

The U.S. State Department has approved a potential \$1.1 billion sale of military equipment to Taiwan, including 60 anti-ship missiles and 100 air-to-air missiles, with China threatening to take countermeasures.

The Pentagon announced the package on Friday in the wake of China's aggressive military drills around Taiwan following a visit to the island last month by U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the highest-ranking U.S. official to travel to Taipei in years.

The sale includes Sidewinder missiles, which can be used for air-to-air and surface-attack missions, at a cost of some \$85.6 million, Harpoon anti-ship missiles at an estimated \$355 million cost and support for Taiwan's surveillance radar program for an estimated \$665.4 million, the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said.

Liu Pengyu, spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said in a statement the possible arms sale "severely jeopardizes China-U.S. relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

"China will resolutely take legitimate and necessary counter-measures in light of the development of the situation," he said.



Soldiers march to position during an anti-invasion drill on the beach during the annual Han Kuang military drill in Tainan, Taiwan, September 14, 2021. REUTERS/Ann Wang

President Joe Biden's administration said the package has been under consideration for some time and was developed in consultation with Taiwan and U.S. lawmakers.

"As the PRC continues to increase pressure on Taiwan - including through heightened military air and maritime presence around Taiwan - and engages in attempts to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, we're providing Taiwan with what it needs to maintain its self-defence capabilities," Laura Rosenberger, White House senior director for China and Taiwan, said in a statement.

The Pentagon said the equipment and support announced on Friday would not alter the basic military balance in the region. U.S. officials said they did not reflect any change in policy toward Taiwan.

Taiwan's defence ministry expressed its thanks, adding that China's recent "provocative" activities represented a serious threat and the arms sale would help it face China's military pressure.

"At the same time, it also demonstrates that it will help our country strengthen its overall defence capabilities and jointly maintain the security and peace of the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific region," the ministry said in a statement.

The order reflects continued U.S. support for Taiwan as Taipei faces pressure from China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and has never ruled out using force to bring the democratically ruled island under its control.

The sales must be reviewed by Congress, but both Democratic and Republican congressional aides said they do not expect opposition. There have been at least two other visits to Taiwan by members of Congress from both parties since Pelosi's visit, as well as by governors of U.S. states, all condemned by Beijing.

The principal contractor for the Harpoon missiles is Boeing Co Raytheon is the principal contractor for both the Sidewinders and the radar program.

Taipei says that as the People's Republic of China has never ruled the island, it has no right to claim it.

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