

Congressman Phil Gingrey
U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission
Public Hearing: “Taiwan-China: Recent Economic, Political, and Military
Developments across the Strait, and Implications for the United States”
March 18, 2010
Statement

Chairman Mulloy, Chairman Wortzel, Chairman Slane, Vice Chairman Bartholomew, and Commissioners—I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today and would like to thank each of you for your important work on the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Geo-politics is far from static, and we have an obligation to thoroughly evaluate the changing state of international relations and the shifting balance of international power and influence—particularly as we see the rapid economic and military growth of the People’s Republic of China. The implications of this growth only help to underscore the importance of preserving and strengthening our relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan.

Accordingly, I am pleased to be able to share my thoughts with you and to also express the general sentiments of the House of Representatives Taiwan Caucus.

I am also pleased and honored to be able to join today with my friend, colleague, and fellow Co-Chairman of the Taiwan Caucus—Lincoln Diaz-Balart. The House Taiwan Caucus has four co-chairs—2 Republicans and 2 Democrats—and maintains a strong, bi-partisan membership of almost 140 members. The strength of this Caucus demonstrates this Congress’s continued commitment to support Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act which requires Congress and the Administration to “preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan.”

In fact just last year, Congress unanimously passed House Concurrent Resolution 55 recognizing the 30th Anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act and reaffirmed the House’s “unwavering commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act as the cornerstone of relations between the United States and Taiwan.”

Peace is not only sustained through diplomacy, but also through the maintenance of vigorous self-defense. The preservation of peace in the Strait of Taiwan requires the strengthening of Taiwan’s defenses to ensure that PRC military aggression against Taiwan is never, never a viable option either from an international perspective or from a practical standpoint.

Under the Taiwan Relations Act, our policy is that that “United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”

Further, after intense study and thorough examination, it has become abundantly clear that the United States must move forward with pending announced arm sales as well as agreeing to sell F-16 Fighters to Taiwan.

These sales are critically important for several reasons. Outside of the F-16, Taiwan's current fleet consists of F-5s, Indigenous Defense Fighters, and Mirage 2000 Fighters. The F-5s are aging rapidly, while the Mirage 2000 fleet will have to be retired in 2010 due to the lack of affordable spare parts. The Indigenous Defense Fighters are expected to reach the end of their service life by 2020. Without new F-16s, in the next 5 years the Taiwanese fleet will be reduced by 120 aircraft. It is clear that new F-16s would enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense and ensure cross-strait stability through air parity.

With respect to Taiwan's participation in the global community, we must also recognize that it is imperative that the United States encourage, and the international community recognize, the practical contributions of the people of Taiwan. As clearly demonstrated by its participation with the World Health Organization, Taiwan stands ready, willing, and able to make meaningful contributions to the international community through involvement in United Nations specialized agencies, programs, and conventions. Accordingly, I think the U.S. should encourage the meaningful participation of Taiwan International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

We all recognize there remains to be unresolved questions for which there are currently no definitive answers regarding Taiwan and China. However, as we continue to analyze and deepen our comprehensive of the changing nature of the relationship between the United States and the People's Republic of China, U.S. policy must continue to reflect the important role of Taiwan and preserve the special relationship between the people of the U.S. and the people of Taiwan.