Ernst David Bergmann and Israel’s Role in Taiwan’s Defense

Yitzhak Shichor
The Importance of Being Ernst: Ernst David Bergmann and Israel’s Role in Taiwan’s Defense

YITZHAK SHICHER

THE ASIA PAPERS, NO. 2 | 2016
Established in 2005, the Center for International and Regional Studies at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar is a premier research institute devoted to the academic study of regional and international issues through dialogue and exchange of ideas, research and scholarship, and engagement with national and international scholars, opinion makers, practitioners, and activists.

Guided by the principles of academic excellence, forward vision, and community engagement, the CIRS mission revolves around five principal goals:

- To provide a forum for scholarship and research on international and regional affairs;
- To encourage in-depth examination and exchange of ideas;
- To foster thoughtful dialogue among students, scholars, and practitioners of international affairs;
- To facilitate the free flow of ideas and knowledge through publishing the products of its research, sponsoring conferences and seminars, and holding workshops designed to explore the complexities of the twenty-first century;
- To engage in outreach activities with a wide range of local, regional, and international partners.

This publication series is made possible by the generous support of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.
ABSTRACT
Since the early 1960s when Taiwanese officials met Professor Ernst David Bergmann, the first chairman of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, he played a significant role in Taiwan’s nuclear (and missile) programs. In Taiwan, which he visited occasionally and maintained close relations with President Chiang Kai-shek and its military-technological-scientific complex, Bergmann also facilitated some of Israel’s conventional military transfers to Taiwan. While some of his activities in Taiwan may have been approved by the Israeli Ministry of Defense (which followed its own foreign policy), the Foreign Ministry took exception, well before Jerusalem’s rapprochement with Beijing. Israel’s military relations with the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) had been aborted by the mid-1990s, even though attempts have been made to resume defense links. Since his death in 1975—one day after Chiang Kai-shek’s—and definitely before, Ernst Bergmann has been considered, implicitly but lately explicitly, a prominent player in Taiwan’s defense modernization and one of the forefathers of its nuclear program.

YITZHAK SHICHOR, Ph.D. the London School of Economics and Political Science, is Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Haifa and Michael William Lipson Chair Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A former Dean of Students at the Hebrew University and Head of the Tel-Hai Academic College, he is a fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies. His main research interests are: Chinese arms transactions and defense conversion; China’s Middle East policy; international energy relations; labor export; East Asian democratization processes; Sino-Uyghur relations, Xinjiang and the Uyghur Diaspora. He is the chief editor and a contributor to ‘All under Heaven”: History of the Chinese Empire, 3 Vols. (Ra’anana: The Open University, 2011, 2013, 2017), in Hebrew, and his recent publications include: “Connected Vessels: West Asia and East Asia in China’s Geopolitics,” Araucaria: Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades 18, no. 35 (2016): 319-339; “Crackdown: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in China,” in National Experiences with Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies, ed. Beatrice Heuser, Eitan Shamir, and Efraim Inbar (London: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS The author wishes to thank the two external reviewers for their comments and suggestions for improving the manuscript, and to JY from Taiwan for providing some of the sources for this paper.
In March 1988, I attended an international workshop on People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Affairs, organized by the Sun Yat-sen Center for Policy Studies held in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. After it ended, we were taken to visit the nearby Military Academy (Zhonghua Minguo Lujun Junguan Xuexiao). During the visit two people dressed in civilian clothing approached me saying that they wanted to show me “something.” They took me to a building and opened a side door. Inside was a large windowless hall covered in purple velvet, with a big picture hanging on the wall. I almost fainted as I saw it. Years later when I asked my students to guess whose picture it was, they usually came up with names of Chinese leaders like Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, or even Mao Zedong… But the man in the picture was Ernst David Bergmann, professor of Organic Chemistry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who, as the first chairman of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), has been called by some “the father of the Israeli nuclear program” and, in the words of former Israeli president Shimon Peres, one of the seven founders of the State of Israel.¹

I never met Bergmann. He had been the academic director of the Hebrew University’s Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace. When I joined the Institute as executive director in April 1976, he was no longer alive. Still, a dozen years later, when I visited Taiwan’s Military Academy, no one volunteered any explanation as to why such a shrine—for this is what it was—had been dedicated to Bergmann’s memory. Needless to say, I did not dare ask—there was no need for that. I understood instantly that he must have done something very significant for Taiwan to deserve such honor and, given his biography, I could guess what that “something” was.

