

U.S. considers selling weapons to Taiwan

WASHINGTON (AP) — When U.S. and Taiwanese officials gather behind closed doors Monday to discuss which weapons the United States is willing to sell, the \$4.4 billion question will be whether Taiwan gets the go-ahead to buy the Aegis destroyers it says it needs to counter a buildup of Chinese missiles.

The talks Monday and Tuesday in Washington are especially sensitive because of their profound political implications.

China has said it would be compelled to react harshly if Taiwan acquires Aegis warships. Taiwan views its request as a test of U.S. support in the face of China's continuing buildup of offensive missiles.

China regards Taiwan as Chinese territory, separated by civil war. The United States has a "one China" policy, but under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 it is obligated to ensure a "sufficient" defense for Taiwan.

The Clinton administration is divided over the weapons sales. The Pentagon believes they are justified for Taiwan's self-defense but the White House and State Department worry more about provoking China.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said Friday he could not discuss the substance of the U.S.-Taiwan talks.

The Washington Post, citing anonymous sources, reported in Monday's edi-

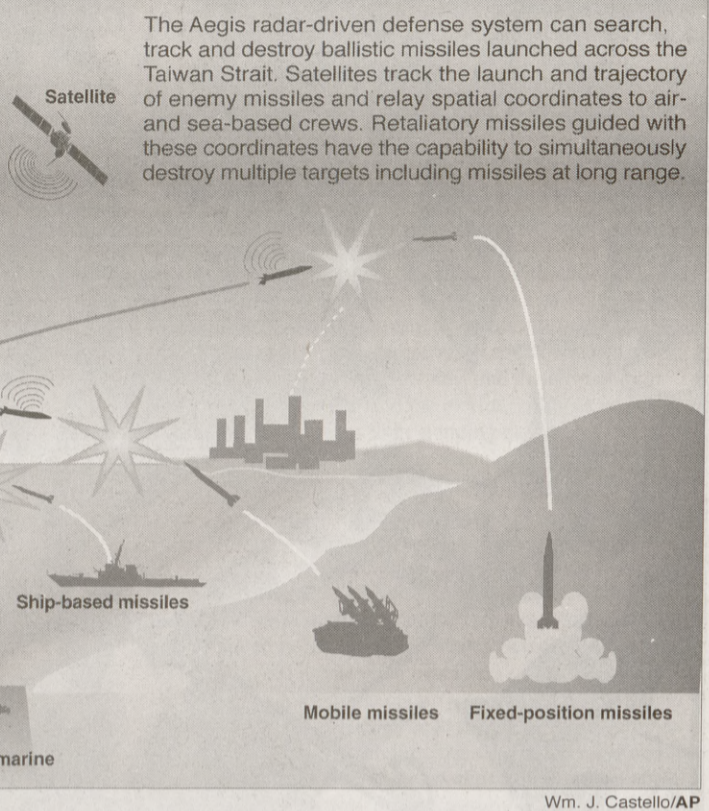
The Aegis system

U.S. and Taiwanese officials gathered on Monday to discuss which weapons the United States is willing to sell. On the table is the \$4.4 billion sale of Aegis destroyers Taiwan says it needs to counter a buildup of Chinese missiles.

In strictly military terms, there is little question that Taiwan can justify its desire for warships equipped with the highly advanced Aegis weapons system, which is designed to defend against aircraft and missiles.

Taiwan wants to buy four of the warships, which go for \$1.1 billion apiece, plus a variety of other advanced weapons. Adm. Dennis Blair, commander in chief of U.S. Pacific Command, has made clear that he believes Taiwan faces a serious missile threat from China.

"Currently, China has deployed about 200 ballistic missiles against Taiwan and is adding about 50 missiles per year," Blair said in a speech in Washington on March 16.



Source: U.S. Navy

Wm. J. Castellino/AP

Mugabe supports farmers

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — President Robert Mugabe abruptly summoned white farm leaders to his office Monday and promised to personally intervene to end the violent crisis over the occupation of white-owned farms, the farmers said.

During the 1 1/2 hour meeting on the eve of Zimbabwe's 20th anniversary of independence, Mugabe said he would work "to get things back to normality," said Tim Henwood, head of the Commercial Farmers Union, which represents white farmers.

The official state news agency confirmed Mugabe's first meeting with farm union officials since the occupations began two months ago. But government officials declined to comment on the talks, and it was unclear whether Mugabe's reported promise marked a reversal of his stance on the thousands of

armed black squatters who have occupied more than 900 white-owned farms.

