to Send Envoy for UN Donors Conference', *Xinhua*, 30 March 2010; Ministry of Commerce, PRC, 'Yuan Haidi zaihou Chongjian wuzi qiyun' [Reconstruction aid materials shipped to Haiti], 6 April 2010, <http://yws.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/jgzdongtai/201004/20100406854480.html> 2 December 2010.; UNOCHA, 'Haiti Emergencies for 2010: List of all Humanitarian Pledges, Commitments & Contributions in 2010', 16 April 2011, [www.reliefweb.int/fts](http://www.reliefweb.int/fts) 30 June 2011. (Table ref. R10c).

diplomatic truce that prevented China from interfering in Taiwan's rescue efforts in Haiti, averted a cutthroat diplomatic struggle and ended Beijing–Taipei aid competition in Haiti and beyond (Ko, 2010b). For some analysts, a diplomatic truce indeed created an opportunity for Taiwan and China's parallel assistance to Haiti and stopped China from outshining Taiwan's aid commitments (Harris, 2010; Tharoor, 2010; Tsai, 2010; Dorneval, 2011). Others disagreed and still considered Haiti as 'a diplomatic battlefield for Taiwan and China' (Irish Times, 2010; Jennings and Hornby, 2010).

## 7 Beijing's response to Taiwan's efforts in Haiti

Public opinion in China could be excused for failing to notice cross-Strait rivalry in Haiti or its absence. The PRC media covered the Haiti disaster extensively, discussing China's rescue efforts, financial and material assistance as manifesting China's 'great power responsibility' (Lu, 2010; Zhang and Xu, 2010; see also Zhu, 2010; Tao *et al.*, 2010). The Chinese press also widely reported on the eight dead Chinese, who were posthumously awarded the titles of 'martyrs' and 'heroes', and given a state funeral attended by top state and party leaders (Wang, 2010a,b; Xinhua, 2010). According to press reports, the Chinese peacekeeping mission and the martyrs' 'sacrifice' exemplified China's 'sacred mission' to safeguard world peace and build a harmonious world, as well as the fulfillment of its international responsibilities as a 'great power' and UNSC member (Gao, 2010; Wang, 2010a,b). The martyrs epitomized core values of 'contemporary Chinese revolutionary soldiers': loyalty to the CCP, industriousness, unity, and dedication (Li and Wei, 2010; Wang, 2010a,b; Zhou, 2010).

The Chinese media reported on international rescue efforts as well, focussing particularly upon the United States. They criticized Washington's decision to dispatch soldiers first (to take control of Haiti's airport allegedly in order to evacuate US nationals) and then rescuers, who began the relief operation 2 h later than their Chinese counterparts (China Daily, 2010b; Luo 2010). They likened the US military presence in Haiti to an occupation but doubted the sustainability of the US commitment to Haiti given the massive cost of the endeavor and Haiti's non-centrality to Washington geopolitics (Chen, 2010; People's Daily Online, 2010a). The PRC commentators praised, however, the Obama administration's public relations machine, crediting it for saving the US

reputation and overshadowing the Chinese relief effort. Considering this a successful application of Washington's smart power, they drew an analogy between the Haiti case and post-tsunami South and Southeast Asia, where China's large-scale assistance was allegedly outshined by that of the West. This happened despite the Chinese aid benefiting the local population, whereas the Western relief funding also benefited the NGOs or was misappropriated to projects unrelated to the tsunami (China Daily, 2010b; Luo, 2010).

The PRC media remained remarkably silent, however, on Taiwan's assistance to Haiti. This led some observers to conclude that Beijing's response to the Haiti earthquake had nothing to do with Taiwan, but – instead – was motivated primarily by its desire to protect Chinese nationals still in Haiti, recover the bodies of the fallen countrymen and showcase its capacity to assume the humanitarian responsibilities of an emerging great power. Of equal importance was the PRC leadership's attempt to use the Haiti disaster for domestic purposes, namely, to project an image of China's role in global affairs that would strengthen its cause of Chinese nationalism and prepare the Chinese audience for Beijing's greater involvement in future humanitarian projects (Erikson, 2010; Hoyle, 2010).

