

## Chinese anger over arms sale 'not warranted': US

Written by Taipei Times

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White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said on Monday that China's threat to impose sanctions on US companies manufacturing weapons systems for sale to Taiwan was "not warranted."

Analysts said the unusually blunt reaction from Gibbs reflected a new policy by US President Barack Obama to "push back" against what is seen as overly antagonistic actions by Beijing whenever the US does something it doesn't like.

China yesterday warned the US that their cooperation on international and regional issues could suffer over Washington's decision to sell arms to Taiwan.

Beijing also urged US firms selling arms to Taipei to back away from the multibillion-dollar deal, after warning that those companies could face Chinese sanctions.

"China-US relations, in important international and regional issues, will inevitably be influenced and the responsibility completely lies with the US," foreign ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu (马照旭) told reporters.

"We strongly urge relevant US companies to stop pushing forward and taking part in the arms sales to Taiwan," Ma said.

Bruce Lemkin, a deputy undersecretary with the US Air Force, said China shouldn't have been surprised by the arms sale and called on Beijing to continue talks with Taiwan to help reduce tensions.

Asked by reporters at the Singapore Airshow if China had overreacted, Lemkin said: "Personally I think so, because it does not contribute to a positive or collaborative atmosphere. I think it's unfortunate that China has reacted the way it has."

The US has approved a package of Patriot missiles, Black Hawk helicopters and other military hardware totaling US\$6.4 billion for Taiwan.

China, which has always strongly opposed US sales to Taiwan, reacted angrily to the news, cutting off military and security contacts with Washington, and threatening to impose sanctions on the firms involved in the transaction.

Raytheon Co and Lockheed Martin Corp were awarded a US\$2.81 billion contract as part of the deal to produce the Patriot system, which is meant to defend against incoming missiles.

Neither defense company has major operations in China, which has been under a US and EU arms embargo since its bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in 1989.

But Boeing — whose McDonnell Douglas unit was awarded a US\$37 million contract for 12 Harpoon test missiles to Taiwan — is an aerospace giant that counts China as one of its largest markets.

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United Technologies unit Sikorsky Aircraft is supplying Black Hawk helicopters to Taiwan

The New York Times reported on Sunday that administration officials were saying in private that the timing of last week's arms sales to Taiwan and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's sharp criticism of China for not taking a stronger position on holding Iran accountable for its nuclear program were "calculated to send a message to Beijing."

A senior administration official was quoted by the New York Times as saying: "This was a case of making sure that there was no misunderstanding that we will act in our own national security interests."

Following Gibbs' statement on Monday, two Democratic Party -political analysts told the Taipei Times that the statement was part of the same decision to counter what is seen in Washington as China going too far in the way it has reacted.

During the regular White House briefing, Gibbs was asked if the administration was concerned about China's reaction to Obama's decision to sell arms to Taiwan.

He said: "We discussed each and every aspect of our relationship with China when we met in China in November, including arms sales to Taiwan. We have always said that we want the type of relationship where we're working together on important issues of mutual concern — the global economic recovery, our concerns about proliferation. But when we have disagreements, we'll voice those disagreements out in the open, in public."

Meanwhile, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) said yesterday the arms sale was to meet US obligations to ensure security for Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific region, not to help President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) or the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT).

DPP spokesman Chuang Shuo-han (莊舒涵) quoted a remark from People's Liberation Army Rear Admiral Yang Yi (楊毅) saying that to improve his low approval rate, Ma had shown Taiwanese and the DPP that he enjoyed a good relationship with the US by pushing for the arms sale.

Source: [Taipei Times 2010/02/03](#)