

Taiwan pathetically blames China's cognitive warfare for implicating the island in the Lebanon pager bombings

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On Thursday, September 19, state prosecutors questioned the founder and CEO of Gold Apollo, a Taiwanese manufacturer, about the simultaneous explosions of thousands of pagers targeting Hezbollah members and civilians in Lebanon on Tuesday, September 17.

A Lebanese security source and another source indicated that Israel's espionage agency, the Mossad, planted explosives in 5,000 pagers ordered by Hezbollah months before the blasts, and a code was transmitted to 3,000 units at the same time, resulting in the explosions.

The consequence was catastrophic. Dr. Ghassan Abu-Sittah, a British-Palestinian surgeon, who formerly served in Gaza and is currently in Beirut, told Sky News that “the hands for the overwhelming majority have been mangled, with a lot of amputations.” He added, “a lot of the shrapnel has gone into the eyes, with loss of eyesight complete in one eye and some unfortunately both eyes”, but “almost all of the victims will end up with some permanent disability”.

Despite this, Gold Apollo, located in New Taipei, has claimed to be a victim of Lebanon's terror bombings. The company's founder and CEO, Ching-kuang Hsu, told Reuters that the firm played no part in the exploding device's design or production in Taiwan. While his company was not a huge one, it was “a responsible one”.

Gold Apollo had a licensing arrangement with BAC Consulting. The contract allowed the Hungary-based firm to take charge of product design and manufacturing while using the Gold Apollo brand in particular regions.

However, according to a report in the *Financial*

Times on September 18, industry experts clarified that any such digital gadgets made in Europe or the Middle East would still need to source the majority of their components from Taiwanese or Chinese firms, even though they were not manufactured in Taiwan.

Asked by media if he knew the Hungary-based firm was a bogus company, Hsu declined to comment. He readily admitted, as reported by Reuters, that remittances made by BAC strangely came from the Middle East.

When the contracts and shipping records were confiscated by the Taiwanese police, it was found that BAC Consulting had previously paid Gold Apollo a very handsome \$15 per pager for brand licensing.

Gold Apollo has produced digital gadgets for a tiny but considerable niche market. It has been the largest provider of beepers to the US for over a decade. Among its most significant clients are the US intelligence agencies.

According to a 2011 Chinese-language report, “Gold Apollo captures the Federal Bureau of Investigation's heart with walkie-talkies”, the US intelligence service used the devices because of the company's expert technology, high level of customization, strict quality control, and supply chain concentrated in Taiwan, rather than diversifying outside of the island.

Similarly, these digital gadgets were most frequently used for firefighting, rescue missions, intelligence, and national defense operations in Europe as well as the United States. The great majority of Gold Apollo's market demands originated from individual governments.

In the 2011 interview, Hsu emphasized that the company's sales were not affected by business cycles.

With nearly all governments obtaining highly customized items, the company could earn up to 40 percent in gross profit with few competitors.

As in the procurement by the FBI, the US military-intelligence state has mulled over how to use the island's technologies to further the aims of US imperialism. As indicated by a 2021 article in The US Army War College Quarterly, *Parameters*, the US and Taiwan should devise a "scorched-earth strategy that would render Taiwan... unattractive if ever seized by force," which would include the destruction of the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, the world's leading chipmaker.

Taiwan's government simply stated that the Gold Apollo pagers were "not exported to Lebanon from Taiwan". State officials did not comment on whether the government was involved in the terrorist attacks in Lebanon until September 20.

From 2022 to August 2024, Gold Apollo shipped 260,000 pagers, with the majority going to the US and Australia. On September 20, Taiwan's Minister of Economic Affairs, Jyh-Huei Kuo, told Taiwanese lawmakers that pagers were made of low-end integrated circuits and batteries. "No beepers exported within this period have ever exploded. They wouldn't detonate. We can assure that the exploding pagers were not made in Taiwan."

On September 20, 2024, Taiwan's premier, Cho Jung-tai, denounced certain individuals for insinuating that Taiwanese manufacturers and the government were implicated in the bombings. Currently, the national security system has been investigating the sources of this supposedly fake news. The premier highlighted how the country's "national policy" had always centered on "peace, freedom, democracy, and human rights". Taiwan was not involved in the incident, and "we will find out who was responsible."

Speaking to the media on the condition of anonymity, sources from Taiwan's national security apparatus revealed that after the pager explosions, they discovered various cyber cognitive operations from abroad, falsely tying Taiwan to the incident. These efforts were carried out by "external forces, primarily from Beijing, Chinese social media and their local collaborators". To avoid being implicated, the government's top priority was to emphasize that "the pagers were not exported from Taiwan" to Lebanon. It

was also important to "clear up false information" and "fight against China's cognitive warfare."



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