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PRESS RELEASE

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The US-Taiwan Business Council Supports Taiwan's Request for New F-16 Viper Fighter Jets from the United States

According to a statement yesterday from the Ministry of National Defense (MND), Taiwan has made an official request to the United States for new-build fighter jets. While MND has not yet confirmed the quantity or type of aircraft that it has asked for, the request is believed to be for a fleet of 66 F-16 Vipers.

The US-Taiwan Business Council has long supported the sale of additional F-16s to Taiwan. The Council believes that such a sale will address both quantitative and qualitative challenges, and that it will significantly boost Taiwan's air defenses. The F-16 Viper's performance and capabilities readily satisfy the Taiwan Air Force's operational requirements. In addition, current maintenance, life-cycle support, and pilot training infrastructure would allow for cost-efficient and rapid integration into Taiwan's existing armed forces.

The new-build F-16-Vs will both support and augment the F-16 upgrade program that the Taiwan military is currently undertaking. A major project begun in 2016, the program upgrades Taiwan's existing F-16 A/B s to F-16Vs, and provides them with the AN/APG-83 Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar. Together, the retrofit program and the new buy will allow Taiwan to field a modern and capable fleet of fighter aircraft in sufficient numbers to meet the evolving threat represented by China's ongoing military modernization.

Council President Rupert Hammond-Chambers commented "*Taiwan has a legitimate right to purchase new airframes and to maintain a modern, well-functioning Air Force that can ensure air sovereignty. A purchase of new F-16Vs will help to close the previously looming fighter gap, and will serve to significantly improve Taiwan's ability to defend its airspace. This request also represents an important increase in Taiwan's commitment to its own defense and security. Given that this sale would be consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) requirement for the U.S. to provide Taiwan with arms to defend itself, I am hopeful that the two sides can come to an agreement and move forward with the acquisition program in a timely manner.*"

About the US-Taiwan Business Council:

The US-Taiwan Business Council (www.us-taiwan.org) is a membership-based non-profit association, founded in 1976 to foster trade and business relations between the United States and Taiwan. The Council provides its members with business intelligence, offers access to an extensive network of relationships, and serves as a vital and effective representative in dealing with business, trade, and investment matters.

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