

## US defense contractor to open in Taipei

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US-based AMS Group, a provider of technology, equipment and integrated logistics support services, is to open an office in Taipei by the end of this year, senior vice president of global aftermarket Michael Perry said on Monday.

Perry made the remark at an event after a panel discussion on Taiwan-US defense industry cooperation held by the Global Taiwan Institute in Washington.

AMS' board of directors earlier that day approved opening an office in Taiwan following communications from Taipei that it welcomes the defense contractor's services, he said.

The firm would be able to provide spare parts and components for Taiwan's older weapons systems, Perry added.

The timetable for establishing the office would be determined by business opportunities, he said, adding that the group is cognizant that other US defense contractors are interested in Taiwan's business.

While Taiwan's domestic defense industry could meet half of its military equipment needs, international support would still be needed for advanced equipment, such as stealth jets, submarines and vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, institute senior research fellow David An (安達) said in a report to the panel.

The nation's defense sector has annual revenue of US\$2.3 billion, or 23 percent of the defense budget, but it is heavily concentrated among a few large, government-backed companies, he said.

Taiwan should increase the competitiveness of its defense sector as it moves to enhance and upgrade its self-defense capabilities, US-Taiwan Business Council president Rupert Hammond-Chambers said.

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The systems integration of Taiwan's indigenous submarine program would benefit from foreign technical assistance, he said.

If the Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology fails to integrate the submarine's systems, the political fallout might cause unacceptable setbacks to the program, he added.

While Taiwan still has the time to develop its own submarines, Taipei and Washington need to pick up the pace of cooperation, Hammond-Chambers said, adding that the two governments also have to prepare for China's inevitable — and loud — complaints.

The Taiwanese and US defense industries should strengthen their cooperation and integrate Taiwan as part of the global supply chain, he said, adding that US President Donald Trump should take stronger and more assertive actions in support of Taiwan.

As Taiwan lacks the technology to integrate the sophisticated systems and components of advanced submarines and fighter jets, US technical assistance would be beneficial to the nation's weapons programs, Taiwan Security Analysis Center director Mei Fu-shing (梅福生) said.

Two US firms specializing in systems integration have expressed an interest in working with Taiwan's submarine program following the US Department of State's approval last month of marketing licenses for related technologies, he said.

Although the US encourages Taiwan to develop asymmetric warfare capabilities, they are mainly useful for countering a Chinese invasion, not dealing with saber-rattling from Chinese military drills, Mei said.

These actions by Beijing demonstrate that Taiwan needs to obtain the most advanced fighter aircraft, Mei added.

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