

## US unveils possible torpedo sale

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South Korean participants of the Indo-Pacific Landpower Conference on Wednesday watch screens showing participants from other nations, including Taiwan.

**Photo: screen grab from Facebook**

Just hours after President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) inauguration on Wednesday, the US Department of State's Defense Security Cooperation Agency announced in Washington the possible sale of 18 MK-48 Heavy Weight Torpedoes to Taiwan.

Reacting to the announcement, Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳敦義) yesterday told a meeting of the Legislative Yuan's Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee that the ministry applauded the US move, which would help to uphold the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA).

The TRA states that the US should "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character ... to maintain the capacity of the US to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan."

The possible sale — which includes 18 MK-48s, spare parts, logistics support, training and manuals — was valued at US\$180 million and is pending review by the US Congress.

Wu told Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Lo Chih-cheng (羅智強) that the announcement could be considered tacit US support for the Taiwan's indigenous arms manufacturing program.

Deputy Minister of National Defense Chang Che-ping (張哲平) said in an interview at the Legislative Yuan that the sale, if approved, would help strengthen the nation's defensive capabilities and maintain peace in the region.

However, in Beijing, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian (趙立堅) yesterday said that China is "staunchly against" US arm sales to Taiwan, reminding the US to observe the

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“one China” principle and to respect the three US-China communiques on the issue.

China’s state-run Global Times said that Beijing should “zero Taiwan’s diplomatic relations,” as the basis of regular US-China interaction over the “Taiwan issue” had been undermined and Beijing should pursue its goals in its own fashion.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei declined to comment on the article.

In related news, the military on Wednesday and yesterday participated in the US-led Indo-Pacific Landpower Conference, which was held by videoconference.

Footage released by the South Korean Army showed that the Republic of China national flag had been included alongside those of the other 26 participating nations.

Taiwan was represented by Army Logistics Command Combat Medic Division Major General Hsieh Chung-bao (何中保).

Meanwhile, responding to DPP Legislator Chao Tian-lin’s (趙天麟) query about a possible visit by a delegation headed by Czech Senate President Milos Vystrelil, Wu said that the government would welcome such a visit.

The foreign ministry would make the necessary preparations once the global COVID-19 pandemic has been brought under control, he said.

Additional reporting by Aaron Tu and Lu Yi-hsuan

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