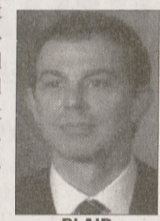
Until now, Mugabe has backed the occupations, arguing they are a justified protest against unequal distribution of land in a country where 4,000 white farmers own one-third of the productive farmland. On Sunday, he insisted he would not order supporters to vacate the farms and urged them to defend themselves from opponents and "hit back wildly."

Mugabe's speech Sunday came hours after the killing of farmer David Stevens, a known supporter of the Movement for Democratic Change, the main opposition party.

The state news agency reported that police were searching for suspects in Stevens' killing and the beatings of five other white farmers.

Putin meets Blair in London

LONDON (AP) — On his first visit to the West as Russian president, Vladimir Putin pledged Monday that his country would not drift back into isolation, but would seek friendlier ties with Europe — despite sharp differences over Chechnya.



BLAIR

Putin promised to implement economic reforms, defend property owners and root out corruption to attract foreign investment, and Prime Minister Tony Blair responded by saying the newly elected Russian "talks our language on reform."

"Of course, one could follow the logic of isolation, but I'm entirely convinced that such logic is absolutely inappropriate not only in relations with Great Britain but the rest of Europe," Putin said at a joint news conference with Blair.

The Russian leader later traveled to Windsor Castle, where he had a 30-minute private audience with Queen Elizabeth II, before flying to the Ukraine.

Putin's 24-hour stop in London — the centerpiece of his first foreign trip — appeared to signal a strengthening of ties between the two nuclear powers. Putin already showed signs of cultivating Britain by inviting Blair to visit him in St. Petersburg last month.

Blair's aides said Britain is ideally suited to provide a bridge not only between Russia and the European Union but also Russia and the United States, whose relations have deteriorated in the past year.

"Some say that because of our concerns about Chechnya, we should keep some distance from Moscow," Blair said. "I share this concern ... but I believe the best way to get results is by engaging with Russia, not isolating Russia."

THE BATTALION Classified Ads

Classified continue from page 10

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20 Aggieland 01 STAFF APPLICATION

If you are interested in designing pages, writing stories, or taking pictures for the 2001 Texas A&M yearbook... then simply fill out this form and drop it off in room 004 (basement) of the Reed McDonald Building.

Available Positions Include (Check all desired positions)

- Managing Editor
Section Editor(s)
Copy Editor
Photo Editor
Web Editor
Designer(s)
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Name:
Classification:
Major:
Phone Number(s):
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Editor Positions

- 1) Why do you want an editor position?
2) What changes would you like to make to the yearbook?
3) What experience do you have in leadership roles?

Staff Positions

- 1) Why do you want to be on the staff?
2) What prior experience do you have that relates to the position you are applying for?

Please read and type your responses to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper that is to be turned in with this form. Also, attach any samples of work that you have along with a resumé, if possible. All applicants are encouraged to include any other relevant information.

DEADLINE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS IS THURSDAY, APRIL 20

If you have any questions, call Jon Niven at (979) 845-2681

THE BATTALION

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If you can write, edit, design pages, draw, use a camera... Texas A&M's award-winning student newspaper is looking for you.

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Number of hours you will take in the summer:
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If you have another job, what is it:
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Do you plan to keep it, if hired?

OPENINGS INCLUDE:

Please check the position(s) for which you are interested. If you are interested in more than one, number them in order of preference with 1 being your top choice.

Assistant Editors

- City (Campus/Community)
Lifestyle & Entertainment

Staff

- News Reporter
Science & Technology Reporter
Feature Writer
Entertainment Writer
Sports Writer
Columnist
Web Designer
Radio Reporter
Photographer
Graphic Artist
Cartoonist
Page Designer
Copy Editor

Assistant Editor Applicants*

- 1) What are your goals for managing your staff?
2) What do you believe is the role of The Battalion?
3) What changes would you make to improve The Battalion? Pay particular attention to the position for which you're applying.

Staff Applicants*

- 1) Why do you want to work at The Battalion, and what do you hope to accomplish?
2) What experience do you have that relates to the position for which you are applying? (include classes, seminars, etc.)
3) What changes do you feel would improve the quality of The Battalion? (Give special attention to the section for which you're applying.)

*Please type your responses on a separate piece of paper, and attach a resumé and samples of your work (stories you have written for publications or classes, pages you have designed, photos taken, drawings made or other creative samples — just show us what you can do.

*Deadlines: Wednesday, April 19, for assistant editor positions, and Friday, April 21, for staff positions. Turn applications in at 013 (basement) Reed McDonald Building.