

<http://atimes.com/2015/03/asia-times-back-to-the-future>

Asia Times: Back to the future

Please allow me to introduce myself **as the new editor in chief of Asia Times**. It is a role that I accept with a great deal of humility.

I'm well aware that Asia Times today reflects the dedication, vision and sacrifice of many who have come before me. They **include Sondhi Limthongkul, the Thai publisher who first conceived of creating a newspaper in 1995** that would serve as a "New York Times of Asia", and which ultimately gave birth to this website. There was the enormous heroism of **Syed Saleem Shahzad, Asia Times' Pakistan bureau chief**, who was brutally murdered in 2011 after writing an investigative report that exposed the alleged links between the Pakistani Navy and al-Qaeda, and whose killers have never been brought to justice. **Let me credit the wry, myth-busting columns of Spengler and the intrepid reporting of Pepe Escobar, Francesco Sisci, M.K. Bhadrakumar, Chan Akya, Henry CK Liu, and Japan correspondent Richard C. Hanson**. Also, the superb and tireless efforts of **Asia Times editors Allen Quicke, Tony Allison, Bradley Martin, Shawn Crispin, Chris Stewart and Uwe Parpart**, the executive editor of Asia Times' original print edition, who shepherded this website's launch back in 1999. Forgive me if I've left anyone out – since the roll of those who have contributed greatly to Asia Times' success is quite long.

Now, something about myself. As a journalist with more than three decades **working for mainstream English-language media** and extensive experience in Asia, I'm acutely aware of the need for a regional outlet for news and opinions that analyzes events and issues from an **Asian perspective**. All too often, reporting on Asian affairs is generally by Westerners, for Westerners.

But I also believe that conveying an "Asian view" has more to do with one's state of mind, rather than simple ethnicity. On AT's site you'll find analysis from writers of all nationalities – both Asians and non-Asians. In most cases, they are individuals who have spent years in Asia, steeped their lives in its affairs or occupied high policy posts that had a direct bearing on the region. **The opinions expressed at times, will be controversial, even irreverent. But they will always be authoritative.**

The website is also re-launching with **three new fixtures**. **Asia Unhedged** is an edgy daily comment on breaking economic, financial and business news affecting Asia and the rest of the world. **Chatham House Rules** is a continuously updated collection of blogs on major geopolitical issues by popular Asia Times columnists and former top policy officials. It takes its name from the rules that govern a **famous forum run by Britain's Royal Institute for International Affairs**. A unique twist is that AT's contributors will comment on each other's views to enliven the debate. **Empire of Chaos** is the editorial home of AT's roving correspondent Pepe Escobar and others.

You will also see expanded comment on **Asia Times' webpages on Russia and Iran**. These nations have always formed integral parts of Asia and are having an increasing impact on the region.

Having said that, I am suspicious of all ideologies – both right and left – that seek to mold what should be objective news coverage to fit a cookie-cutter view of reality. **Asia Times has no ideology**, though its writers are free to express their very diverse viewpoints. **Our only requirement is that they do so in a civil and intelligent manner.** And **while U.S.-born**, I make no secret of the fact that I hail from a family with deep roots on both sides of the Pacific.

My grandfather, Tokutaro, was a San Francisco-based Japanese-American painter and fine arts dealer who traveled throughout China, Mongolia and Japan in the days before Pearl Harbor, collecting vases and statuary for famous American clients like playwright Eugene O’Neill and philosopher John Dewey. He read Chinese, spoke Shanghai dialect, spent part of his life in Shanghai, and **was an opponent of the military government in Tokyo that led Japan to ruin.**

My grandfather was in Shanghai on an April evening nearly 88 years ago when Nationalist troops under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in an incident known as the “Shanghai Massacre”, turned on their erstwhile Communist allies and slaughtered thousands of party cadre and their families in their beds. In the morning light, he saw the huge wooden carts roll slowly past his hotel piled 20 feet high with the bodies of men, women and children – all wearing the blue worker uniforms and red armbands of the CCP. It’s an image he recounted that has always haunted me.

Gazing at the soaring glass skyscrapers of Shanghai’s World Financial Center on a visit not long ago, **it’s clear that China and the rest of Asia have attained a level of advancement and relative peace that is beyond the wildest imaginings of anyone connected with that tragic night in 1927. Amen.**

But it’s an old cliché that great success heralds great challenges. Asia today is again buffeted by powerful political and economic winds – from Pakistan and India, to the South China Sea and North Korea. **Its societies are in transition**, trouble spots are brewing, and the region is being rocked by natural disasters and other events. **The need for communication and understanding between East and West is greater than ever before.**

What better time for a revamped Asia Times and its take on Asian affairs?

-- *emphasis, m.z.* --