Born in Germany in 1903, Bergmann received his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from the University of Berlin in 1927, escaped Nazi persecution to London in early 1933, and arrived in Palestine

¹ Shimon Peres, From These Men: Seven Founders of the State of Israel (New York, NY: Windham Books, 1979), 185–212. Bergmann is one of them, along with David Ben-Gurion. Peres, a former defense minister, foreign minister, prime-minister, and president of Israel, knew Bergmann intimately—for better and for worse.
(then under the British Mandate) in early 1934. During World War II, Bergmann was working on various defense projects abroad and in August 1948, three months after the establishment of the State of Israel, was appointed Science Chief of the Israel Defense Forces. In July 1951, he became adviser to David Ben-Gurion, minister of defense (and prime minister) and in early 1952, following a reorganization of the defense bureaucracy, Bergmann was named the Scientific Director of the Division of Research and Infrastructure (Hebrew acronym EMET) in the Ministry of Defense. More important, in June 1952, he was appointed by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion as the first chairman of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission. At the same time he continued his academic work at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he became full professor in 1953. Little is known about his work at the IAEC—whose existence, and his appointment, were kept secret until 1954. He was a staunch Ben-Gurionist and finally resigned from the IAEC and his other Defense Ministry positions on April 1, 1966, probably frustrated. He did not get along with Levi Eshkol, who replaced Ben-Gurion as the new prime minister in 1963, as well as with many of his scientist colleagues and even with Shimon Peres, then the energetic director general of the Defense Ministry and, since 1959, deputy minister of Defense. However, there may have been additional reasons for his resignation/dismissal (to be dealt with later in the paper). It was then that Bergmann’s relations with Taiwan, begun a few years earlier, were gathering momentum.

---


3 Bergmann tried to resign in 1964, but decided (or was convinced) to stay on.
INTRODUCTION

Israel has never established diplomatic relations with the ROC.¹ In fact, in early January 1950, Israel was one of the seven non-communist governments to recognize the People’s Republic of China (PRC)—although it took over forty years to turn this recognition into official diplomatic relations. In the meantime, Israel and the ROC maintained unofficial relations—primarily in the field of trade. Evidently, Taipei was displeased by Jerusalem’s early interest in the PRC, although by 1953 it transpired that, in addition to Washington’s firm objection to Sino-Israel relations, Beijing had preferred relations with the Arab and Muslim countries. In China’s media, Israel was labeled “the running dog of American imperialism.” Taipei also preferred to be associated with Arab nations, not because of any ideological reasons but mainly because of its dependence on Arab (primarily Saudi) oil and, even more, on the Arab UN vote it needed to block Beijing’s admission. To avoid upsetting Arab governments, Taipei had rejected political and even economic relations with Israel, but soon became interested in confidential military acquisitions of advanced Israeli technologies, conventional and non-conventional.

By the late-1960s, five developments—by no means directly related to Israel’s relations with Taiwan—had helped bridge the gap between the two countries. The first was Beijing’s increasing hostility to Israel, on the one hand and, on the other, its ideological, revolutionary, and military support of radical Arab “national revolutionary and liberation movements,” mainly Palestinian organizations, which targeted Israel’s existence. The second development was Mao’s Cultural Revolution radicalism that led to the destabilization of China and East Asia. The third was Beijing’s first nuclear explosion on October 16, 1964, which terrified Taiwan, and the fourth development was Taipei’s presumed awareness of the Israeli nuclear weapons program. The fifth and final development was Washington’s intentions to improve its relations with Beijing, leading Taipei to seek alternative sources of military support. All these were instrumental in creating

¹ On March 1, 1949, the ROC—on the verge of collapse—accorded official recognition of the State of Israel, but it was not reciprocated.
and providing the framework for Israel’s involvement in Taiwan’s conventional and non-conventional military development. Bergmann played a crucial role in both.

