



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

AUG 25 2022

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response, coordinated with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to section 1260B of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), is enclosed. Section 1260B requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with HHS, to submit a report on the feasibility of establishing a medical security partnership with the Ministry of Defense of Taiwan.

The Department's Global Health Engagement activities with Taiwan over the past 6 years have enabled us to forge relationships and build trust between U.S. and Taiwan military medical personnel. We believe that cooperation with Taiwan on a broad range of health-related matters is not only feasible but desirable. As we continue to gradually expand our engagements, we are cautiously optimistic that we are building the foundation for a strong and increasingly productive health security partnership.

Thank you for your continued strong support for the health and well-being of our Service members. I am sending a similar letter to the House Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member



UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

AUG 25 2022

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Ranking Member

**Report to the Committees on Armed Services of the
Senate and the House of Representatives**



**Response to Section 1260B of the William M. (Mac)
Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for
Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116–283)**

**Report on United States-Taiwan Medical Security
Partnership**

August 2022

The estimated cost of this report for the Department of
Defense is approximately \$15.4k in fiscal year 2020-2021.
It includes \$.1k in expenses and \$15.3k in DoD labor
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Introduction

This is the final report in response to section 1260B of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116–283), which requires the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to submit a report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the feasibility of establishing a medical security partnership with the Ministry of Defense of Taiwan.

Executive Summary

The Department’s Global Health Engagement activities with Taiwan over the past 6 years have enabled us to forge relationships and build trust between U.S. and Taiwan military medical personnel. As we continue to gradually expand these engagements, we are cautiously optimistic that we are building the foundation for a strong and increasingly productive health security partnership.

Department of Defense (DoD) Global Health Engagement and Global Health Security

The Department’s global health engagement (GHE) activities contribute to National Defense Strategy and Combatant Command strategic objectives by serving as key enablers in enhancing readiness, force health protection, and security cooperation. GHE activities include collaborating with partner nations to help them build health security capabilities and facilitate their participation in the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), in alignment with our responsibilities under the U.S. Global Health Security Strategy.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and Global Health Security

Within the Indo-Asia Pacific region, USINDOPACOM has increasingly made global health security a key pillar of its cooperative health engagement strategy. DoD personnel have advised and supported military medical colleagues in Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and Thailand during their nations’ tenures as GHSA Steering Group Chair. USINDOPACOM has partnered with the Australian Defence Force to host a series of key leader events and webinars to increase health security awareness, knowledge, and communication among partner nations, and is preparing to establish a multilateral Indo-Pacific Health Security Initiative to further operationalize these shared lines of efforts and priorities.

Engaging with Taiwan

Taiwan is the lynchpin to the first-island chain and a critical enabler to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific region. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiqués between the United States and the People’s Republic of China, and the Six Assurances regarding relations between the United States and Taiwan, USINDOPACOM engages the Taiwan military to maintain sufficient self-defense capability that is credible and resilient. The Department, and USINDOPACOM, remains committed to enhancing our unofficial engagements with Taiwan, to include conducting regular meetings, reciprocal visits, and promoting Taiwan’s meaningful

participation in international organizations, as well as collaborating on outreach to third countries, including through the Global Cooperation and Training Framework.

Given its strategic location, and what we know of its capabilities, the Department and USINDOPACOM have determined that it is not only feasible but indeed mutually beneficial to establish a health security partnership with Taiwan, and we are carefully proceeding in that direction.

Partnering with Taiwan in infectious disease preparedness and control is not new

Partnering with Taiwan in infectious disease preparedness and control is not new for the Department. U.S. Navy and Taiwan researchers enjoyed a strong collaborative relationship from 1955 to 1979 while the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit TWO (NAMRU-2) was headquartered in Taipei, with the partnership's benefits extending well beyond the United States and Taiwan. NAMRU-2 trained hundreds of research fellows from throughout Asia, and its many scientific accomplishments included: identifying the causes of fevers of unknown origin in U.S. military personnel in Vietnam; being the first to demonstrate the role of attenuated Rubella vaccine in preventing naturally acquired disease in humans; establishing mosquito cell cultures for use in studying arthropod-borne viral and parasitic agents; and sending teams around the world to respond to cholera epidemics, applying treatment methods it had developed that reduced cholera fatality rates from 40 percent to less than 2 percent.

