Promises to Keep: The Case For Ending Arms Sales to Taiwan

By Vance Trefethen

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Promises to Keep: The Case for Ending Taiwan Arms Sales

Beloved New England poet Robert Frost saw the deep moral imperative of commitment to one's word when he wrote: *The woods are lovely, dark and deep. / But I have promises to keep / And miles to go before I sleep*

The United States government made promises to the People's Republic of China over 30 years ago, and has ever since knowingly and intentionally failed to keep them. The goal of US foreign policy should be to develop good relations with China, and keeping our promises will help us do that. Please join my partner and me as we affirm that: The United States federal government should substantially reform its trade policy with one or more of the following nations: China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan.

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS.

**Trade**: “: the activity or process of buying, selling, or exchanging goods or services” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2015* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trade*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trade)*)*

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body” (*Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2015* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy))

OBSERVATION 2. The GOAL: Better US foreign relations with China. This should be our foreign policy goal because improving the US relationship with China is critical for us and the rest of the world

Miller Center of Public Affairs at the Univ. of Virginia 2011 (report of a conference of experts, managed by: **Admiral Joseph W. Prueher** - the Miller Center’s James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor; consulting professor at Stanford University’s Institute of International Studies; former US Ambassador to China. **Heather Mullins Crislip** is a Visiting Fellow coordinating the Miller Center’s Policy Programs. She also served as the Staff Director of the David R. Goode National Transportation Conference at the Miller Center. **Taylor Reveley** is the Associate Director of the Miller Center. He has served as the coordinating attorney for the Center's National War Powers Commission, co-chaired by former Secretaries of State James Baker and Warren Christopher. Mr. Reveley previously was an attorney with Hunton & Williams) “A Way Ahead With China” 2011 <http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/chinaroundtable-report.pdf>

The PRC has gone through years of great tribulations, and is in the process of both exercising and returning to great power status in the world. The United States is also adjusting to China’s rise to world power. Arguably, the U.S. relationship with China is the largest and most critical one for us to get right. This immense, multifaceted relationship encompassing political, economic, cultural, and military aspects is generally stable. The relationship has the potential to be much better, not only for China and the U.S., but for a world that can only benefit from a more stable, more predictable and more positive future.

OBSERVATION 3. The FAILURES of current policy.

FAILURE 1. Broken Promise. We see this in 2 sub-points

A. Promise Made. In 1982, President Reagan promised China that we would reduce and then end arms sales to Taiwan.

Ambassador Harvey Feldman 2007 (helped plan President Richard Nixon’s historic first visit to China as a member of the State Department’s Policy Planning Council; later served as Director of the Office of the Republic of China Affairs; Distinguished Fellow in China Policy in the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation) 2 Oct 2007 "President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan and Their Meaning Today" <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2007/10/President-Reagans-Six-Assurances-to-Taiwan-and-Their-Meaning-Today>

In the spring of 1982, the PRC began threatening to severely downgrade its relationship with the U.S. unless something was done about the arms sales, and some in Beijing were discussing "playing the Soviet card." Then-Secretary of State Alexander Haig was convinced that, "in the last quarter of the twentieth century, China may well be the most important country in the world" in terms of American interests. He pressed hard and successfully for some form of accommodation with Beijing, although his ultimate recommendation that the U.S. agree to cease arms sales to Taiwan was not accepted. The result was the communiqué signed on August 17, 1982--almost two months after Haig had left office. In it, the U.S. government stated "that it does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to a final resolution."

B. Promise Broken. The U.S. violates the promise, and angers China, by selling arms to Taiwan

NEW YORK TIMES in December 2014 (journalist Austin Ramzy) 19 Dec 2014 “China Protests Planned U.S. Sale of Warships to Taiwan” <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/20/world/asia/china-protests-planned-us-sale-of-warships-to-taiwan.html?ref=topics&_r=0>

[China](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/china/index.html?inline=nyt-geo) sharply criticized on Friday a decision by Washington to sell four used warships to [Taiwan](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/taiwan/index.html?inline=nyt-geo), the self-ruled island it considers part of its territory. [President Obama](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/o/barack_obama/index.html?inline=nyt-per) signed legislation on Thursday approving the sale of four [Hazard Perry-class guided-missile frigates](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/fact_display.asp?cid=4200&tid=1300&ct=4), the first military hardware sale to Taiwan since 2011, when the[United States transferred upgrades](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/23/world/asia/china-expresses-anger-over-latest-us-arms-sales-to-taiwan.html) to F-16 fighter jets.

