



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - URGENT

20 March 2002

Editors please note: this is a statement from Next Media Taiwan in response to the raid this morning on their offices and printing facilities by the Taiwan National Prosecutors Office and the confiscation of one hundred and sixty thousand copies of the latest issue of Next, set for distribution tomorrow (Thursday 21st March)

‘ This is one of the darkest days in Taiwan’ s media history, a tarnish on press freedom, all the more surprising given that the country claims to be a full democracy. We must lodge the strongest possible protest against such an action.

‘ The Liu Kuan-chun case – which was the reason for the raid and for the confiscation of this week’ s issue of Next magazine – has become one of the biggest intelligence scandals in Taiwan. It involves the improper use of Government funds and as journalists, we have no choice but to delve into the story and tell the whole truth to the Taiwanese people. Now the judicial system is being used as an instrument to cover up the National Security Bureau’ s actions in the name of safeguarding “ state secrets”

‘ Ever since this story first surfaced, many so-called “ state secrets” have made their way to the media. The information provided by the up-coming issue of Next can hardly count as classified material at all. Furthermore, both the public interest and national security are at stake and Next has an obligation to report the facts to the public. “ State secrets” should not be an excuse for all Taiwanese news media to remain silent and hushed-up. “ State secrets” should not be cited by the judicial authorities as reasons for suppressing the freedom of the press.

We therefore call on the government to investigate the scandals and unsolved mysteries surrounding the Liu Kuan-chun case as quickly as possible and we demand that freedom of the press be fully respected.

In the meantime we intend to publish and distribute Next magazine, this week, as scheduled’

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On behalf of Next Media Limited

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