Dear colleagues and students,

I believe all of us are extremely worried about the recent outbreak of war in Iraq and atypical pneumonia in Hong Kong. In fact both incidents have had their tremendous impact felt on our campus. A few days before the start of the contentious war, a war without the full endorsement of the United Nations, I made the decision to postpone the University Presidents’ Global Forum from March 2003 to 2004. It was a tough decision to make, one which entails as much disappointment on my part as on the part of many of our colleagues who have diligently prepared for the Forum over the past 12 months. But many university presidents across the world who were invited have expressed their support for my decision. Next year’s Forum, to be hosted by a new Vice-Chancellor, will certainly carry a special meaning for The Chinese University.

The outbreak of atypical pneumonia is indeed a very grave matter. Our Faculty of Medicine at the Prince of Wales Hospital was pressured into a state of acute emergency right away. As the virus associated with the disease is a brand new strain, combating it in the initial phase was as difficult as fighting an enemy in pitch darkness. Since the outbreak, the number of those afflicted has risen significantly, among whom 16 are students of the University (14 have been cleared and discharged; the two who were in more serious condition are being given effective treatment, and one is now on the way to recovery). All this while, colleagues at the Faculty of Medicine (as well as doctors and nurses at the Prince of Wales Hospital) have been fully engrossed in the provision of urgent medical care for the patients. They work around the clock to save lives, struggling against shortages of resources and manpower. Thanks to them all, order has been maintained throughout the crisis and a great majority of patients are out of immediate danger. Their high level of professionalism, their selfless courage, and their dedication to their duty truly deserve our respect and salutation. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Sydney Chung, dean of medicine, and Prof. Joseph Sung in particular for the exemplary leadership and medical ethics they have displayed.

In the tough battle against atypical pneumonia (now named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome — SARS), Prof. Tam Siu Lun of the Department of Microbiology and his colleagues successfully identified the nature of the virus (of a genre called paramyxoviridae) on 20th March. The discovery posed a glimmer of hope in the fight against the disease and was affirmed and lauded by the World Health Organization. On 22nd March, the University of Hong Kong also discovered the virus and came up with a method of test for it. This is indeed another piece of encouraging news. I believe Hong Kong is on the way to the eventual conquest of the virus. However, we cannot afford to loosen our grip on the situation, as SARS is still rampant in Hong Kong and other parts of the world. We should in fact be more vigilant. On 21st March, a CUHK Campus (SARS) Task Force was set up with Prof. Jack Cheng, pro-vice-chancellor, as chairman, and Dr. Kenneth Pang, director of the University Health Service, as member/secretary. Other members of the Task Force include representatives from staff, students, and the Committee on Safety. The group has started work immediately. I rely on all staff and students of the University to give the Task Force their full support and cooperation.

Dear colleagues and students, the University is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. For the many tasks that await to be done, let us tackle them one by one decisively, overcoming whatever hurdle that may come our way, as has been the case in the past. Wind or rain, let us forge ahead determined and fearless. United, we shall sail into fair weather on our way forward.

Wishing you health and all the best.

Ambrose Y.C. King
Vice-Chancellor
各位同事、各位同学：

最近发生的伊拉克战事和非典型肺炎，相信大家都感到十分困扰。其实，这二桩事对中大都产生了很大影响。在这一不合情不合法的伊拉克战火爆发前，我已决定把原定三月二十三至三月二十五日的『全球大学校长论坛』延到明年（2004）三月举行，这是一件很困难的决定，许多为此准备经年的同仁与我一样感到十分失望，但世界许多被邀参加的校长都表示赞同我的决定。我觉得明年这个论坛由新校长来主持，对中大会另有一番意义。

非典型肺炎之袭港，是一桩非同小可的事，中大的教学医院（威尔斯亲王医院）更在第一时间进入紧张状态，非典型肺炎的病毒是一新病毒，初时对抗它犹如在黑暗中与敌作战，艰巨非常。其间，本港得病者大有增加，而本校有十六位同学亦受到感染（幸而四位无碍，其中受感染的二位同学已受到有效治疗，其中一位正康复中）。这期间，中大医学院的不少位同仁（还有威院的医师与护士等）身入急危的医疗工作，面对一波之后又一波的病患者，他们日以继夜，废寝忘食，在人手资源紧缺中，他们苦撑硬挺，专心一地抢救病人，此院之所以危而不乱，而绝大多数病患者所以有惊而无险。中大医学院同仁（还有医院医师与护士等），所表现的高度专业精神与勇于承当的精神，实在值得我们敬佩与感激，我们特别要对钟尚志院长和沈祖堯教授所展现的人苦已苦，以身作则的领导才能与医业伦理加以表扬。

在与非典型肺炎（医学名称为SARS）艰苦作战中，中大谈兆麟教授与其同仁在三月二十日发现了这个病毒的性质（属于副黏液病毒），这使发现在攻克非典型肺炎的战事中露出了曙光，得到了世界卫生组织的肯定与赞扬，而三月二十二日港大教授也找到了这个病毒，并提出快速测验患者是否得此病的方式，令人高兴，我相信香港正在走在这战胜利的路上。不过，此时此刻，我们一点也不能懈怠，非典型肺炎在香港，在世界都在肆虐中，我们应该提高警觉，三月二十一日，中大已成立了『中大校園（SARS）專责小组』，由副校长、中大医学院教授郑振耀教授为主席，大学保健处处长彭國雄医生为委员兼秘书，委员有数位职工与学生代表与安全事务委员会的负责人。这个小组已成立及及地展开工作，我希望全校师生能够给予他们最大的合作与支持。

各位同事、各位同学，今年是中大四十校庆，而摆在我们面前有好多要做的事，我们应一如既往，认认真真，一样一样地去做好。我们风雨同路，无所畏惧，一无顾忌，只要同心协力，定能走出一个朗朗晴日！祝大家健康进步！

金大教授

二零零三年三月二十四日

注：这封公开信已於三月二十四日经电邮发送。