**The New York Times then continues later in the same context saying QUOTE:**

The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act authorizes the United States to provide Taiwan with “arms of a defensive character.” China, which has a much larger military than Taiwan, regularly protests such sales. In 2010, Beijing called off military exchanges with Washington for about a year over the announcement of a [$6.4 billion deal](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/30/world/asia/30arms.html) to sell Black Hawk helicopters, air defense missiles and mine hunting ships to Taiwan.

FAILURE 2. No military solution. Arms sales to Taiwan are useless because there is no military solution to its dispute with China.

A recent Taiwan military study concludes that no amount of US military support could save Taiwan from Chinese attack

Retired Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr 2013. (former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; and former Director of Chinese Affairs at the US State Department) 16 Nov 2013 The Beijing-Taipei-Washington Triangle, Remarks to an Academic Seminar at the Miller Center, University of Virginia <http://chasfreeman.net/beijing-taipei-washington-triangle/>

In practice, if not yet rhetorically, Taipei also seems to have altered its military strategy, including its approach to arms purchases from the United States.  The military balance in the Taiwan Strait has shifted so decisively in favor of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) that it’s no longer possible to sustain the fantasy that an island of 23 million people can balance the military power of a dynamic society of 1.3 billion. Whatever the answer to Taiwan’s continued survival as a prosperous democratic society may be, it’s not military.  By 2020, according to a recent report from Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense, the PLA may be able to overwhelm the island even in the face of armed U.S. opposition.  This finding leads ineluctably to a judgment that cross-Strait challenges must be met by political rather than military means.  Such a judgment is implicit in the fact that Taipei’s defense budget has been shrinking, while Beijing’s continues its rapid growth.

OBSERVATION 4. We offer the following PLAN

1. Congress amends the Taiwan Relations Act to stop US policy of selling arms to Taiwan. Arms will only be sold to Taiwan in the case of an outbreak of hostilities between China and Taiwan initiated by China.

2. Enforcement through normal means. Violators punished the same as similar violations under existing law

3. Funding through existing budgets of existing agencies.

4. Plan takes effect 3 days after an Affirmative ballot.

5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 5. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. US / China relations. We see this in 2 sub-points:

A. The Link: We meet our foreign policy Goal because changing our policy on Taiwan arms sales is key to improving US/China relations

Dr. Ted Galen Carpenter 2013 (PhD in US diplomatic history; senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) 7 Nov 2013 U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan: A Delicate, Troublesome Issue <http://www.cato.org/blog/us-arms-sales-taiwan-delicate-troublesome-issue>

However, arms sales of any sort to Taipei have long been a major irritant in U.S.-China relations. Chinese leaders have never wavered in their contention that Taiwan is rightfully a part of China, and they view U.S. weapons sales as provocative. Beijing is especially wrathful about transfers of modern weapons with offensive potential. Selling the advanced F-16 models, the Apaches, or the Patriots would likely produce a surge in bilateral tensions. Washington and Beijing are already on poor terms regarding other issues, especially the Obama administration’s unsubtle support for East Asian countries challenging China’s territorial claims in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. U.S. officials need to proceed with considerable caution on the issue of arms sales. Understandably, Washington would like to see Taiwan maintain its de facto independence and remain out of Beijing’s political orbit. But a cordial relationship with China is important to America, both strategically and economically. The last thing this country needs is a renewed crisis in East Asia.

