

ROC air force plane transits in US on way to Haiti

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The US allowed a Republic of China (ROC) military plane from Taiwan to transit its territory for the first time in 30 years, officials said yesterday.

The cargo plane made a stop inside US territory while carrying relief supplies to Haiti, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) said.

“We have approved Taiwan’s request for a cargo airplane to refuel in the US and in US territories in order to reach Haiti as quickly as possible. We are doing possible to ensure needed emergency supplies reach Haiti expeditiously. This is part of that effort,” AIT press officer Christopher Kavanagh said.

AIT declined to give further details and asked the media to refer all questions to Taiwan’s government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, however, refused to comment, saying it had no information at the moment.

Asked if Washington had discussed the issue with Beijing prior to giving the green light, Kavanagh told Agence France Presse “there is no need” as the approval was given on humanitarian grounds.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu (馬照旭) reacted to the news by saying: “We oppose any government, including the United States, from having any official contact with Taiwan.”

The Chinese-language United Daily News identified the aircraft as a C-130 air force transport plane and said the stop was for refueling.

In other developments, a 65-member Taiwan Root Medical Peace Corps team landed in the Dominican Republic capital of Santo Domingo on Wednesday and was scheduled to drive into Haiti yesterday. It is the third team from Taiwan to go to Haiti.

A team of 23 rescue workers and two dogs from the National Fire Agency and Taichung City Fire Department is en route to Taiwan, said Chen Chia-chun (陳嘉春), minister extraordinary of the ROC embassy in the Dominican Republic.

A group of 33 members of the Red Cross Society of The Republic of China, a Taipei City international rescue squad, and a Tri-Service General Hospital will return home in the next two days, Chen said.

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