

Congressman Phil Gingrey
U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission
Public Hearing: “China's Military Aerospace and Commercial Aviation Capabilities”
May 20, 2010
Statement

Commissioner Videnieks, Commissioner Blumenthal, and Members of the Commission, I appreciate this opportunity to testify before you today and would once again like to commend you for the important work of the Commission in analyzing the economic and security relations between the U.S. and China. Accordingly, I am pleased to be able to share my thoughts with you especially as the Co-Chair of the House of Representatives Taiwan Caucus.

Your hearing today on China’s Military Aerospace and Commercial Aviation Capabilities is a critically important topic that provokes not only questions of Asian regional relations but also of U.S. aerospace superiority.

There is an old saying that “good fences make for good neighbors.” Well, I would like to offer a variant of that saying: “good defenses make for good neighbors.” Establishing defensive parity among nations has been one mechanism to prioritize diplomatic interaction over military recourse. As we look to Eastern Asia, the explosive growth of China and its increasing investment in its military necessitates our consideration of the defensive capabilities of their neighbors. I do not say this to ascribe motive or impugn the actions of China, but rather, I say this because again, the preservation of defensive parity is key to preserving peaceful interactions in all regions of the world.

These sales are critically important for several reasons. Outside of the F-16, Taiwan’s current fleet consists of F-5s, Indigenous Defense Fighters, and Mirage 2000 Fighters. The F-5s are aging rapidly, while the Mirage 2000 fleet will have to be retired in 2010 due to the lack of affordable spare parts. The Indigenous Defense Fighters are expected to reach the end of their service life by 2020. Without new F-16s, in the next 5 years the Taiwanese fleet will be reduced by 120 aircraft. It is clear that new F-16Cs would enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense and ensure cross-strait stability through air parity.

Further, we must not only work to ensure cross-strait stability, but regional stability as well. One way to accomplish this is by exploring the sale of the F-22 Raptor to Japan. This makes sense for several reasons, mainly because we know other regional powers — namely the Chinese and the Russians — are currently test flying and committed to fielding the T-50, which is quite obviously an F-22 Raptor-like aircraft. In the past, the top admiral in the Chinese navy discussed their development of a stealthy fighter capable of supercruise. Further, sophisticated and highly lethal missile systems such as the SA-20 and S-300/400 are proliferating worldwide.

Additionally, since the United States is poised to terminate F-22 production nearly 200 aircraft shy of the Air Force’s validated requirement for 381 Raptors, a Japanese Self

Defense Air Force equipped with an FMS version of the F-22 would demonstrate, without question, our real commitment to a key ally, Japan, while allowing the U.S. to position more of our limited USAF F-22 fleet in other areas.

Ultimately, foreign sales of the F-16 and the F-22 to our allies in the region will help to preserve a military balance of power in the region that will actually do more to preserve peace and foster cooperation than to upset it. Further at a time of growing U.S. deficits, foreign sales are a pragmatic approach to preserving this balance of power in the region without doing so at the cost of the American taxpayer.

In conclusion, I want to again thank this Commission for its work and express my optimism that the fruits of its labor will promote sound and solid policymaking here in Washington. Thank you.