

China hits back at US over arms sale to Taiwan



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THE American relationship with Taiwan is one of the most delicate diplomatic issues between Beijing and Washington. Each US administration had to deal with the issue and China-Taiwan relations have through a seesaw game in the past decade.

On 29th January, the Obama administration announced a decision to sell Patriot missiles, Black Hawk helicopters, minesweepers and communications equipment for Taiwan's F-16 fleet of

fighter jets, fueling strains in relations with the world's third largest economy.

China has lashed out with a raft of reprisals after the United States announced a \$US6.4 billion arms package for Taiwan, escalating the biggest Sino-US crisis yet under President Barack Obama.

Berating the one-year-old Obama administration for "crude interference" in its affairs, China says it is suspending military and security contacts with the United States and imposing sanctions on US firms involved in the Taiwan deal.

The furious riposte came a day after

the Pentagon approved the sale of arms. Chinese defence ministry spokesman Huang Xueping says the reprisals reflect the "severe harm" posed by the deal with Taiwan, which Beijing says is a part of its territory and must return to the mainland fold.

China refuses to rule out the use of force to reacquire Taiwan and has hundreds of missiles deployed against the self-governing island of 23 million people, which split from the mainland in 1949.

In Washington, officials say the White House is committed to Taiwan's defence

and denied that it is picking a fight. But Chinese vice foreign minister He Yafei made an urgent official protest to the US Ambassador in Beijing, Jon Huntsman, Chinese officials said.

In a statement delivered to Huntsman, he urged Washington to cancel the deal, which he said constituted "crude interference in China's internal affairs that seriously endangers China's peaceful reunification".

The United States insisted on 30th January that its decision to sell arms to Taiwan is right despite severe criticism from China.

The planned arms sales would contribute to "maintaining security and stability across the Taiwan Strait," US State Department spokeswoman Laura Tischler told journalists.

China is believed to have more than 1,000 missiles aimed at the island. Taiwan's relations with the mainland have improved since President Ma Ying-jeou took office in 2008. But Beijing's reaction to the long-expected sale suggests it may have hoped the thaw would reduce US military cooperation. China's Taiwan affairs office said the deal "fanned the flames of Taiwan independence" and sent the wrong message, according to the Xinhua state news agency.

Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou, who has overseen a marked warming in trade and political relations with China, says Beijing has nothing to fear from the arms sale.

"It will let Taiwan feel more confident and secure so we can have more interactions with China," Ma said, according to Taiwan's Central News Agency.

China's response underscored a rapid degeneration in relations with the US following recent strains over trade, climate change and Google's threat to quit China.

Observers say China could yet go further by rejecting new UN sanctions on Iran. Hours before the announcement on Taiwan, the United States urged Beijing to help curb Iran's nuclear program.

"Cooperation between China and the

Berating the one-year-old Obama administration for "crude interference" in its affairs, China says it is suspending military and security contacts with the United States and imposing sanctions on US firms involved in the Taiwan deal.

US on key international and regional issues will also inevitably be affected," Huang said.

It is likely to hinder the prospect of new sanctions against Iran at the United Nations Security Council. Despite China's reluctance to act against its ally, the US was hopeful that it could win its backing if Russia was on board.

Beijing will postpone high-level consultation on strategic security, arms control and non-proliferation issues, it said. The Defence Ministry said it was suspending military exchanges because of the "harm and odious effect" of the deal.

The dispute comes amid growing tensions over issues including trade, climate change and Internet censorship.

"This is the strongest reaction we have seen in recent years," said Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, North East Asia pro-

ject director of the International Crisis Group. But she added: "Our real sense is that China is looking to see what reaction it will receive from Barack Obama."

Washington and Beijing had boasted of a strengthening of bilateral ties, but in recent weeks the relationship has come under growing strain.

