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IT'S TIME TO EXPAND U.S.-TAIWAN MILITARY EXCHANGES

US-Taiwan Business Council Statement July 11, 2016

The United States Congress is currently considering legislation directing the U.S. Department of Defense to conduct expanded military exchanges between senior flag officers and other senior officials from the United States with their counterparts in Taiwan.

A program to expand military exchanges would include encouraging members of the U.S. Armed Forces and senior officials within DoD to participate with the Taiwan Armed Forces and officials from the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense in activities such as exercises, events, and observation opportunities in both the U.S. and Taiwan. Such a program would allow the two sides to focus on a lengthened list of issues of mutual interest, and to conduct discussions on threat analysis; military doctrine; force planning; logistics support; intelligence collection and analysis; operational tactics, techniques, and procedures; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and civil-military relations.

While the U.S. and Taiwan already hold both senior-level strategic security dialogues and numerous lower-level exchanges each year, there are many policy restrictions constraining official U.S.-Taiwan interactions on national security issues. Expanding such exchanges would help improve military to military relations between the two sides, enhance the long-term military relationship, and strengthen overall bilateral relations. It could also boost U.S. security cooperation with Taiwan, ensure open lines of communication, and build mutual trust. In addition, a strengthened relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan militaries could help prevent any potential miscalculations in the Taiwan Strait or in the South China Sea.

Rupert Hammond-Chambers, President of the US-Taiwan Business Council, said “*The Council applauds the work of Congress on this matter, and wholly supports any effort by the DoD to increase the number of annual official and unofficial military exchanges, to broaden the range of exchanges to encompass the full spectrum of the military-to-military relationship, as well as to normalize and institutionalize such bilateral military exchanges between the U.S. and Taiwan.*”

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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