Officially, Beijing maintained that politics played no role in its assistance to Haiti, provided with 'the strong spirit of humanitarianism' (Liao *et al.*, 2010). At no point did it discuss its emergency relief in the context of cross-Strait relations. However, it forgot about neither Haiti's 'Taiwan connection' nor the 'one China' principle. Wang Shuping, the PRC's de facto ambassador to Haiti, restated Beijing's keenness to 'build friendship with Haiti' (Chen and Huo, 2010). Disregarding the presence of the ROC diplomatic mission in Port-au-Prince, Wang reassured the Taiwanese 'compatriots' that his office would provide necessary and timely assistance to Taiwanese people in Haiti, because 'blood is thicker than water' (Chen and Huo, 2010). Similarly, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) formally offered consular assistance to 'all Taiwanese compatriots' in Haiti, the absence of the PRC consular office in Haiti notwithstanding (Liao *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, it claimed that the Chinese peacekeepers – allegedly with President Ma's approval – provided security for Taiwanese rescue and medical teams in Haiti (Tong, 2010). Haiti's 'sensitive diplomatic affiliation' was believed to be responsible for Beijing's decision to call back some mainland reporters from Haiti and ban all media from

sending more reporters to the quake-hit country (Tam and Ng, 2010). The UN's 'one China' policy was responsible for Taiwan's exclusion from any UN-sponsored donor conference on Haiti and for OCHA's Financial Tracking System recording all Taipei-reported financial contributions to Haiti as China's. Finally, Port-au-Prince's ban on Taiwanese high-level visits continued: President Ma could visit Haiti neither in 2010 nor in 2011, when the new Haitian President, Michel Martelly, hosted foreign leaders attending his inaugural ceremony.

And yet, Beijing – perhaps out of concern for the progression of cross-Strait rapprochement – remained surprisingly low-key when witnessing Taipei's efforts to utilize the Haiti disaster in order to underline the island's sovereignty (Tong, 2010). The MFA did angrily react to the news about Taiwan's military plane carrying relief supplies by declaring Beijing's opposition to 'any government, including the United States, from having any official contact with Taiwan' (Taipei Times, 2010). It did not respond, however, to Taipei's refusal to form a joint rescue team in Haiti,<sup>2</sup> the inclusion of Taiwanese aid teams in the UN rescue system or President Ma's attempt to secure for Taiwan a high-profile role in Haiti's post-relief reconstruction effort. Nevertheless, Beijing's official silence did not signify the approval of the Ma administration's tactics. The contrast between China's self-limited engagement in Haiti and Taipei's attempt to score diplomatic breakthroughs on the ruins of Port-au-Prince raised doubts in Beijing regarding President Ma's commitment to suspending the diplomatic rivalry with China. This led an analyst at the PRC's Institute of Taiwan Studies to conclude that the Haiti tragedy underscored Beijing's goodwill – rather than the Ma administration's sincerity – as the foundation for a cross-Strait diplomatic truce (Xu, 2010).

## 8 A divided China and the DAC humanitarian aid architecture

What does this case study reveal about China's and Taiwan's accommodation of the DAC-established norms and practices of humanitarian assistance? It confirms the HPG analysts' findings regarding non-DAC

2 Beijing indirectly suggested to the Taiwanese embassy in Port-au-Prince that Chinese and Taiwanese rescue teams could jointly carry out search and rescue efforts. The Taiwanese diplomats in Haiti rejected the offer, without consulting MOFA.

donors' limited funding for humanitarian assistance, their reliance on in-kind, government-to-government relief supplies and services (rather than cash or multilateral aid, offered via UN agencies and based on an assessment of the needs of affected countries), and their relative silence on the GHD initiative (Harmer and Cotterrell, 2005; Haver, 2007; Harmer and Martin, 2010). Yet, in the context of wider literature on humanitarian assistance, these features do not necessarily demonstrate – as one HPG analyst suggests (Haver, 2007, p. 12) – noncommitment to humanitarianism as defined by 'many western donors'. Contrary to the HPG conclusions, the Haiti case study indicates China's and Taiwan's – two key non-DAC donors in Haiti – broad compliance with the DAC's humanitarian aid architecture, rather than their challenge to traditional donors' relief practices or underlying assumptions about the nature of humanitarian response.