THE NUCLEAR CONNECTION

First encounters between Israeli and Taiwanese nuclear science officials may have taken place in September 1961 at the Fifth Regular Session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference, held in Vienna, when a Taiwanese delegation must have met the Israeli delegation led by Professor Ernst David Bergmann. He was invited to visit Taiwan by “Dr. Lee” (Li Ximou, 李熙謀, also known as Lee Shih-mou, executive secretary of Taiwan’s Atomic Energy Council and later vice minister of Education). Later in 1961, Bergmann and another leading member of the IAEC paid a first visit to Taiwan, though no information is publicly available. Taipei wanted to explore Israel’s readiness to cooperate in nuclear research and to send its scientists and students to Israel. Bergmann was asked to advise the Taiwanese Atomic Energy Council on its future plans, and his presumptive suggestion to his hosts—undoubtedly based on Israel’s experience—was to pursue nuclear weapons. Bergmann headed all Israeli delegations to the IAEA through 1965. In 1962, the Taiwanese delegation was headed by Professor Cheng Chenhwa (Zheng Zhenhua, 鄭振華), director of the Institute of Nuclear Science, Tsing Hua University. Known as Victor Cheng, he attended the 1964 session as well, and was to play a central role in Taiwan’s defense program, non-conventional and conventional. It should be underlined that in the early 1960s, when Bergmann began his relations with Taiwan, Israel had already built the infrastructure for its Dimona reactor (apparently without his direct involvement) but did not as yet have all the facilities needed to build a nuclear bomb, let alone launching vehicles. Taipei’s attempt to enlist Bergmann had to

2 The first encounter may have taken place already in 1960, when Bergmann headed the Israeli delegation to the IAEA annual conference for the first time.
4 IAEA General Conference Annual Reports; Taiwan Today, January 1, 1964 and January 5, 1964.
do more with his reputation and vision, rather than concrete nuclear science knowledge that he did not master.

Until recent years, public information on Bergmann’s contribution to the ROC’s military modernization, conventional and unconventional, was not available. A recent biography of Ernst Bergmann, the only one ever published, does not even mention his relations with Taiwan, the last significant chapter of his life.\(^5\) Other researchers are also unaware of his role in Taiwan’s defense modernization.\(^6\) Much of the Taiwanese perspective below is based on a series of articles by Wang Feng (王子), published in the journal *Wang Pao* (旺報).\(^7\) These articles were copied by scores of other Chinese journals and Internet blogs and websites, though not in English.\(^8\)

According to these sources, the major figure that played the predominant role in Taiwan’s nuclear program was General T’ang Chün-po (Tang Junbo, 唐君鉑). He was born in south China in 1910, but lived in Hebei, and was admitted to the Ninth Military Academy after joining the army. He was then sent to England to study artillery and electrical engineering for over five years. His promotion was quick: in 1942, he became a colonel and in 1946 he became a major general and was sent to England again. He returned to China in 1948 and became deputy director of the Logistics War Department. After the Nationalists’ retreat to Taiwan he was appointed chief of the School of Army Command and General Staff and permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defense, promoted to lieutenant general. He died in 1999, aged 90.

---

\(^5\) Fenichel, Orchin, and Jensen, *Scientist in the Service of Israel*.

\(^6\) See for example: Alan K. Chang, "Crisis Avoided: The Past, Present and Future of Taiwan’s Nuclear Weapons Program" (master’s thesis, Diplomacy and Military Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hawaii Pacific University, Fall 2011). There is no word on Bergmann. However, Bergmann is mentioned in a recent book published in Taiwan: He Liwei [David Ho], *Hedan MIT: Yige shangwei jieshu de gushi* ["A" Bomb Made in Taiwan: The Story Is Not Over] (Taipei: Women Chubanshe, 2015).