B. The Impact: Improving US/China relations is critical to meeting every major challenge the world faces today

US-China Smart Power Commission 2009(chaired by former US Defense Secretary William Cohen & Maurice R. Greenberg) March 2009, "Smart Power in US-China Relations" CENTER FOR STRATEGIC & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090309_mcgiffert_uschinasmartpower_web.pdf>

The evolution of Sino-US relations over the next months, years, and decades has the potential to have a greater impact on global security and prosperity than any other bilateral or multilateral arrangement. In this sense, many analysts consider the US-China diplomatic relationship to be the most influential in the world. Without question, strong and stable US alliances provide the foundation for the protection and promotion of US and global interests. Yet within that broad framework, the trajectory of US-China relations will determine the success, or failure, of efforts to address the toughest global challenges: global financial stability, energy security and climate change, nonproliferation, and terrorism, among other pressing issues. Shepherding that trajectory in the most constructive direction possible must therefore be a priority for Washington and Beijing. Virtually no major global challenge can be met without US-China cooperation.

ADVANTAGE 2. Avoid Chinese Espionage. We see this in 2 sub-points:

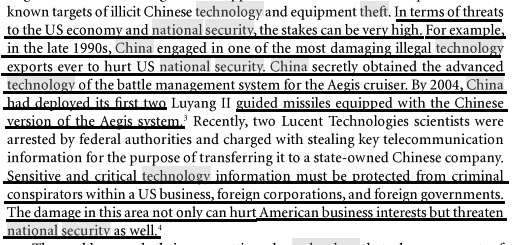
A. The Link: Taiwanese military officials have a history of passing classified defense technology to China

*Lauren Dickey 2014 (research associate for U.S. foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations) 15 Sept 2014 “*Taiwan Wants to Buy U.S. Subs; This Would Be a Bad Deal for Both Countries *“* <http://blogs.cfr.org/davidson/2014/09/15/taiwan-wants-to-buy-u-s-subs-this-would-be-a-bad-deal-for-both-countries/>

The current strategic advantage the United States has in its use and ownership of nuclear submarines is not something the Pentagon should be eager to share with others. As Taiwanese military officials have an unfortunate history of passing [classified military information](http://www.defensenews.com/article/20140428/DEFREG03/304280015/Taiwan-Air-Force-Major-Jailed-Spying-China" \t "_blank) into the hands of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), Washington should [remain cautious](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/taiwanese-spies-undermine-us-confidence-ex-diplomat-says/2013/03/19/40e59150-90ba-11e2-9abd-e4c5c9dc5e90_story.html" \t "_blank) in transferring any sensitive technology or capabilities to Taiwan. These cost-benefit concerns, as well as those of espionage, emerged initially around the Bush submarine deal in 2001, but linger today as the Pentagon appears to weigh the option of a submarine program with Taiwan.

B. The Impact: Hurts US businesses and national security. Chinese technology theft hurts US business interests and threatens national security

Dr. Edward J. Maggio 2009 (PhD; Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice, New York Institute of Technology ) Private Security in the 21st Century <https://books.google.fr/books?id=CZNdwscVq1EC&pg=PA303&lpg=PA303&dq=national+security+china+technology+theft&source=bl&ots=suyk2A9RLt&sig=yLxYPeKuuZxb3dXfQxWfga0Wpzk&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAzgKahUKEwjHk8712Z7GAhWBaRQKHa8XABo#v=onepage&q=national%20security%20china%20technology%20theft&f=false>



2A EVIDENCE: TAIWAN ARMS SALES

GOAL / OPENING QUOTES

Improved US/China relationship is imperative

*Retired Admiral Bill Owens 2009 (former vice-chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff) 17 Nov 2009* America must start treating China as a friend <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/69241506-d3b2-11de-8caf-00144feabdc0.html>

The US-China relationship is a vital interest for the two countries and the world. Throughout history, great powers have tended to become adversaries. Now, for a few years, we have a chance to break that cycle. It will take strong and enduring commitment on both sides. But a new and engaging relationship is imperative for our common good.

