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## **US-Taiwan Business Council Supports House Resolution 676 (H. Res. 676) On Taiwan Arms Sales**

The US-Taiwan Business Council - a non-profit trade association representing the interests of U.S. businesses in Taiwan - supports the passage of H.Res.676 on the matter of U.S. support for Taiwan's legitimate national defense needs, and specifically supports immediately allowing Taiwan to submit a Letter of Request (LOR) to the U.S. Department of Defense for Price and Availability (P&A) data for F-16C/D fighters.

While Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's unpredictability has often been to the detriment of U.S. interests in the Asia Pacific, America has always looked to the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) as the principal guide for bipartisan support of Taiwan's legitimate defense needs. The TRA calls for the U.S. to provide Taiwan with such defensive items as Taiwan requires, in order to maintain a balance of power in the Taiwan Strait.

The United States, in denying Taiwan the opportunity to submit an LOR, has undertaken an unprecedented action - no NATO or non-NATO ally has previously been denied the right to submit an LOR. Submission of an LOR does not require the United States to sell the equipment requested; it simply launches the process for consideration. In this instance, it would allow the release of P&A data, which would then allow the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense to secure badly needed funds in support of its force modernization program. This would seem a straightforward deal, since F-16s are a part of Taiwan's existing arsenal and do not constitute a new capability.

America has generally separated the short-term ebbs and flows of U.S. policy toward Taiwan from our long-term commitment to maintaining peace and security in the Taiwan Strait - an aspect of which is the arms sales process. No administration, going back to President Carter, has undertaken to weaken Taiwan's military capabilities in order to censure a sitting Taiwan president, even if his actions have been viewed as contrary to U.S. policy. The precedent set raises serious concerns about the long-term viability of a sustained U.S. security commitment to Taiwan.

The US-Taiwan Business Council encourages our congressional leaders to support H.Res.676. The Council also suggests that all concerned parties call on the President's National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley, to explain why the administration is using our security commitment to Taiwan to admonish President Chen Shui-bian. Arms sales are an aspect of America's commitment to Taiwan's defense under the TRA, of preserving the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait, and of maintaining the 'status quo'. It is not, and should not be, a short-term tool for censure.

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