

A BUNCH OF HYPOCRITES

BY JASON GAGLIARDI

UNITED States sanction threats against China over arms sales sparked outrage across Hongkong yesterday, after it was revealed the US is now the undisputed king of Third World arms deals.

Legislators, lawyers and academics accused the US of gross hypocrisy, amid warnings that any sanctions against China would also hit Hongkong's economy.

"The US are the masters of hypocrisy and double standards," Hongkong lawyer Liu Yiu-chu said.

"They are the bullies of the world playground - and no-one wants to play with them any more."

The Hongkong protests come as US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen prepare for a showdown on arms sales at

CIA wants to buy back missiles

BY ROBIN WRIGHT AND JOHN BRODER

LOS ANGELES TIMES

THE US Central Intelligence Agency wants US\$55 million (HK\$429 million) to buy back hundreds of the highly efficient Stinger anti-aircraft missiles that the United States gave to Afghan rebels in the 1980s.

US sources said the buy-back bid was in response to growing fears of terrorist attacks on American civilian aircraft.

The extraordinary sum - more than five times the last allocation for the covert Stinger buy-back program - is being sought

from contingency funds because of fierce competition for the prized missiles on the international black market.

Officials said US agents were outbid for the accurate, shoulder-launched rockets that would now fetch upwards of US\$100,000 apiece on the black market.

"Whatever we pay to get them back is a small price, given the almost insoluble threat to civil aviation that Stingers pose in the hands of terrorists," Rand Corporation terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman said.

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Sunday's Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Singapore.

The US has taken over from the former Soviet Union as by far the biggest arms supplier to the Third World, according to a report released yesterday by the US Congressional Research Service.

It reveals that the US accounted for almost two-thirds of the \$24 billion in arms supply agreements signed by Third World countries in 1992.

Five years ago, the US supplied only 13 per cent of the same market.

In the same period, China

dropped from fifth to tenth in the ranks of Third World arms suppliers and last year supplied less than 1 per cent of the market.

Two days before the report's release, the US threatened to impose economic sanctions on China after intelligence reports claimed

Beijing had shipped all the necessary components for building nuclear-capable M-11 missiles to Pakistan.

Independent legislators Emily Lau and Vincent Cheng lashed the US for its hypocrisy.

"I am not saying the US concerns about China are groundless but it is certainly hypocritical to threaten sanctions when the US is doing the same thing," Lau said.

"I would like to see them put their own house in order if they want people to listen to them about China.

"It is just like the immigration issue - the US throws out the Haitians but tells us to keep the Vietnamese.

"It is time for them to practise what they preach."

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US officials are slated as 'bunch of hypocrites'

Liu, a Hongkong affairs adviser to the National People's Congress, said if the US continued to throw its weight around, the policy would "backfire in its face".

"Many countries will prefer just to trade amongst each other and have nothing to do with the US," she said.

"They simply apply whatever standards are convenient to them at the time - culturally, socially and economically. They are the bullies of this Earth."

Legislator Tam Yiu-chung also joined in condemning the US for bullying tactics and double standards.

Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce director Brigadier Ian Christie said it was likely any US sanctions against China would involve high-technology products.

"This would affect Hongkong's re-export trade because many of these types of products come through Hongkong first," he said.

Chinese University political scientist Tony Liao said many people felt the US was guilty of double standards.

"But I doubt places like Hongkong and Japan will say much because they need US support," he said.

HONG KONG STANDARD

24 JUL 1993