The US and China have potential for much better relationship, and the world would benefit from it

Miller Center of Public Affairs at the Univ. of Virginia 2011 (report of a conference of experts, managed by: **Admiral Joseph W. Prueher** is the Miller Center’s James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor; consulting professor at Stanford University’s Institute of International Studies; former US Ambassador to China. **Heather Mullins Crislip** is a Visiting Fellow coordinating the Miller Center’s Policy Programs. She also served as the Staff Director of the David R. Goode National Transportation Conference at the Miller Center. **Taylor Reveley** is the Associate Director of the Miller Center. He has served as the coordinating attorney for the Center's National War Powers Commission, co-chaired by Secretaries of State James Baker and Warren Christopher. Mr. Reveley previously was an attorney with Hunton & Williams) “A Way Ahead With China” 2011 <http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/chinaroundtable-report.pdf>

The PRC has gone through years of great tribulations, and is in the process of both exercising and returning to great power status in the world. The United States is also adjusting to China’s rise to world power. Arguably, the U.S. relationship with China is the largest and most critical one for us to get right. This immense, multifaceted relationship encompassing political, economic, cultural, and military aspects is generally stable. The relationship has the potential to be much better, not only for China and the U.S., but for a world that can only benefit from a more stable, more predictable and more positive future.

INHERENCY

Quantification of US arms sales to Taiwan

Arms Control Association 2012 (national nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to promoting public understanding of and support for effective arms control policies) updated Oct 2012 U.S. Conventional Arms Sales to Taiwan <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/taiwanarms>

The value of annual U.S. government arms sales agreements with Taiwan varies, ranging in the past 20 years from a low of $10 million in fiscal year 2006 to a high of nearly $5.37 billion in fiscal year 1993. (See chart on reverse side.) The United States also authorizes private U.S. arms companies to conclude weapon deals with Taiwan. The value of reported arms deliveries through these commercial channels has varied between roughly $5 million and $364 million each year.

Taiwan Relations Act mandates US arms sales to Taiwan

David J. Firestein 2014 (EastWest Institute, Vice President and Perot Fellow; 18 years worked as a US diplomat) Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 5 June 2014 “China’s Relations with Taiwan and North Korea” <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Firestein-USCC%20Testimony%20%28FINAL%29.pdf> (ellipses in original)

The cross-Strait relationship and its attendant military and security issues directly implicate the interests of the United States for reasons of which the Commission is well aware – but not least, because of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which states, inter alia, that “it is the policy of the United States… to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means… a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.” More specifically, the TRA mandates that the United States “make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”

US arms sales to Taiwan violate the terms of the 1982 Communique. David Firestein generally supports US arms sales to Taiwan, but he admits in 2014:

David J. Firestein 2014 (EastWest Institute, Vice President and Perot Fellow; 18 years worked as a US diplomat) Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 5 June 2014 “China’s Relations with Taiwan and North Korea” <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Firestein-USCC%20Testimony%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

The quantitative limits set forth in the Communique, while not computed in concrete terms within the document itself, actually represent a quantifiable, knowable number. In our research on this issue, we calculated that number – that is, the upper limit to which the United States committed when it agreed that “its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China.” As noted earlier, the “recent years” referred to in this clause means the period between January 1, 1979 and August 17, 1982, the date of the 1982 Communique. This is a very finite period and therefore a very finite data set, and the “level” in question is a matter of open-source record. In our research, we compiled the publicly available data on U.S. arms deliveries to Taiwan, adjusted the numbers for inflation (using 2012 dollars), and then generated – for the first time, to our knowledge – a specific dollar figure for the cap referenced in the 1982 Communique. That figure came to $941 million in 2012 dollars. Using inflation-adjusted numbers so as to facilitate an apples-to-apples comparison of the data over time, we then assessed U.S. arms sales from 1982 to 2011, the last year for which we had a full set of data at the time we were crafting our analysis, against that figure. In 15 of the 30 years in question, the United States delivered arms to Taiwan in excess of a reasonable construction of the quantitative limit it had signed onto in 1982 – that is, in excess of the inflation-adjusted figure of $941 million. For years, the Chinese have protested, publicly and privately, what they have regarded as the United States’ failure to adhere to its own stated policy. It turns out, they were right.

