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CROSS-CULTURAL MISCUÉ

Sometimes insensitivity to the local political situation can be costly when dealing with other cultures. Jack Moore, a chemistry professor at a leading U.S. university, had just received a prestigious grant to conduct research in the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Chinese mainland. As part of the application process of obtaining research clearance, Moore was asked to declare in what other countries he had conducted research. On the application Moore put Indonesia and the Republic of China (ROC) located on the island of Taiwan. Several months after applying, Moore was informed that his request for permission to conduct research was denied. What he should have known, but apparently did not, was that the government of the People's Republic of China does not officially recognize the Republic of China but rather considers it a renegade province of its own government. A simple declaration that he had conducted research on Taiwan would have been much less problematic for Moore and, in all likelihood, would have enabled him to secure the desired research clearance.

Find interactive Cross-Cultural Miscues in the Cultural AnthropologyNow study resource.

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