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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE US-TAIWAN BUSINESS COUNCIL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED FOREIGN MILITARY SALE OF F-16 INFRARED SEARCH AND TRACK (IRST) SYSTEMS TO TAIWAN

The US-Taiwan Business Council today welcomed the announcement of a possible Foreign Military Sale to Taiwan of F-16 Infrared Search and Track (IRST) systems and related equipment and support at an estimated total cost of US\$500 million. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) delivered the required certification notifying Congress of the proposed Taiwan arms sale on August 23, 2023.

The published Congressional Notification (transmittal number [23-25](#)) is for Infrared Search and Track (IRST) systems for Taiwan's F-16 fighter jets, support and equipment, spare parts, consumables and accessories, and related elements of engineering, training, technical, logistical, testing, and other program support. There is no Major Defense Equipment (MDE) included. No specific IRST system is named in the release, but DSCA notes that the principal contractor for this sale will be Lockheed Martin Corporation.

The Infrared Search and Track (IRST) system is an important and new capability for Taiwan's F-16 fleet. The technology allows for passive search of possible targets, and importantly provides the ability to track targets without activating radar. This brings a new capability to Taiwan's front-line fighter fleet, and should enhance Taiwan's ability to address China's ongoing grey-zone coercion. This Congressional Notification is in addition to the equipment [notified in the 2019 announcement](#) of 66 new F-16 Vipers for Taiwan.

USTBC President Rupert Hammond-Chambers commented on this sale, *"In 2022, the Biden Administration took a hard look at cancelling Taiwan's F-16V program – along with several programs that were ultimately cancelled - as a function of its so-called 'asymmetric approach' to Taiwan's defense. It saw the program as incompatible with this approach. When it became clear that the legal barriers to doing so were too great, the program was allowed to continue. Meanwhile, the Administration's security assistance has continued to focus solely on munitions and sustainment of legacy systems."*

"As we pointed out in a [May 2022 letter to the U.S. Department of State](#), this approach leaves Taiwan vulnerable to Chinese grey-zone and blockade scenarios. We believe that U.S. security assistance to Taiwan instead needs to take a broader view of the platforms, systems, and munitions required to maintain a full defense of the island in the face of the myriad challenges posed by China's military."

Hammond-Chambers further added, *"The IRST sale may be evidence that the Biden Administration is adjusting and broadening its approach in support of Taiwan's defense, given that this sale provides new capabilities that enhances Taiwan's military ability to meet PLA threats beyond the narrow asymmetric view."*

Source: See the DSCA website at <https://www.dsca.mil/press-media/major-arms-sales>

Additional Data:

For more details on Taiwan arms sales, please visit our dedicated defense website at www.ustaiwandefense.com. The post "[Taiwan Arms Sales Notified to Congress 1990-2023](#)" contains charts showing a summary of arms sales data by year, along



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with a link to the raw data compiled by the Council from DSCA and other sources.

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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