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## Chinese researcher says arms procurement harms Taiwan's security

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Text of report by Hong Kong-based news agency Zhongguo Tongxun She

[Special article by staff reporter Lin Chuan: "The More Weapons United States Sells to Taiwan, the Less Secure Taiwan Becomes"]

The other day, Ma Ying-jeou [Ma Ying-chiu] said that the US arms sale to Taiwan would also help promote cross-Strait reconciliation and dialogue, in addition to ensuring Taiwan's security, and a stable Taiwan-US relationship is of great significance to cross-Strait reconciliation. But some experts think otherwise. They pointed out: Military imbalance across the Strait will be permanent. The more advanced Taiwan's weapons are, the greater the chance of military tension across the Taiwan Strait and, as a matter of fact, the less security for Taiwan.

Of the weapons that the United States is selling to Taiwan this time, the 114 "PAC-3" missiles have attracted the most attention. Du Wenlong, research fellow with the Academy of Military Science, pointed out: The performance data of "PAC-3" missiles are not bad, but the quantity of these missiles and launchers indicates that the "PAC-3" system can only intercept 114 missiles at the most. If the opponent launched a high-intensity, multi-wave offensive, the emplacement would be reduced to rubble.

It may pay dividends to use "PAC-3" in less built-up areas with low population density, such as the United Arab Emirates and Germany, but Taiwan is among the most densely populated and built-up places in Asia, with very high density of livelihood targets. Using "PAC-3" interceptor missiles may cause even greater losses than suffering a missile attack and, therefore, prove counterproductive.

Du Wenlong said: These weapons can raise the overall defensive capability of Taiwan to a limited extent, but will make the situation on Taiwan Island more perilous. Take antimissile system for example, which may not be very apt. If one side can kill 100 missiles, it will naturally stimulate the other side to produce more. In this sense, the more weapons Taiwan has, the lower its safety factor.

Terrence Yeung [Yang Ta], Hong Kong current affairs commentator and supervisor of the European Documentation Centre of Hong Kong Baptist University, said in an interview with Zhongguo Tongxun She that the military imbalance between Taiwan and the mainland will be permanent. Judging by the current situation, this disparity will keep widening. In the 1980s and the early 1990s, the F16 and Mirage fighter jets that Taiwan imported from the United States and France respectively had relatively strong defensive capabilities in terms of air control. But after two decades of development, the mainland's military strength has markedly improved and has surpassed that of Taiwan both in quality and in quantity.

According to prediction by experts, it is not impossible that the United States will be selling more and more weapons to Taiwan, because as far as the United States is concerned, arms sale to Taiwan can interfere in China's internal affairs on the one hand and, on the other, serve as a critical factor in its attempt to further beef up its antimissile deployment in the Asia Pacific. The United States still has the intention to exploit Taiwan and the Taiwan issue as a strategic measure to guard against and contain China. But the United States will not forfeit its own interests for the sake of Taiwan. Whether or not the United States will get involved in the event of a war across the Taiwan Strait remains unanswered.

Guo Zhenyuan, research fellow with the China Institute of International Studies, said: In the coming time, if US President Obama runs into major setbacks and difficulties in his administration, these forces are bound to further intensify the promotion of US-Taiwan military ties, especially arms sales to Taiwan, and it is perfectly possible for Obama to pander to them, thereby creating a US-Taiwan military relationship characterized by more high-profile arms sales to Taiwan. The Ma Ying-jeou authorities have a palpable pro-US tendency. If Ma Ying-jeou's traction in office keeps weakening or if he faces a grim outlook in a major election, he may very well take a bolder step in arms procurement from the United States, so as to both win the support of the United States and make a show of his so-called resolve to "safeguard the status of the Republic of China as an independent sovereign state," to win the support of so-called public opinion on the island.

As to whether or not the United States will get involved in the event of a military conflict across the Taiwan Strait, Douglas Bandow, senior fellow with Washington's think tank, the **Cato Institute**, indicated that they are in favour of the United States selling to Taiwan the weapon systems that they want to buy, instead of defending Taiwan. Bandow emphasized: The more involved the United States gets in the Taiwan Strait, the more dangerous China's response would be. The state of affairs has changed: Free lunch for Taiwan is no longer an option, while defending Taiwan would spell disaster for the United States.

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