\(^8\) For a study in Chinese based mainly on open sources, see: Guopei Qing, “Taiwan yu Yiselie junshi maoyi guanxi tanxi” [Analysis of Military Trade Relations between Taiwan and Israel], *Er-shiyi Shiiji* [Twenty–First Century], No. 58 (Chinese University of Hong Kong, January 31, 2007), http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/supplem/essay/0612020g.htm.
Wang Feng reported that in 1963 Chiang Kai-shek personally ordered General T’ang to attend the IAEA General Conference in Vienna on behalf of the ROC. Yet, the meeting was also an excuse (a pretext, jiekou 藉口). In reality Chiang wanted T’ang to contact the head of the Israeli Atomic Energy Commission, Professor Ernst David Bergmann, and to invite him to pay a “secret visit” (mifang 祕訪) to Taiwan. Chiang told T’ang that to guarantee a successful counterattack against a Chinese communist atomic offensive, Taiwan “cannot completely rely on the Americans” (buneng wanquan yilai Meiguoren).9 Chiang Kai-shek hoped that with Israel’s technological assistance Taiwan could develop nuclear weapons independently.10

Subsequently, Bergmann was invited to Taiwan and in early 1965 paid a seven-day secret visit to Taiwan. The meetings were held at the Lalu Sun Moon Lake Hotel, Yuchi Township, Nantou County, in central Taiwan, “in order to avoid the eyes and ears of many in Taipei, in particular US secret agents [tewu] and [the US] Military Assistance Advisory Group personnel.”11 Bergmann’s confidential talks with Chiang Kai-shek and T’ang Chün-po lasted for two days.

Bergmann met President Chiang Kai-shek as well as his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, who was the director of the Science Development Advisory Committee and the newly appointed defense minister. They decided to implement the proposal aimed at replicating Israel’s science and technology development program and to form three research institutes: nuclear, missiles, and electronics. In case Taiwan’s nuclear program were blocked by the US, two institutes for chemical and biological warfare were to be added. Bergmann explained that it would be difficult to reach a formal and visible cooperation agreement with a country that does not maintain diplomatic relations with Israel. Moreover, he stressed that Israel by no means concealed its nuclear energy research which, he said, was “directed at peaceful purposes

10  Bergmann, who like Peres and Ben-Gurion, relied on France (he praised De Gaulle’s independent nuclear policy) and on Germany for nuclear assistance, was always suspicious of the US and rejected its demands to supervise Israel’s nuclear facilities (four US planes that flew over Dimona in July 1963 were intercepted by the Israeli Air Force). His views coincided with Taipei’s.
11  Wang, “Yiselie.”
only.”12 Leaving shortly after the Spring Festival, Bergmann may have lied (twice), but his hosts had probably known the truth. Despite his articulated reservations, Taiwan’s interest in nuclear cooperation was, however, discussed in Israel while explorations with Taipei continued in the next few years, though Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs may have been unaware of them.

In 1962, if not before, the US provided Taipei with intelligence, based on U-2 flights, about suspicious Mainland Chinese missile and nuclear sites. This was proved when on October 16, 1964, Beijing detonated its first atomic bomb. Chiang Kai-shek became even more determined to implement Bergmann’s suggestions.13 However, Washington remained skeptical about the prospects for Taiwan’s nuclear weapons development. According to US intelligence estimates: “For the next few years at least, we believe that Nationalist China would have great difficulty in obtaining unsafeguarded materials [uranium] and equipment.”14 Nonetheless, preparations were made to set up the Chungshan Science Research Institute (zhongshan kexue yanjiuyuan)—later renamed the Chungshan [SunYat-sen] Institute of Science and Technology. T’ang Chün-po assumed responsibility for the Institute’s nuclear research, the “Hsinchu Program.” He also served on the board of the ROC’s Atomic Energy Council.15

---


13 Bergmann always maintained that there was no way to stop nuclear proliferation and the Chinese test only reinforced his views—and those of the proponents of Israel’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. “I think that we are facing a very rapid expansion of the nuclear club; those who believe that East and West have reached an agreement on the proliferation of nuclear weapons are very naïve; the Chinese atomic bomb has changed the situation in the world and it is about time that they understand it,” Ma’ariv, April 9, 1965, quoted in Adam Raz, The Struggle for the Bomb [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2015), 424.


both capacities T’ang Chūn-po was in charge of acquiring materials, equipment, technologies, and personnel. His main tasks included, first, recruiting experts in nuclear and related sciences, and second, strengthening links, cooperation, and contacts with friends in foreign countries—“including Israel” (baokuo Yiselie).\(^{16}\) Indeed, some of the scientists at the Chungshan Institute had been trained in the United States, Germany, and Israel. Jerusalem, whose earlier attempts to form diplomatic relations with the PRC had been rebuffed,\(^{17}\) nevertheless still tried to explore avenues to Beijing. Taipei was never a priority.

