

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express serious concern about the military imbalance in the Taiwan Strait. To maintain peace and stability in the Strait, it is critical that your administration accept Taiwan's Letter of Request (LOR) and move quickly to notify Congress of the sale of 66 F-16 C/D aircraft that Taiwan needs in order to modernize its air force.

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. Beijing presently has more than 1,400 missiles aimed at Taiwan, and China is in the process of deploying next generation Chinese and Russian manufactured ships, fighter aircraft, and submarines. 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.

Taiwan desperately needs new tactical fighter aircraft. Within the next decade Taiwan will retire 70% of its fighter force structure. Its F-5s have reached the end of their utility, its Mirage fighters lack parts and life-cycle support, and its Indigenous Defense Fighters are being converted to a trainer role. Additionally, Taiwan's existing 145 F-16 A/B fighters all require a mid-life upgrade. With F-16s already in its inventory, Taiwan is seeking to combine its fighter fleet around a single airframe with the commensurate cost and operational benefits.

We are deeply concerned that further delay of the decision to sell F-16s to Taiwan could result in closure of the F-16 production line, and urge you to expedite this defense export process before the line closes. 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.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 directs both the Congress and the President to make decisions on arms sales to Taiwan based solely on the "judgment of the needs of Taiwan," and we believe that Taiwanese pilots, flying Taiwanese fighter aircraft manufactured in the United States, represent the best first line of defense for our democratic ally, while presenting no offensive threat to China.

We urge you to act swiftly and provide Taiwan with the F-16 C/D aircraft that are critical to meeting our obligations pursuant to the TRA and to preserving peace and security in the Taiwan Strait.

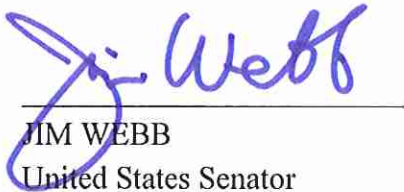
Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator



JAMES INHOFE
United States Senator



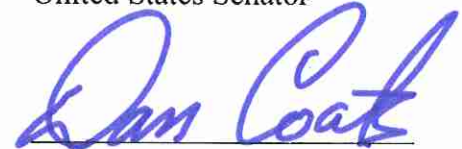
JIM WEBB
United States Senator



JON KYL
United States Senator



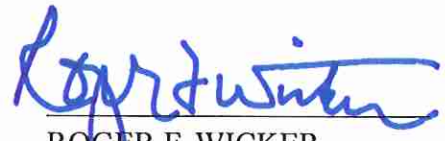
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
United States Senator



DAN COATS
United States Senator



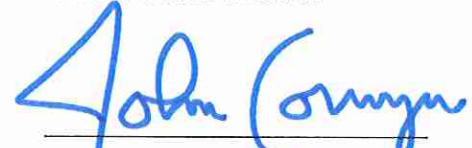
TIM JOHNSON
United States Senator



ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator



RON WYDEN
United States Senator



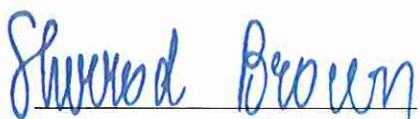
JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
United States Senator



JOHN BARRASSO
United States Senator



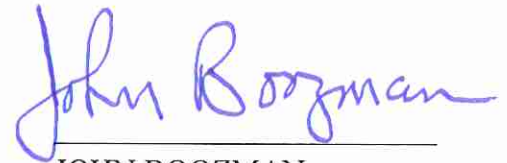
SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator



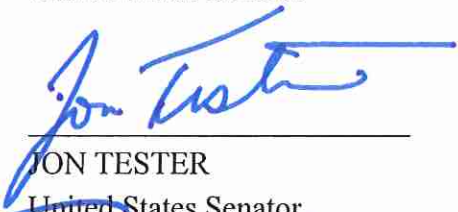
JEFF SESSIONS
United States Senator



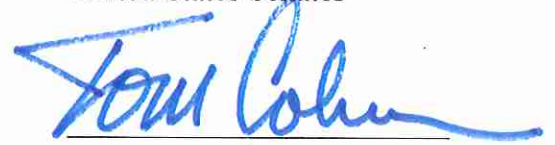
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator



