

It is unlikely that China's threat of "severe consequences" will sway White House plans to sell several billions of dollars in arms to Taiwan early this year, a source close to the White House said.

But the threat made on Tuesday by Beijing's Foreign Ministry was nevertheless a "cause for concern" among US President Barack Obama's national security advisers.

The source said that the threat was "not unexpected" and that the US was prepared for "a more difficult period" in its relationship with Beijing.

While the exact contents of the arms package remain secret, there are strong indications that it will include Black Hawk helicopters and anti-missile batteries.

The Washington Post reported earlier this week that it might also involve design and manufacturing plans for diesel-powered submarines, although this could not be verified by the Taipei Times.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman warned that any arms package would "undermine China-US cooperation."

Senior Washington officials have indicated that advanced F-16 fighter planes sought by Taipei will not be part of the upcoming arms deal.

This omission — a considerable disappointment to the Taiwan military — is seen by some Washington analysts as an early concession to Chinese President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛).

The source close to the White House told the Taipei Times that following Obama's trip to China late last year, the president hoped that withholding the fighters would be enough to calm Beijing's reaction to the rest of the arms sales.

However, "Obama will not back down. The arms package will stay on track. Beijing may be overestimating its influence," the source said.

The source said that while it was unlikely that Beijing would allow the arms sales to stop cooperation on such issues as economic recovery and climate change, there would be significant impact in other areas.

Of most concern is the possibility that China may end — at least temporarily — the recently restarted military-to-military contacts that the White House considers very valuable.

In addition, Beijing's help to advance US policies in Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea could end and Hu may now refuse to attend a nuclear security summit planned for April.

Chinese threat won't sway arms deal: source

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 07 January 2010 07:49 -

The Washington Post story published on Sunday said that the arms sales and Obama's decision to meet the Dalai Lama meant that US-China relations were headed for a "rough patch" despite a concerted effort by Washington to forge closer ties.

David Lampton, director of China Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, was quoted as saying: "I think it's going to be nasty. That said, the US and China need each other."

One analyst said China appeared to be increasing its assertiveness, that Beijing may now believe the US is in decline and that Obama may not have taken a hard enough line during his first year in power.

Coen Blaauw, a senior official with the Washington-based Formosa Association of Public Affairs, said: "Obama is obliged under the law — the Taiwan Relations Act — to sell defensive arms to Taiwan.

"These latest threats from Beijing are hollow. Beijing can't afford to break off diplomatic relations with Washington, the US is too big. But China benefits from continuing to stir the pot and that's what it's doing," he said.

Source: [Taipei Times 2010/01/07](#)