John Cornyn

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To provide Taiwan with critically needed United States-built multirole fighter aircraft to strengthen its self-defense capability against the increasing military threat from China.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

_____

Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To provide Taiwan with critically needed United States-built multirole fighter aircraft to strengthen its self-defense capability against the increasing military threat from China.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Taiwan Airpower Modernization Act of 2011".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings.

(1) The Department of Defense, in its 2011 report to Congress on "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China," found that "China continued modernizing its military in 2010, with a focus on Taiwan contingencies, even as cross-Strait relations improved. The PLA seeks the capability to deter Taiwan independence and influence Taiwan to settle the dispute on Beijing's terms. In pursuit of this objective, Beijing is developing capabilities intended to deter, delay, or deny possible U.S. support for the island in the event of conflict. The balance of cross-Strait military forces and capabilities continues to shift in the mainland's favor." In this report, the Department of Defense also concludes that, over the next decade, China's air force will remain primarily focused on "building the capabilities required to pose a credible military threat to Taiwan and U.S. forces in East Asia, deter Taiwan independence, or influence Taiwan to settle the dispute on Beijing's terms".

(2) The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) conducted a preliminary assessment of the status and capabilities of Taiwan's air force in an unclassified report, dated January 21, 2010. The DIA found that, "[a]lthough Taiwan has nearly 400 combat air-

craft in service, far fewer of these are operationally capable." The report concluded, "Many of Taiwan's fighter aircraft are close to or beyond service life, and many require extensive maintenance support. The retirement of Mirage and F–5 aircraft will reduce the total size of the Taiwan Air Force."

(3) Since 2006, authorities from Taiwan have made repeated requests to purchase 66 F–16C/D multirole fighter aircraft from the United States, in an effort to modernize the air force of Taiwan and maintain its self-defense capability.

(4) According to a report by the Perryman Group, a private economic research and analysis firm, the requested sale of F–16C/Ds to Taiwan "would generate some $8,700,000,000 in output (gross product) and more than 87,664 person-years of employment in the US," including 23,407 direct jobs, while "economic benefits would likely be realized in 44 states and the District of Columbia".

(5) The sale of F–16C/Ds to Taiwan would both sustain existing high-skilled jobs in key United States manufacturing sectors and create new ones.

(6) On August 1, 2011, a bipartisan group of 181 members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to the President, expressing support for the

sale of F–16C/Ds to Taiwan. On May 26, 2011, a bipartisan group of 45 members of the Senate sent a similar letter to the President, expressing support for the sale. Two other members of the Senate wrote separately to the President or the Secretary of State in 2011 and expressed support for this sale.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a critical element to maintaining peace and stability in Asia in the face of China's two-decade long program of military modernization and expansion of military capabilities is ensuring a militarily strong and confident Taiwan;

(2) a Taiwan that is confident in its ability to deter Chinese aggression will increase its ability to proceed in developing peaceful relations with China in areas of mutual interest;

(3) the cross-Strait military balance between China and our longstanding strategic partner, Taiwan, has clearly shifted in China's favor;

(4) China's military expansion poses a clear and present danger to Taiwan, and this threat has very serious implications for the ability of the United States to fulfill its security obligations to allies in

the region and protect our vital United States national interests in East Asia;

(5) Taiwan's air force continues to deteriorate, and it needs additional advanced multirole fighter aircraft in order to modernize its fleet and maintain a sufficient self-defense capability;

(6) the United States has a statutory obligation under the Taiwan Relations Act (22 U.S.C. 3301 et seq.) to provide Taiwan the defense articles necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain sufficient self-defense capabilities, in furtherance of maintaining peace and stability in the western Pacific region;

(7) in order to comply with the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States must provide Taiwan with additional advanced multirole fighter aircraft, as well as significant upgrades to Taiwan's existing fleet of multirole fighter aircraft; and

(8) the proposed sale of F–16C/D multirole fighter aircraft to Taiwan would have significant economic benefits to the United States economy.

SEC. 4. SALE OF F–16 AIRCRAFT TO TAIWAN.

The President shall carry out the sale of no fewer than 66 F–16C/D multirole fighter aircraft to Taiwan.