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US approves \$2 billion in arms sales to Taiwan including advanced missile defense system



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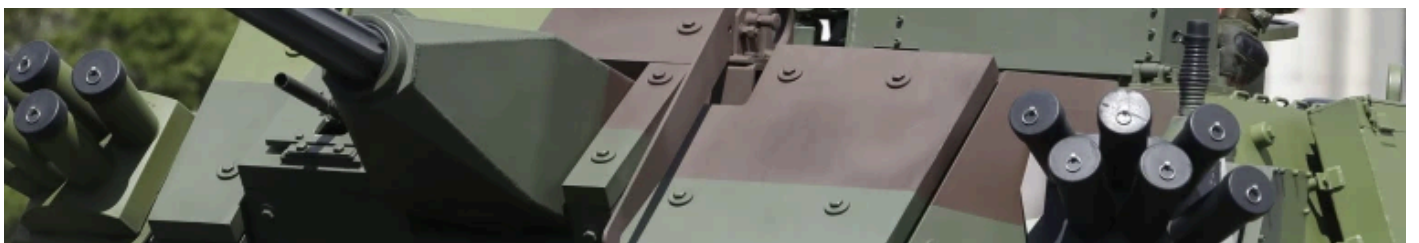
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FILE - Taiwanese soldiers salute during National Day celebrations in front of the Presidential Building in Taipei, Taiwan, on Oct. 10, 2021. (AP Photo/Chiang Ying-ying, File) [Read More](#)

BY [SIMINA MISTREANU](#)

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TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The United States has approved \$2 billion in arms sales to Taiwan, including the first-time delivery to the self-ruled island of an advanced surface-to-air missile defense system, in a move that has drawn China's criticism.

Taiwan's presidential office on Saturday thanked Washington for greenlighting the potential arms sales. Under the island's new president, Lai Ching-te, Taiwan has been stepping up defense measures as China increased its military threats against the territory it claims as its own.

Beijing last week held [war games encircling Taiwan](#) for the second time since Lai took office in May.

The U.S. is Taiwan's strongest unofficial ally and its laws bound it to provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself.

"Strengthening Taiwan's self-defense capabilities is the foundation for maintaining regional stability," Taiwan's presidential spokesperson Karen Kuo said.

China criticized the move, saying it undermined its sovereignty and security interests, was harming U.S.-China relations and threatened peace across the Taiwan Strait, which separates China from Taiwan.

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“China strongly condemns and firmly opposes this and has lodged serious protests with the U.S.,” read a statement by a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson. “We will take resolute countermeasures and take all measures necessary to firmly defend national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.”

The potential sales package includes three National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) and related equipment valued at up to \$1.16 billion, according to the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.

It also includes radar systems worth an estimated \$828 million.

The NASAMS system has been battle-tested in Ukraine and will help to strengthen the Taiwanese army’s air defense capabilities, Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said.

China’s war games last week were aimed at practicing the “sealing off of key ports and key areas” around Taiwan, according to Chinese officials. Taiwan counted a record one-day total of 153 aircraft, 14 navy vessels and 12 Chinese government ships.

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