FAILURES

US/China Relationship Damaged

Taiwan arms sales damage US/China relationship and China/Taiwan relationship

Reuters news service 2014. China angered by latest U.S. arms sale plan for Taiwan 9 Apr 2014 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/09/us-china-usa-taiwan-idUSBREA380H520140409>

China's defense ministry expressed anger on Wednesday after the U.S. House of Representatives agreed to authorize the sale to Taiwan of four second-hand U.S. warships, saying the United States had ignored Chinese protests. China and Taiwan have been ruled separately since defeated Nationalist forces fled to the island at the end of a civil war with the communists in 1949. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. The U.S. legislation also reaffirmed the Taiwan Relations Act, which obligates the United States to come to Taiwan's aid in the event of an attack, and was enacted in 1979 when Washington severed formal ties with the island in favor of recognizing the People's Republic of China in Beijing. China's defense ministry said it was resolutely opposed to all arms sales to Taiwan, saying it was an interference in China's internal affairs. "The U.S. side ignored China's strong opposition, and insisted on passing the bill pushing weapons sales to Taiwan," the ministry said in a statement on its website ([www.mod.gov.cn](http://www.mod.gov.cn)). "This act is highly damaging, and doubtless will seriously interfere in and damage the development of Sino-U.S. military ties and the peaceful development of cross-strait relations."

Taiwan is the most crucial issue in US/China relations, and arms sales are hurting the relationship

Arms Control Association 2012 (national nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to promoting public understanding of and support for effective arms control policies) updated Oct 2012 U.S. Conventional Arms Sales to Taiwan <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/taiwanarms>

China, which claims Taiwan is the "most crucial and most sensitive issue" in its relations with the United States, maintains that U.S. arms sales to Taipei infringe on China's sovereignty because Washington acknowledges that Taiwan is part of China. Beijing also charges that sales contradict the U.S.-China joint communiqué issued August 17, 1982. That document stated that the United States  
"Does not seek to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, that its arms sales to Taiwan will not exceed, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China, and that it intends gradually to reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading, over a period of time, to a final resolution."

No Security Benefit

Even Taiwan knows that their arms requests don’t really matter – they’re only for political value

Retired Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr 2013. (former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; and former Director of Chinese Affairs at the US State Department) 16 Nov 2013 The Beijing-Taipei-Washington Triangle, Remarks to an Academic Seminar at the Miller Center, University of Virginia <http://chasfreeman.net/beijing-taipei-washington-triangle/>

In the past, Taipei sought approval of weapons purchases from Washington as much or more for their political value as tokens of American politico-military support as for their contributions to its defense.  Taipei still asks for advanced American weaponry, but there is now no money and not much oomph behind these requests.  They hold Taiwan’s military-industrial constituency in America in thrall to continuing dreams of a lucrative arms market.

Taiwan arms sales have no effect on security – the balance of power is irreversibly in favor of China

Retired Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr 2013. (former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; and former Director of Chinese Affairs at the US State Department) 16 Nov 2013 The Beijing-Taipei-Washington Triangle, Remarks to an Academic Seminar at the Miller Center, University of Virginia <http://chasfreeman.net/beijing-taipei-washington-triangle/>

Taipei still asks for advanced American weaponry, but there is now no money and not much oomph behind these requests.  They hold Taiwan’s military-industrial constituency in America in thrall to continuing dreams of a lucrative arms market.  If realized, however, these sales would not have much, if any, effect on the military balance in the Taiwan Strait.  With that balance now irreversibly in favor of the mainland, U.S. weapons transfers cannot boost the island’s sense of security as they once did.  Still less do U.S. arms sales serve to embolden Taiwan’s political elite to defy Beijing or the logic of eventual reunification with the mainland, as Beijing long supposed they did.

The only way Taiwan could deter a Chinese threat is by increasing defense spending, but they aren’t going to do it

Bonnie Glaser and Anastasia Mark 2015 (Glaser is a senior adviser for Asia in the Freeman Chair in China Studies, where she works on issues related to Chinese foreign and security policy. She is also a senior associate with Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Pacific Forum and a consultant for the U.S. government on East Asia. Mark is a Masters candidate at Georgetown’s Asia Studies Program in the School of Foreign Service and works as an intern for CSIS’s Asia Maritime Transparency Project. She has over four years of experience living in China ) Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative 18 Mar 2015 TAIWAN’S DEFENSE SPENDING: THE SECURITY CONSEQUENCES OF CHOOSING BUTTER OVER GUNS <http://amti.csis.org/taiwans-defense-spending-the-security-consequences-of-choosing-butter-over-guns/>