China is thought to be concerned that Obama faces growing domestic pressure to take a tougher line towards Beijing, and was angered by Hillary Clinton's speech on Internet freedom last week. Although China warned that the speech could damage bilateral relations, both sides subsequently sought to play down the disagreement. Obama's national security adviser, Jim Jones, said in a speech on Friday that the US was "bent toward a new relationship with China as a rising power in the world".

But Jin Canrong, a professor of international studies at Renmin University, said the arms sale would give Beijing a "fair and proper reason" to accelerate weapons testing.

Huang says the US package "runs counter" to commitments on cooperation outlined by the two governments when Obama visited China in November.

The last US arms package for Taiwan, announced under Obama's predecessor George W Bush in October 2008, also led China to cut off military relations with the US temporarily.

But this time the sanctions were more biting and analysts say they reflect China's increased clout at a time when its economy looks set to overtake Japan's and its military budget is surging year by year. China has become more assertive in world affairs and the US cannot expect that after arms sale to Taiwan, it is business as usual with China as was in the past.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Russian arms exports hit record in 2009

The global financial crunch didn't stop Russian defence exports from hitting a record \$7.4 billion in 2009, and the prospects remain bright for the next few years, the governmental arms export agency said Jan. 28.

Its 2009 total was up 10 percent from the previous year, and "in 2010, we expect to earn no less," Rosoboronexport head Anatoly Isaikin told reporters here.

Bookings also hit a record high of \$34 billion, up \$15 billion, Isaikin said. Rosoboronexport, which exports to more than 70 countries, accounted for 80 percent of Russian military export sales in 2009, with the rest coming from Russian defence companies that trade in spare parts and maintenance and repair services.

Of Rosoboronexport's revenues, military airplanes and helicopters accounted for half; arms and gear for land forces, 19 percent; naval ships and gear, almost 14 percent; and air defence systems, more than 13 percent.

Isaikin said the agency's revenue has grown 2.4-fold since 2001, when it was established by then-President Vladimir Putin.

India held onto its crown as the top Russian arms client, followed by Algeria, China, Malaysia, Venezuela and Syria, the agency said. Isaikin said that the share of China, Russia's biggest arms client through the 1990s, will fall from the current 18 percent because Chinese defence industry is growing so fast.

Source: www.defensenews.com

US export-control reform gains momentum

After languishing for years, efforts to reform U.S. defence export control laws appear to be gaining momentum. President Obama vowed in his State of the Union address Jan. 27 to double U.S. exports and "reform export controls consistent with national security."

Earlier that day, Defence Secretary Robert Gates and other top administration officials breakfasted with lawmakers on Capitol Hill to discuss what's being called Obama's "ambitious plans to dramatically reform our nation's outdated export control system."

Meanwhile, Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he expects to introduce "bipartisan" legislation this spring to overhaul export control regulations. The push for export reforms has become "re-energized in the last couple of weeks," a congressional aide said.

At the Pentagon, chief spokesman Geoff Morrell said Gates wants "meaningful and lasting changes to our export controls." That's a sharp break from the past. "This department has historically been an impediment, an obstacle to meaningful change," Morrell said. "What's different now is that [Gates] is fully supportive of dramatic change." The developments are reigniting hope in the defence industry.

"Trade expansion and export control modernization are long-time priorities," said Marion Blakey, president of the Aerospace Industries Association. "Recognition of their importance by the president sets a positive tone for action this year."

Obama's trade reform comments "were welcome. It sounds like we share the same goals," said Erin Streeter, a spokeswoman for the National Association of Manufacturers. The president's remarks "definitely demonstrate the importance exports have in terms of job creation and manufacturing. We were pleased to see them," she said. While hope for export control reform grows, it is not at all clear what shape the reforms might take. Obama offered no details. The Capitol Hill breakfast was conducted in secret, aides during a Jan. 15 hearing in California, Berman said the Foreign Affairs Committee was preparing "for a complete revision of the statute that authorizes our system of licensing and controlling dual-use technologies."

