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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A.

U.S. SENATE SENDS PRESIDENT OBAMA STRONG MESSAGE ON NEW F-16S FOR TAIWAN

The US-Taiwan Business Council welcomes the May 26, 2011 letter to President Obama, urging him to "move quickly to notify Congress of the sale of 66 F-16C/D aircraft that Taiwan needs in order to modernize its air force." The letter came from Senators Robert Menendez and James Inhofe, joined by 43 of their U.S. Senate colleagues.

The letter notes that "successive reports issued by U.S. and Taiwanese defense authorities clearly outline the direct threat faced by Taiwan as a result of China's unprecedented military buildup," and that "military experts in both Taiwan and the United States have raised concerns that Taiwan is losing the qualitative advantage in defensive arms that has long served as its primary military deterrent against China." The letter goes on to say that "without new fighter aircraft and upgrades to its existing fleet of F-16s, Taiwan will be dangerously exposed to Chinese military threats, aggression and provocation, which pose significant national security implications for the United States."

Commenting on the letter, Council President Rupert Hammond-Chambers said, "The Obama Administration has just hosted PLA Chief of Staff Chen Bingde, who made several unsubstantiated claims concerning Taiwan during his visit - including that some on Capitol Hill are considering reviewing the need for the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). Senators Menendez and Inhofe and their 43 Senate colleagues are clearly and concisely responding to General Chen's claims. The United States Congress remains firmly in support of the Taiwan Relations Act, and of its requirement to provide Taiwan with arms to provide for its own self-defense."

Mr. Hammond-Chambers went on to note that "The discussion around the F-16 sale should really only be about providing Taiwan with the replacement fighters it requires to maintain a viable air force able to handle all of Taiwan's many contingencies. But China and its leaders are clearly making a concerted effort to redefine and downgrade the security relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan as established in the TRA. This effort is taking the form of direct statements such as those by General Chen, and it is being bolstered by sympathetic voices in America's retired military community and in U.S. academia." "Yet by elevating the issue, China has now made this issue about America's commitment to North East Asian security, and about U.S. willingness to make the difficult decisions - in the face of Chinese opposition - that promote our interests, as well as those of our friends and allies."

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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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