More resources are evidently needed.  The DPP promises to raise the defense budget to 3 percent of GDP if it returns to power, but many observers are skeptical that it would follow through on this pledge. After all, when the DPP was the ruling party, defense spending dropped annually as a percentage of GDP from 2.9 in 2001 to 2.1 in 2006, and then inched upwards to 2.4 percent in 2007, its final year in office. This suggests that regardless of which party is elected in 2016, significant increases in defense spending are unlikely. Competing pressures from the electorate to support social welfare programs means that a marginal reversal of the current downward trend is the best case scenario. Taiwan cannot outspend China and it cannot prevent the cross-Strait capabilities gap from widening. But Taiwan can raise the costs and risks to the PRC of an attack, which would likely reduce the possibility that Beijing will opt to use military force to achieve its goals. To do so, Taiwan must devote greater resources to defense spending.

If the goal of arms sales is to protect Taiwan from the mainland, the policy is failing. David Firestein generally supports US arms sales to Taiwan, but he admits in 2014:

David J. Firestein 2014 (EastWest Institute, Vice President and Perot Fellow; 18 years worked as a US diplomat) Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 5 June 2014 “China’s Relations with Taiwan and North Korea” <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Firestein-USCC%20Testimony%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

The second point to make is even more fundamental: if the ultimate aim of U.S. policy toward Taiwan, as expressed most directly in the TRA, is to protect Taiwan from the mainland (e.g., “to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability”), then, clearly, the policy is failing. By virtually any meaningful measure, Taiwan has seen its net security position vis-à-vis the mainland deteriorate steadily and dramatically over the last three decades, as China’s military has developed and its posture toward Taiwan has hardened. In 1979, when the United States derecognized the Republic of China in favor of the People’s Republic of China – and when the TRA was adopted – the mainland had no ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan. Today, there are between 1,600 and 2,000, depending on which authoritative estimate you believe. Whereas in 1979, Taiwan’s “self-defense capability” was sufficient to allow the island to stave off a conventional mainland assault indefinitely and indeed possibly even prevail in a such a conflict or at least fight to a stalemate, today, estimates of the length of time it would take for Chinese military forces to subjugate Taiwan range from one month to seven minutes.

We can’t know what weapons Taiwan needs because they don’t have a clear defense strategy

Wendell Minnick 2015 (B.S., M.A., is an author, commentator, journalist and speaker who has spent two decades covering military and security issues in Asia, including one book on intelligence and over 1,000 articles; currently Asia Bureau Chief for [Defense News](http://www.defensenews.com/), a Washington-based defense weekly newspaper) 27 May 2015 DEFENSE NEWS Taiwan Pushes for New Weapons on All Fronts <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/warfare/2015/05/27/taiwan-requirements-submarine-frigate-destroyer-helicopter-budget-china/26860647/>

When the US government or a US think tank complains that the Taiwanese are not spending enough on defense, they are talking about dollar value, not quality, said Ching Chang, research fellow for the conservative ROC Society for Strategic Studies. "Value is subjective," he said. "How can you decide what kind of weapons you need when you do not know what size of military force you will have in 10 years? Do you prepare to fight China based on force levels of the past, with 300,000 troops? This would be very different from the current 170,000 troops. What about a reduced force of 100,000? How can the US define the value of Taiwan's budget numbers based solely on how much US weapons they procure?"

US arms sales to Taiwan are doomed to fail, because they will never keep up with China’s military capability. David Firestein generally supports US arms sales to Taiwan, but he admits in 2014:

David J. Firestein 2014 (EastWest Institute, Vice President and Perot Fellow; 18 years worked as a US diplomat) Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 5 June 2014 “China’s Relations with Taiwan and North Korea” <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Firestein-USCC%20Testimony%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

In short, the U.S. policy architecture, while displaying some notable strengths, does not seem to be performing optimally, at least as currently implemented. It is not because of U.S. policies, per se, that Taiwan is now in a vastly weaker position relative to the mainland than it was two generations ago. But it is fair to say that U.S. policies, as implemented, do not seem to be able to keep pace with events in the region, particularly the rapid and well-documented development of China’s military capabilities. To put it in simple terms, the United States is selling arms to Taiwan at an arithmetic pace, while China’s military capabilities are developing at something closer to a geometric trajectory. On these terms, this is a game that the United States and Taiwan cannot win.