When compared with DAC donors, both China and Taiwan appeared to be parsimonious. Although collectively ranking as the second largest non-DAC donor (behind Saudi Arabia), their funding for Haiti relief amounted to about 1% of all contributions in 2010. Analysts of DAC's humanitarian assistance would not have found this unanticipated given Haiti's geographical location (Stromberg, 2007; Fink and Redaelli, 2010). Moreover, one should not discount the financial implications of a cross-Strait diplomatic truce. Suspending their competition for allies prevented a bidding war between China and Taiwan, but also thereby suppressed their generosity. Haiti became, arguably, the first known casualty of the 'truce dividend'.

China and Taiwan relied on bilateral donations, the former channeling less than 17% of its assistance via UN agencies, the latter – due to its contested sovereignty – unable to fund UN-led humanitarian assistance. For HPG analysts, this would have been incompatible with the DAC donorship patterns, while for scholars of the DAC donorship – noting the decreasing volume and share of major Western donors' total multilateral aid going to the UN (Randel and German, 2002, p. 21; Barnett, 2005, p. 731) – it is not unusual. Similarly, China's and Taiwan's aid modalities (in-kind donations and services, rather than cash) would have concerned the HPG, whereas the *Inter-Agency Standing Committee* (2010, p. 25) consider it to have been widespread among donors in Haiti, attributing this phenomenon to governments' attempts to appeal to domestic audiences. China's and Taiwan's choice of high-profile rescue and

medical teams and in-kind contributions could be also explained in terms of Haitian government's reduced capacity – at both national and local levels – to lead and coordinate the emergency response, as well as their desire to publicly display solidarity with the Haitian people and to gain greater visibility in Haiti and beyond. None of these objectives are alien to DAC donors.

While failing to reference the GHD initiative in explicit terms, both China and Taiwan worked toward saving lives, alleviating suffering and facilitating affected peoples' return to normal livelihoods. Humanity, neutrality, universality, and impartiality informed their assistance. Both China and Taiwan emphasized their apolitical humanitarianism, with China considering its objectives nobler than those of DAC donors, particularly the United States. However, Haiti's diplomatic relations with Taipei ensured that neither Taiwan nor China could escape the political consequences of their humanitarian action. Far from avoiding the diplomatic minefield the Haiti case presented, they actively engaged in shaping their humanitarian assistance in a way that would advance their broader political agendas. It should be noted, though, that the scholarship on the DAC's humanitarianism offers countless examples of dissonance between declaratory altruism and the pursuit of strategic objectives being common to all major donors, rather than confined to non-DAC donors, such as China and Taiwan.

Although not deviating too radically from the pattern of the DAC donorship, China differed from DAC donors in one important aspect: the involvement of the civil society. Beijing's relief aid was highly centralized, funded, and coordinated by the MFA, and featured only one NGO (the Chinese Red Cross), whose engagement was limited to fundraising. This contrasted with the centrality of NGOs to Taiwan's relief assistance. MOFA attempted to coordinate relief activities with other governmental agencies and NGOs, but it had to rely on NGOs – both domestic and international – to secure sufficient funding and achieve operational efficiency.

## 9 Strategizing compassion

From the outset, both the PRC and ROC leaderships realized that the Haiti earthquake would test their diplomatic truce. Beijing's measured assistance was to symbolize its commitment to the truce, a diplomatic

