



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on September 1, 2023

## U.S. Approves First-ever Defense Aid for Taiwan Under Sovereign State Program

SINGAPORE — The United States has authorized financial aid for the first-ever transfer of U.S. military equipment to Taiwan under a program usually meant for sovereign nations, based on a notification sent to Congress on August 29.

As part of the State Department’s foreign military financing (FMF) program, the package amounts to \$80 million and will be paid for by U.S. taxpayers. The United States has hitherto sold weapons to Taiwan via a separate program known as Foreign Military Sales (FMS).

“FMF will be used to strengthen Taiwan’s self-defense capabilities through joint and combined defense capability and enhanced maritime domain awareness and maritime security capability,” the department indicated in its notification to Congress, CNN reported.



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Besides, the letter sent to Congress stated that the sale could include a wide range of capabilities, such as air and coastal defense systems, ballistic missile defense, cyber defense, drones, military training, individual soldier protective gear, and ammunition. The fund might also be used to buy protective gear; a range of small, medium, and heavy weapons systems; ammunition; armored and infantry fighting vehicles; as well as training for Taiwanese military forces. That being said, it may take months or years for the military aid to reach Taiwan, as it will be part of future equipment purchased by the Pentagon.

Such a transfer would form part of the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, which President Biden signed in December of last year, that authorizes up to \$2 billion in direct loans to Taiwan for military uses.

The Associated Press reported that while the package was “modest” in amount, “the implications of using the so-called Foreign Military Financing program to provide it will likely infuriate China.”

“FMF simply enables eligible partner nations to purchase US defense articles, services, and training through either Foreign Military Sales or, for a limited number of countries, through the foreign military financing of direct commercial contracts program,” AP cited two unnamed U.S. officials as saying.

The language used in the aid “implied that Taiwan is or could be compared to a ‘nation’ or a ‘country,’” AP said, pointing out that the only other time the United States has offered military aid under the FMF to a non-nation-state was to the African Union.

The package followed the military assistance of \$345 million provided by the United States to Taiwan in



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July through the Presidential Drawdown Authority that the U.S. Congress authorized last year and the \$500 million arms sale package, which includes F-16 Infrared Search and Track systems, to the nation earlier this month.

Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Defense expressed their gratitude to the United States for helping Taiwan boost its self-defense capabilities.

A State Department spokesperson also authenticated the transfer.

"Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our longstanding one China policy, which has not changed, the United States makes available to Taiwan defense articles and services necessary to enable it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability," the spokesperson said in a statement to CNN. "The United States has an abiding interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, which is critical to regional and global security and prosperity."

House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas) welcomed the approval.

"I am glad the administration is further implementing our bipartisan Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act by finally providing FMF to Taiwan. These weapons will not only help Taiwan and protect other democracies in the region, but also strengthen the U.S. deterrence posture and ensure our national security from an increasingly aggressive CCP," McCaul proclaimed in a statement, alluding to the Chinese Communist Party.

The latest news came amid continued U.S. support for Taiwan in an atmosphere of worsening Sino-U.S. ties and drew ire from China, which claims Taiwan as its own, to be reunited with the mainland by force if necessary.

On August 31, China's Foreign Ministry voiced "strong dissatisfaction" and "firm opposition" at the arms sale, which it claimed had undermined "China's sovereignty and security interests" and jeopardized "peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

The United States should "cease enhancing US-Taiwan military connections and arming Taiwan" and "stop creating tensions across the Taiwan Strait," ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin declared at a regular news conference.

China's Defense Ministry also expressed outrage at the sale, pledging that the Chinese military will "take all necessary measures to resolutely counter this."

China, which objects to any official diplomatic interactions between Taiwan and other countries, previously vowed to facilitate the process of a "peaceful reunification" with the island. On his end, Chinese authoritarian leader Xi Jinping stated that Beijing would concentrate on the "peaceful development of relations on both sides of the Taiwan Strait" and resist external pressure, while insisting that Beijing "firmly adheres to an independent and peaceful foreign policy."

Meanwhile, in an interview with Sputnik News in early August, journalist and political analyst KJ Noh opined that Washington persistently deploying arms to Taipei implied that the United States "wants to expedite weapons [to Taiwan] as fast as possible," saying that "it's not so much about the amount as it is about the speed. They want to send them as many weapons as fast as possible."

Noh added, "It's exactly the same strategy they used with Ukraine, just continuous salami slicing, continuous provocation," and that the Biden administration "seems dead set on provoking yet another war, this time with China," whom Noh said faces "a dead red line."



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Subsequently, Noh castigated Biden's move of greenlighting defense aid to Taiwan as "a direct insult" to China and "a direct refutation of what they've said publicly" about their hesitancy about engaging in direct conflict with Beijing.

Sino-U.S. hostilities over Taiwan have been increasing since last August after the previous [House Speaker Nancy Pelosi](#) visited Taipei notwithstanding Beijing's warnings against such a visit.

China denounced Pelosi's trip, which it regarded as a show of support for Taiwanese independence. Thus, the Chinese conducted large-scale military drills near Taiwan in response.



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