Arms sales to Taiwan create a “vicious circle” that escalates problems. There is no military solution

Miller Center of Public Affairs at the Univ. of Virginia 2011 (report of a conference of experts, managed by: **Admiral Joseph W. Prueher** is the Miller Center’s James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor; consulting professor at Stanford University’s Institute of International Studies; former US Ambassador to China. **Heather Mullins Crislip** is a Visiting Fellow coordinating the Miller Center’s Policy Programs. She also served as the Staff Director of the David R. Goode National Transportation Conference at the Miller Center. **Taylor Reveley** is the Associate Director of the Miller Center. He has served as the coordinating attorney for the Center's National War Powers Commission, co-chaired by Secretaries of State James Baker and Warren Christopher. Mr. Reveley previously was an attorney with Hunton & Williams) “A Way Ahead With China” 2011 <http://web1.millercenter.org/conferences/chinaroundtable-report.pdf>

A peaceful resolution of the long standing Taiwan issue, acceptable on both sides of the strait would indeed be a boon to stability in East Asia, as well as to U.S./China relations. It is also an issue where progress can be made. Taiwan has over time and with our encouragement become an economically successful democratic polity. Unfortunately, U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are part of a vicious circle, leading to the Taiwan issue that is clearly political, and increasingly economic, being always discussed in military terms. The solution to the Taiwan issue is not a military one, so we should discuss it in the layers of economy, politics, and culture.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Solving Taiwan arms sales issue would advance US/China relations

William Ide 2011 (journalist) Voice of America News 21 May 2011 China Presses US to Reassess Law on Taiwan Arms Sales <http://www.voanews.com/content/china-presses-us-to-reassess-law-on-taiwan-arms-sales-122426244/167508.html> (brackets added)

General Chen Bingde had some pointed remarks about U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.  Speaking on Wednesday at the National Defense University here in Washington, he called such sales the main source of friction in U.S.-China relations. "If America could put herself into our shoes, appreciate and support China's stance on Taiwan and prudently address the major sensitive issues between our two nations, the Sino-U.S. state-to-state and military-to-military relations will be able to advance in the right direction in a sound, stable and continuous manner," he said.

Ending Taiwan arms sales would set a new course for good relations with China

*Retired Admiral Bill Owens 2009 (former vice-chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff) 17 Nov 2009* America must start treating China as a friend <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/69241506-d3b2-11de-8caf-00144feabdc0.html>

It is often politically expedient to paint China as an adversary, or worse, a future enemy. Our national security apparatus is aiming to continue the present level of defence spending and emphasising 30-year-old legislation that is doing more harm than good. The Taiwan Relations Act was passed in 1979 after the establishment of relations with the People’s Republic of China and the breaking of relations with the Republic of China. It is the basis on which we continue to sell arms to Taiwan, an act that is not in our best interest. A thoughtful review of this outdated legislation is warranted and would be viewed by China as a genuine attempt to set a new course for a relationship that can develop into openness, trust and even friendship.

Resolving arms sales issue is key to Chinese cooperation on pressing issues like N. Korea nuclear proliferation

Associated Press 2011 (journalist Peter Enav) Analysis: Hard choices for US on Taiwan arms sales 20 May 2011 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/05/20/analysis-hard-choices-us-taiwan-arms-sales.html>

President Ma Ying-jeou's latest plea for 66 F-16 C/Ds, made in a videoconference with a Washington think tank last week, likened procurement of the warplanes to a confidence booster for Taiwan, allowing it to negotiate further with Beijing in one of Asia's perennial flash points. The plea is a reminder that Beijing's growing power and influence is raising the costs of Washington's involvement in the decades-long feud between Taiwan and China. While the US has committed itself to providing Taiwan the means to defend against a Chinese attack - something the mainland has threatened if the island moves to make its de facto independence permanent - it knows that doing so would undermine its ability to improve ties with China and to secure Chinese help on pressing issues such as North Korean nuclear proliferation.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