Those are dual-use technologies that are useful for both military and civilian purposes. Thermal imaging technology, for example, gives the U.S. military an advantage on the battlefield, Berman said. Exports are restricted to deny the technology to adversaries. But thermal imaging is also used in advanced collision avoidance systems that U.S. companies would like to sell to an expanding market abroad.

Similar dual-use dilemmas arise with encryption technology, some commercial software, bioengineering and nanotechnology, he said. "There is a growing consensus among security experts, as well as academics and industry leaders, that our current system of export controls needs to be updated in order to continue protecting sensitive technologies while also maintaining U.S. technological leadership," Berman said.

Source: www.defensenews.com

Pakistan will oppose the fissile materials cut-off treaty

Continuing its opposition to the initiation of discussions on a global treaty to halt production of nuclear materials required for development of nuclear weapons at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD) - the world's sole multilateral forum to negotiate arms control and disarmament agreements - Pakistan blocked the adoption of the 2010 agenda for the CD on January 19, 2010 at Geneva. Its Permanent Representative at the CD, Zamir Akram, stated that his country did not want to work with a programme that was frozen in time and called for broadening the agenda to cover two other issues, which were directly aimed at India. According to him, the CD should also consider conventional arms control at the regional and sub-regional levels and also negotiate a global regime on all aspects of ballistic missiles. While calling for conventional arms control, Zamir was recalling the UN General Assembly resolution sponsored by Pakistan and passed in November 2009.

Source: IDSA

Russian fifth-generation fighter airborne

RUSSIA'S fifth generation fighter, Sukhoi's T-50 prototype, was flown for the first time from Komsomolsk-on-Amur on Russia's Far East at 11.19 local time today. After the 47-minute flight the aircraft landed at the airfield of Sukhoi's KnaAPO facility, which assembled the PAK FA prototypes.

The T-50 is intended to meet the Russian air force's PAK FA requirement for a next-generation fighter.

The first prototype was flown by Sukhoi test pilot Sergey Bogdan. He says it was easy and comfortable to control, and the aircraft performed well in all stages of the flight. "During the flight we have conducted the initial evaluation of the aircraft's controls, performance of the engine and main systems. The aircraft also retracted the landing gear," said Bogdan.

The T-50 design reflects a greater emphasis on low-observable shaping than Moscow's previous fifth-generation effort, MiG's I.42 program.

Sukhoi started the development of the PAK FA design around a decade ago. The first flight was initially sched-



uled for mid-2009. Three prototypes have been built, one of which was delivered to Moscow and is being used for static tests. In December another PAK FA prototype started taxi trials at the KnaAPO facility. The third aircraft is believed to be being used for ground testing.

Sukhoi is not discussing the technical characteristics of the T-50. Nevertheless it is known that PAK FA prototypes will be powered by a pair of NPO Saturn 117S engines. These

engines, a further modification of AL-31F, rated at up to 14.5 ton thrust are now also installed at the new Su-35 multirole fighters.

The T-50's avionics suite is being developed by Ramenskoye Design Bureau. The company's head Givi Djanjgava earlier explained that the suite includes six-processor computer, visualization tools and flight instrument system.

According to Sukhoi, PAK FA avionics integrates 'electronic pilot' func-

tion and AESA radar being developed by Tikhomirov NIIP design bureau. NIIP's full-scale phased array antenna was unveiled at the Moscow MAKs air show in August 2009.

At that time Anatoly Sinany, Tikhomirov's chief designer, explained that T-50's radar antenna will have 1,500 T/R modules, produced by Iztok company from Fryazino, near Moscow. The new avionics will give T-50 network-centric capabilities; enable it to exchange real-time data within the air group and with ground command posts.

Sukhoi also says the new fighter uses composite materials and innovative technologies that together with the aerodynamic shape of the fuselage and reduced engine's signature ensuring its low radar, optical and infrared visibility.