A series of increasing engagements with Taiwan over the past 6 years

When the United States recognized the People's Republic of China in 1979, NAMRU-2 moved its headquarters to the Philippines, and U.S. military medical collaboration with Taiwan was quite limited for over 35 years. In April 2015, a visit to Taiwan by a Pacific Command medical delegation began a series of DoD GHE activities that have continued through the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Those activities include:

- Visits by Taiwan military medical personnel to Honolulu, Hawaii; San Diego, California; and Washington, D.C., in 2015 and 2017;
- Taiwanese participation in the Pacific Military Health Exchange (now known as the Indo-Pacific Military Health Exchange) in 2016 in Malaysia and in 2017 in Singapore;
- Taiwanese participation at an operational medicine conference in San Diego in March 2018;
- Attendance by the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) Associate Dean for Nursing at a medical conference in Taiwan, and by her Taiwan National Defense Medical Center counterpart at USUHS's "Bushmaster" course in August and September 2018;

- Attendance by the Taiwan Surgeon General at the December 2019 Association of Military Surgeons of the United States conference;
- Participation by USUHS faculty in a series of COVID-19-focused virtual clinical rounds with Taiwan in April 2020;
- A virtual key leader engagement led by the Commanding General of the 18th Army Medical Command and the Medical Affairs Division Chief of the Taiwan Army in March 2021;
- Two virtual key leader engagement and aerospace medicine subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs) led by the U.S. Pacific Air Forces Surgeon General and the Chief Medical Officer of the Taiwan Air Force Command, in March and in October 2021, with the INDOPACOM Surgeon providing opening remarks for the most recent one;
- Participation by three Taiwan physicians during the USUHS “Bushmaster” course in September and October 2021.

Looking forward to 2022 and beyond

The increasing pace of GHE activities with Taiwan is expected to continue in 2022:

- USINDOPACOM plans to invite Taiwan to participate in the Military-Civilian Health Security Summit, in Singapore in June/July 2022. One of the objectives of this event will likely be to socialize and develop the concept for the Indo-Pacific Health Security Initiative, and we envision Taiwan as a valuable charter member of that initiative;
- The U.S. Pacific Fleet has invited Taiwan to participate in PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2022, involving the hospital ship USNS MERCY;
- A face-to-face Aerospace Medicine SMEE is tentatively planned for the 4th Quarter of 2022 in Taiwan;
- When travel restrictions and other pandemic related constraints have eased, visits to Taiwan by the INDOPACOM Surgeon and by the Commanding General of the 18th Army Medical Command, which would mark the first general/flag officer-level visits there in decades.

Responses to specific questions from the Committees

- a) **Research and production of vaccines and medicines:** While the Department is not currently actively collaborating with Taiwan in this area, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) informed us that a diverse set of engagements is ongoing between HHS, particularly the National Institutes for Health (NIH), and Taiwan.

These include post-docs from Taiwan conducting research at NIH intramural laboratories, and more than 13 institutes and centers within NIH funding research with Taiwan.

- b) **Joint conferences with scientists and experts:** In addition to the DoD conferences, SMEEs and other exchanges discussed in the previous paragraphs, HHS informed us that it enjoys a strong and close relationship with the Taiwan Ministry of Health and Welfare, with which it has collaborated for more than 20 years over a wide range of public health issues and major global health events, to include the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic, and management of mass burn casualties during disasters. The American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office signed a memorandum of understanding in August 2020 to expand upon this collaboration. Taiwan also hosts multiple Global Cooperation and Training Framework training sessions each year. At least one of these is typically devoted to health cooperation topics and includes the participation of a mid- to senior-level technical expert from HHS.
- c) **Collaboration relating to and exchanges of medical supplies and equipment:** The Department does not “exchange” medical supplies and equipment, but subject to mutual interest, could consider a SMEE with U.S. and Taiwan military medical logisticians, to discuss technical matters relating to medical supplies and equipment and share best practices. The Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid appropriation allows DoD to donate medical supplies and equipment, and/or provide relevant technical assistance, in response to requests for assistance from partner nations. DoD has provided over \$220 million in assistance to over 140 partner nations through this appropriation during the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of the United States whole-of-government international response. Although we have received no requests for medical supplies and equipment from Taiwan to date, we could respond to a future request, subject to available funds and with concurrence from interagency partners.
- d) **Use of hospital ships:** As discussed above, Taiwan has been invited to participate in PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2022. We have found participation in these missions, by countries like Japan, India, and Australia, to be quite valuable in furthering health interoperability in the maritime domain.

Conclusion

The Department has clearly demonstrated, through the recent and planned engagements discussed in this report, that cooperation on a broad range of health-related activities with Taiwan is not only feasible but desirable, and it is underway.

References

- (a) Public Law 116–283, “William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021.”
- (b) National Defense Strategy, 2018.
- (c) DoD Instruction 2000.30, “Global Health Engagement (GHE) Activities,” July 12, 2017.
- (d) United States Government Global Health Security Strategy, 2019.
- (e) Public Law 96–008, “Taiwan Relations Act,” 1979
- (f) Joint Communiques on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, issued by the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China, 1972, 1979, and 1982
- (g) H.Con.Resolution 88, “Reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances as cornerstones of United States-Taiwan relations,” 2016.
- (h) Shilling, Charles. History of the Research Division, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, U.S. Department of the Navy. Washington, DC: BUMED, 1974.