

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 19, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Obama,

America's long-standing commitment to Taiwan is a multifaceted and bipartisan effort that includes many components, all of which must be exercised as we seek to support and safeguard the ability of the people on Taiwan to determine their own future. One critical component is U.S. security assistance and arms sales to Taiwan to help modernize and build the capacity of its armed forces. We believe this support must be more robust.

While recent relations between Taiwan and China have been more encouraging, we remain concerned that China's ongoing military modernization, and the threat it poses to peace and security in the Taiwan Strait, is not being adequately addressed. We recognize that a great deal of bilateral security cooperation is taking place between the United States and Taiwan, including more than \$12 billion worth of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan since the start of your administration. These actions have been welcome. However, we are troubled that it has now been over four years—the longest period since the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979—since the administration has notified Congress of a new arms sale package.

The United States must continue to further our interests in cross-Strait stability—a vital component of which is arms sales to Taiwan, pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act—even when doing so brings short-term tensions in our relationship with China. The United States should develop and implement an ongoing plan for Taiwan's military modernization, including how the administration plans to address Taiwan's legitimate requirement for additional new manned fighters and submarines and other self-defense articles and services. Given some of the obstacles with the current approach, we believe that a regular and routine process for the provision of security assistance to Taiwan is essential.

Finally, we believe that it is equally important that Taiwan strive to meet President Ma Ying-jeou's 2008 commitment to invest at least 3 percent of its annual gross domestic product on defense. We are increasingly concerned that, absent a change in defense spending, Taiwan's military will continue to be under-resourced and unable to make the investments necessary to maintain a credible deterrent across the strait, especially as its limited defense resources are increasingly constrained by growing military personnel costs.

Consistent with the requirements of the Taiwan Relations Act, which call for regular consultations between the Executive Branch and Congress, we look forward to the opportunity to discuss together how best we can support and strengthen Taiwan's self-defense capabilities, including any arms sales under consideration or planned.

Sincerely,



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator



JOHN MCCAIN
United States Senator