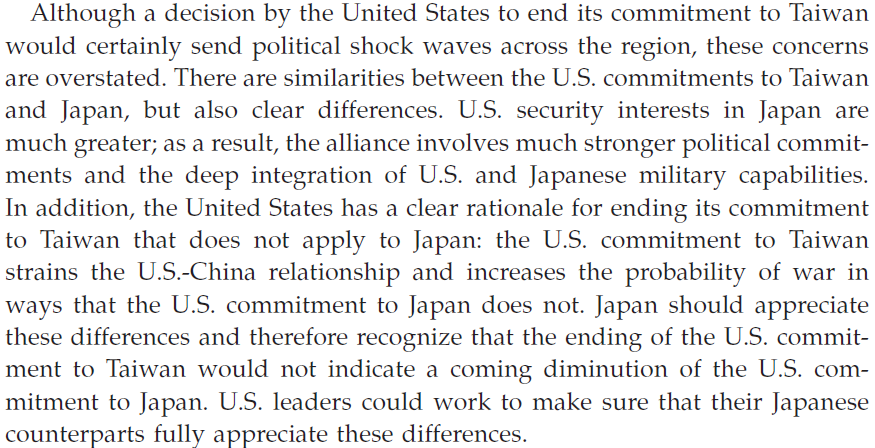
“Moral imperative to support Taiwan” – Response: US policy must be based on US security, we have no obligation to do what other countries want us to do

Prof. Charles Glaser 2011. (*Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington Univ) “Disengaging from Taiwan” July/Aug 2011 FOREIGN AFFAIRS* <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2011-07-01/disengaging-taiwan>

Douglas Paal, meanwhile, believes that the people of Taiwan should have a large say in U.S. decision-making. International politics, however, rarely works this way. Especially when important national security interests are at stake, states make foreign policy decisions based on their own interests. Friends, allies, and adversaries may not like these decisions, but they have little choice but to adapt to them.

“Hurts alliance with Japan” – Response: Even complete abandonment of Taiwan would not cause significant problem for Japan

Prof. Charles L. Glaser 2015. (*Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and Director of the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington Univ* ) A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, Spring 2015 <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/isec_a_00199.pdf>



“Lose Taiwan security” – Response: Taiwan cannot procure enough US weapons to arm its way to security

**David Firestein generally supports arms sales to Taiwan, but he admits in 2014:**

David J. Firestein 2014 (EastWest Institute, Vice President and Perot Fellow; 18 years worked as a US diplomat) Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission 5 June 2014 “China’s Relations with Taiwan and North Korea” <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Firestein-USCC%20Testimony%20%28FINAL%29.pdf>

Sixth, Taiwan faces its own conundrum: Taiwan’s paramount goal is its own security and the preservation of its cherished way of life, but, for a variety of reasons, it can neither provide the desired level of security for itself nor procure itself out of its security dilemma with the mainland through the purchase of defense articles and services from the United States, Taiwan’s only major external supplier of arms. Or, to couch the same point in terms of U.S. policy, the United States cannot arm Taiwan out of its security dilemma with China. This suggests that to attain its goal of security, Taiwan ultimately needs to address the imbalance of power it now faces not merely on the defense side, but also on the threat side – that is, on the Chinese side of the balance of power equation.

“Lose arms sales business” – Response: China is threatening to sanction US companies involved in Taiwan arms sales, so they’ll lose business in Status Quo too

Prof. Suisheng Zhao 2013 (professor of Chinese politics and foreign policy at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of International Studies) “Core interests and great power responsibilities – The evolving pattern of China’s foreign policy” China and the International System: Becoming a World Power, Chapter 3 <https://books.google.fr/books?id=Jm6krAh2LS0C&pg=PA37&lpg=PA37&dq=arms+sales+taiwan+anger+china&source=bl&ots=j1ahxOIulE&sig=kKg8jyHvPiFd6hQBoAxtBEH8b10&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CEwQ6AEwB2oVChMIrduOst2exgIVBdUUCh2jHADn#v=onepage&q=arms%20sales%20taiwan%20anger%20china&f=false>