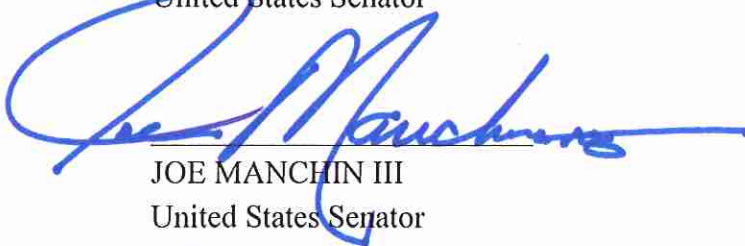
JOHN BOOZMAN
United States Senator



JON TESTER
United States Senator



TOM COBURN
United States Senator



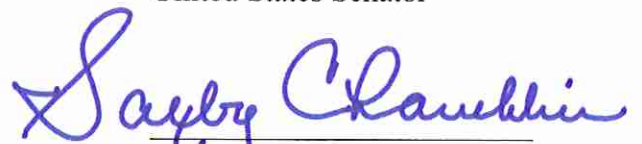
JOE MANCHIN III
United States Senator



JOHN HOEVEN
United States Senator



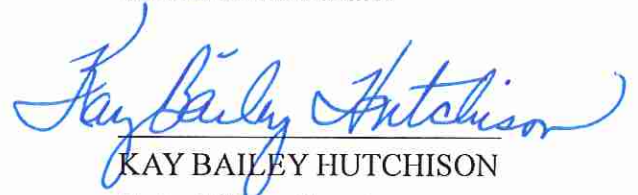
BILL NELSON
United States Senator



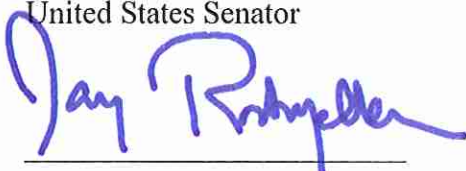
SAXBY CHAMBLISS
United States Senator



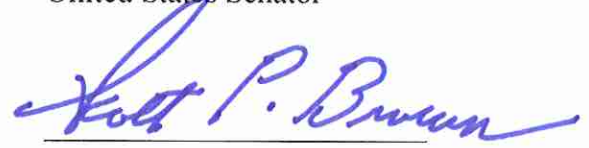
BARBARA MIKULSKI
United States Senator



KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON
United States Senator



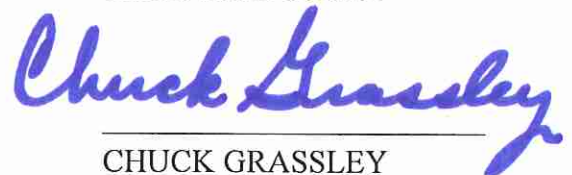
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV
United States Senator




SCOTT BROWN
United States Senator



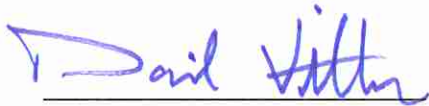
HERB KOHL
United States Senator




CHUCK GRASSLEY
United States Senator


JIM DeMINT
United States Senator


MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator


DAVID VITTER
United States Senator

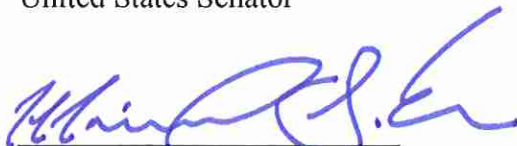

THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

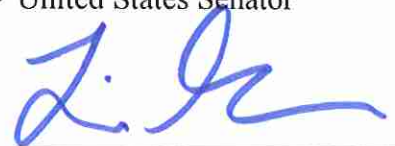

MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator


JOHNNY ISAKSON
United States Senator



MARK KIRK
United States Senator


JOHN McCAIN
United States Senator


MIKE LEE
United States Senator



LINDSEY GRAHAM
United States Senator

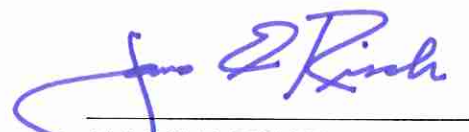

KELLY AYOTTE
United States Senator


MIKE JOHANN'S
United States Senator


RON JOHNSON
United States Senator


RICHARD BURR
United States Senator


MICHAEL B. ENZI
United States Senator


JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator

Susan Collins

SUSAN M. COLLINS

United States Senator