

## Weapons from US are key to peace, MAC chief says

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US assistance in helping Taiwan acquire defensive weapons is key to the development of stable cross-strait ties, Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Chairwoman Lai Shin-yuan said on Thursday.

Lai made the comments at a meeting with visiting US Representative and co-chair of the Congressional Taiwan Caucus Phil Gingrey, a statement said.

The statement, released by the MAC on Friday, quoted Lai as saying that relations between Taiwan and China were improving, describing this as a historic moment.

Taiwan and China should continue to build mutual trust through talks and lay the foundation for peace, she said.

Lai also said that increasing interaction between the populations of Taiwan and China would strengthen Taiwanese identity.

Lai said the two sides should respect each other's existence in the international arena and treat each other with equality and dignity.

For his part, Gingrey said Taiwan should continue to apply to join international organizations including the UN, to which Lai responded that the people of Taiwan had a right to participate in the international community in a dignified manner.

China, which has blocked Taiwan's participation in international organizations, should be able to understand how the Taiwanese public feels, Lai said.

Gingrey arrived in Taiwan on Wednesday for a four-day visit. President Ma Ying-jeou described him as one of Taiwan's most faithful friends in Congress.

Gingrey endorsed a House of Representatives resolution that marked the 30th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act. The resolution reiterates the principles in the Taiwan Relations Act, including providing Taiwan with defensive weapons.

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