The aircraft is expected to enter in service in 2015 and will be supplied to the Russian Air Force along with Su-35 fighters. Commenting the start of PAK FA flight trials, Sukhoi head Mikhail Pogosyan also mentioned that India will join the program on later stages.

www.aviationweek.com

US reorganises its Iraqi commands



THE US military mission in Iraq underwent a significant organisational change on 1 January as the five major command groups in the country were consolidated into a headquarters command called US Forces Iraq (USF-I).

The intent is to streamline the command structure and reduce the footprint of the various organisational headquarters operating in Iraq as the overall drawdown of US forces there continues. Based on security agreements between the two governments, US troops in Iraq are to number about 50,000 by 31 August 2010 and be withdrawn entirely by the end of 2011.

US troops will still be led by General Ray Odierno, who took over command of

USF-I during a ceremony on 1 January during which his former command, Multi National Force Iraq (MNF-I), was deactivated, the army said in a 2 January statement.

Speaking from Diyala, Gen Odierno said on 2 January that the consolidation and withdrawal were all proceeding according to plan.

Subordinate commands were also deactivated in the same ceremony and their responsibilities now fall under the aegis of USF-I. These groups include Multi National Corps Iraq (MNC-I), which served as the operational level headquarters; Multi National Security and Transition Command Iraq (MNSTC-I), which organised, trained and equipped Iraq's military and police forces; and Task Force

134, which conducted detainee operations in theatre. The commands were established in 2004 with MNF-I holding authority over all strategic-level operations for coalition forces.

Charles Musante, then MNF-I's strength management chief, said in December 2009 that the new USF-I headquarters will oversee all operations throughout Iraq. The consolidation of commands is essentially the "headquarters drawdown", he explained. About 112,000 US troops are currently in Iraq and officials have said they plan to have around 100,000 personnel there to provide security during national elections scheduled for March.

Source: Janes Defence Weekly

High speed an option for long-range strike

With a new strike platform, manned or unmanned, unlikely to emerge before the next decade, the ability of long-range, high-speed missiles to extend reach and survivability of current aircraft and warships is drawing increased attention.

Key technologies must be demonstrated before high-speed weapons can be considered viable for development, and 2010 could prove a crucial year.

Weapons developed from the X-51 and HyFly, as well as the unflown Rattler turbine-powered Mach 3 missile demonstrator and derivatives of existing subsonic systems, are candidates to replace the U.S. Navy long-serving Harpoon anti-ship missile.

Another candidate is the Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) under study by the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency and intended to allow Navy warships to engage enemy vessels beyond the range of anti-ship ballistic missiles developed by China. One of two Lockheed Martin concepts should be selected this year for demonstration in 2012.

Rather than speed or range, LRASM focuses on guidance, navigation and targeting technologies enabling the missile to ID and attack ships at long stand-off ranges with minimal reliance on offboard intelligence, data links and GPS.

Source: www.aviationweek.com

Iran boasts of new Apache-killer weapon

Iran has developed a new weapon to shoot down US Apache attack helicopters, the Iranian Fars news agency has reported. The type of the weapon Iran is manufacturing to shoot down Apache helicopters is unknown. The United States and Israel have refused to rule out military action against Iran if diplomacy fails to resolve the dispute over Tehran's nuclear program.

In a further rise in tensions, Iran hit out on Tuesday at US plans to boost Gulf defences. Parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani called the move to deploy ships with missile-targeting abilities off Iran's coast and anti-missile systems in the Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates "a new political trick to pave the way for its presence at others' expense."

Iran launched a domestic arms development program after a US weapons embargo was imposed during its 1980-88 war with Iraq. Since 1992, the Islamic Republic has reportedly produced its own Saeqeh and Azaraksh jet fighters, stealth-capable Ghadir submarine, missile boats, torpedoes, tanks and armoured carrier vehicles. Iranian officials said last year that Tehran had achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing combat missiles of various modifications. Iran frequently holds military drills and shows off modern weaponry in an effort to demonstrate its readiness to thwart any attack on its territory.

Source: www.defensetalk.com