

Appendix 170 -- Taiwan Builds 3 Prototype Cruise Missiles (2006)

Source: Jane's Agence France Presse

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Taiwan Made 3 Cruise Missile Prototypes

Taiwan has produced three prototypes of a new cruise missile which could be used to strike the east coast of rival China, an authoritative defence magazine said.

The cruise missile, called Hsiung Feng 2E (Brave Wind), "will be deployed on mobile land-based platforms and initial plans are for the production of up to 50 missiles before 2010 and up to 500 missiles after 2010," Jane's Defence Weekly said in an article to be published January 11.

With a range exceeding 600 kilometers (360 miles), the missile will be able to attack targets along the east coast of the Chinese mainland, it quoted a defence source as saying.

"If deployed on Penghu Island in the south or Tungyin Island in the north, it could strike as far south as Hong Kong and as far north as Shanghai," the source said.

The defence ministry declined comment on the report.

China has repeatedly threatened to invade Taiwan should it declare formal independence, prompting the island to seek more advanced weaponry to defend itself.

The Pentagon released a report in July last year warning that China had deployed up to 730 ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan. It said Beijing's build-up could tip the military balance against Taiwan and threaten other countries in the region. Taiwan's military-run Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology, the developer of the cruise missile, is planning to extend its range to 1,000 kilometers, the weekly said.

But "this would require the acquisition of specialized engine components from the U.S. that Washington has so far refused to allow, perhaps linked to provisions under the Missile Technology Control Regime," Jane's said. The Chungshan Institute is also working on a short-range ballistic missile based on the Tien Kung (Sky Bow) air-defence missile system, the weekly said.

The ballistic missile and cruise missile are integral to Taiwan's "active defence" policy, which aims to counter any aggression before it reaches Taiwanese territory, it said.

Relations between China and Taiwan, which split in 1949 at the end of a civil war, have worsened since independence-leaning Chen Shui-bian was elected president in 2000. He was re-elected last year.