facet of the cross-Strait rapprochement. Officially, Taipei also professed commitment to the truce, while appreciating Beijing's suspension of an aid competition in Haiti. Yet, Taiwanese responses to the Haiti disaster suggest an apprehension about the long-term viability of a diplomatic truce. First, rather than relying on China's goodwill to sustain relations with its existing 23 allies, Taipei's Haiti strategy indicated a pro-active defence of its international space. The loan cancelation saga in particular revealed its concerns about Haiti's long-term loyalty (and the future of a diplomatic truce) and a forward preparation for such an eventuality. Secondly, rather than being content with its pariah status, Taiwan designed its Haiti relief to increase its international visibility as an independent state, an effort displeasing China and indicative of Taipei continuing – rather than abandoning – its struggle against the Beijing-imposed diplomatic isolation. Taipei fashioned its assistance to Haiti as a *première* of a new foreign aid regime, featuring transparency, accountability, and civil society participation. By committing itself to Western donors' declaratory norms of foreign aid, Taipei underscored its capacity to reenter the community of sovereign states as a responsible and valuable contributor to the global system.

Beijing also considered its humanitarianism in Haiti as apolitical and proving its credentials as a burden-sharer, rather than a free-rider. By contrasting China's selfless, prompt, and generous relief operation with the delayed and politicized US response, the PRC media implied China's moral superiority and greater organizational efficiency than that of the United States, as well as its material capacity matching its global power status. Apart from styling itself into a compassionate global power, Beijing's emergency assistance was also to symbolize its friendship toward Haiti as a prospective diplomatic partner and its concern about the entire Caribbean region.

Domestic politics, too, played a crucial role in a divided China's activities in Haiti. On Taiwan's part, the Ma government's responsiveness to the public concerns about Haiti delivered favorable publicity in domestic affairs. For China, an imperative to rescue and protect Chinese citizens in Haiti necessitated engaging in the relief activities, while validating the CCP's nationalistic credentials and confirming Chinese public's view of their motherland as a peaceful and benevolent global power. Of equal importance was emphasizing the 'martyrdom' of the dead 'peacekeeping heroes', whose 'sacrifice' Beijing exploited to teach the Chinese masses



core values of new ‘revolutionary soldiers’, chief among which was the loyalty to the CCP.

And what about Haiti? For years, Haiti was portrayed as either a victim ‘caught in a war of attrition between China and Taiwan’ (Erikson and Chen, 2007, p. 82) or a beneficiary of cross-Strait diplomatic competition (Sanders, 2007). The China–Taiwan diplomatic competition undeniably provided Haiti (and other cash-stripped countries) with political salience in Beijing and Taipei that it would have otherwise lacked and generated higher aid flows and commitments from Taiwan and China. Having suspended a rivalry for allies, the cross-Strait rapprochement most likely impacted the extent of Beijing’s and Taipei’s involvement in Haiti, rendering Port-au-Prince the casualty of the ‘truce dividend’. Deprived of the diplomatic leverage, Haiti’s supporting role in the cross-Strait drama was reduced to that of an extra, illuminating complex challenges that confront two protagonists in their quest to end the long-standing feud.

In summary, both China’s and Taiwan’s relief activities in Haiti were driven as much by compassion as by strategic considerations. When calibrating their responses to the Haiti disaster, Beijing and Taipei considered the impact their actions would exert on cross-Strait relations, as well as on domestic and international public opinion. This strategizing of emergency aid necessitated state authorities’ control of the relief activities and aid modalities that emphasized highly visible bilateral, in-kind donations and services. It also determined the level of funding and the institutional framework of humanitarian assistance, dominated by state institutions and excluding (in China’s case) or co-opting (in Taiwan’s case) the civil society’s involvement. Given traditional donors’ corresponding use of humanitarian assistance for strategic objectives and a divided China’s declaratory commitment to the Dunantist principles, neither China nor Taiwan sought to redefine the DAC-established humanitarian aid architecture. This contradicts the conclusion reached by scholars of foreign aid regarding the challenge non-DAC donors in general and China in particular pose to the DAC donorship (see, e.g. Manning, 2006; Woods, 2008; Sato *et al.*, 2011). Further research is, therefore, necessary to determine whether the Haiti case represents an exception to or a general pattern of China’s and Taiwan’s humanitarian assistance, and whether a divided China’s accommodation of the DAC norms and practices of emergency relief necessitates a fresh look at the nature of non-DAC donorship in general.

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