



Committee on Foreign Affairs

CHAIRMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN



**Remarks of the Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Committee Markup
“Taiwan Policy Act of 2011” (H.R. 2918) and
“Taiwan Airpower Modernization Act” (H.R. 2992)
November 17, 2011**

The Committee just adopted legislation relating to U.S.-Taiwan relations and the defense needs of Taiwan, including H.R. 2918, the “Taiwan Policy Act of 2011.” This legislation is designed to address the drift and lack of strategic thinking that has hurt the relationship in recent years.

Although Taiwan maintains the staunch support of its many friends in Congress, the relationship has been placed on the defensive this past year by a growing number of policy revisionists. Apologists, who would use Taiwan as a bargaining chip to placate a rising China, started voicing these views in the journal *Foreign Affairs* at the beginning of the year, and have continued with an article last week titled “To Save Our Economy, Ditch Taiwan.”

It was due to concern over these voices of appeasement that I felt it necessary to further strengthen and clarify our relations with the people of Taiwan by introducing the Taiwan Policy Act. These concerns have only been amplified by the Administration’s regrettable and short-sighted decision not to sell the next generation of F-16 C/D fighters to Taiwan, despite growing evidence of China’s increasing military threat to the island.

Taiwan needs those F-16s and she needs them now to defend the skies over the Taiwan Strait. And Taiwan needs diesel submarines, and she needs them now, to protect her territorial waters from the rapidly expanding PLA navy.

And Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta’s comments last month in Bali that we gave Beijing a “heads up” before the formal announcement on arms sales to Taiwan, despite assurances to the contrary given by Administration witnesses at a prior Committee hearing, raises further concern about adherence to the Taiwan Relations Act and Ronald Reagan’s Six Assurances.

The bill considered and adopted today will help ensure that Taiwan’s peace, prosperity and security will be maintained for the next three decades and beyond. It would also further strengthen commercial relations between the United States and the people of Taiwan.

While American trade interests in Asia stagnate, Beijing is expanding its own commercial interests ever further out into the Pacific. Washington cannot cede supremacy in economic influence over the Pacific to Beijing.

This legislation would also expedite the people-to-people ties that are so vital to strengthening our bilateral relations by including Taiwan in the visa waiver program, consistent with our homeland security requirements.

By building on the firm foundation laid by the Taiwan Relations Act over three decades ago, the Taiwan Policy Act will serve to move relations between the peoples of the United States and Taiwan to new levels in the areas of security, trade, and international travel. This Committee showed its support for the people of Taiwan, for the sale of F-16 fighters to this island democracy, and for the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act by taking favorable action today on this legislation.

Similarly, the Committee also considered H.R. 2992, the “Taiwan Airpower Modernization Act” today. This important legislation was introduced by Congresswoman Granger, the distinguished Chairman of the Subcommittee on State/Foreign Operations of the Appropriations Committee.

As the name of the bill suggests, this is straightforward legislation. It simply requires that the President carry out the sale of no fewer than 66 F-16C/D multirole fighter aircraft to Taiwan. As Members are aware, under the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act the U.S. is obligated to make available defense articles and services necessary for Taiwan’s self-defense. In order to meet this requirement, the U.S. must provide Taiwan with equipment necessary to help the island nation defend its own airspace.

While the recent agreement by the U.S. to upgrade Taiwan’s existing fleet of F-16s is a step in the right direction, Taiwan also urgently needs new advanced combat aircraft to help meet the growing menace from communist China. Accordingly, it is long past due for the Executive Branch to cease its dithering on this issue and sell Taiwan the new F-16s it has sought since 2006.

I strongly support passage of this legislation and now recognize the Ranking Member for any comments he might care to make.