Indeed, in the summer of 1965 Bergmann was sent to Hong Kong with Eliahu Elath, then president of the Hebrew University and a former Israeli ambassador to the US (1948–1950) and Britain (1950–1959), to explore once again the latest Chinese attitude toward diplomatic relations with Israel—before turning to Taiwan. After meeting with a “Chinese personality close to the Peking Government,” they concluded that there was no Chinese readiness for any ties with Israel.\(^{18}\) Just a few months earlier Beijing had been the first non-Arab government to welcome an official delegation of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization), set up in January 1965. Shortly afterward, the Chinese became one of the PLO’s most outspoken supporters, and, consequently, one of the most hostile and virulent critics of Israel—not only in words but also in deeds, providing the PLO and other anti-Israel organizations with arms, military training, and ideological indoctrination. Israel’s subsequent intensifying exchanges, primarily military, with Taiwan, probably reflected its realization that Beijing had become an adversary. Before the end of the year, the first steps toward Taiwan-Israel nuclear cooperation were taken—apparently without the knowledge, let alone blessings, of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Bergmann may have visited Taiwan again on his way to (or from) the next IAEA General Conference held in Tokyo in September 1965. By the end of the year an ROC delegation arrived

---

16 Wang, “Yiselie.”
in Israel. Travelling back from “a conference” in Europe, Victor Cheng, described as “Chairman of Nationalist China’s Institute of Atomic Energy,” together with “one of his deputies,” visited Israel in December 21-28, 1965. In addition to meeting with “Israeli nuclear scientists” they were escorted by Bergmann and driven to the Soreq Nuclear Research Reactor (known as Nebi Rubin) south of Tel Aviv. Information about the visit was made public three months later, on March 17, 1966.\(^{19}\) The US Embassy in Tel Aviv (that had apparently been aware of this visit since late 1965) sent confidential cables to the State Department on March 19 and 24, 1966, and tried to glean more information. They noted that Israeli officials were reluctant to provide information and added that “the fact that Dr. Bergman [sic] himself, an extremely busy man, took them around indicates that the visitors were given VIP treatment.”\(^{20}\) The Taiwanese guests also visited the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology), the Weizmann Institute of Science, Elron (one of Israel’s first hi-tech electronics companies), and other industrial facilities.\(^{21}\) Israel was the only country willing to transfer nuclear and sophisticated weapons technologies to the Taiwanese.\(^{22}\)

Following the visit, one of the two visitors approached Bergmann in March 1966 asking to enable a dozen Taiwanese to study at the Technion. At that time, no university in Taiwan offered a Ph.D. degree. Advanced students who had been regularly sent to the US usually preferred to stay there. Taiwan wanted to liberate itself from this dependence. Yet Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, who had earlier acquiesced to Bergmann’s exchanges with Taiwan, opposed any nuclear cooperation and rejected the Taiwanese scientists’ request. In a letter to Eban dated August 19, 1966, Bergmann (now no longer in any official capacity) wished to learn about Taiwan and even more about Taiwan-Israel relations. He suggested cooperation, or more specifically, nuclear cooperation, with Taiwan. In his sober reply, Eban deplored Beijing’s “consistent alienation from Israel, its visible support

---

22 Wang, “Yiselie.”
of our most extremist enemies, the concern that its policy raises in the West, in India, and even in the USSR—all these will by necessity influence our position, among others our relations with Formosa. But the nuclear area seems to me too delicate for cooperation.”

It is interesting to note that by the mid-1960s, David Ben-Gurion had predicted that the PRC would become the most important power in the world within two decades. He praised French President Charles de Gaulle for recognizing the PRC in January 1964, and whenever possible tried to convince Washington to improve relations with Beijing. Although he was his mentor, I doubt if he would have endorsed Bergmann’s actions in Taiwan—or if he even knew about them.

By that time Bergmann had already resigned from his official positions related to Israel’s defense, and the Taiwanese tried to get in touch with him to invite him for a longer period. Initiated by Dr. Lee, the invitation reflected the wish of the Taiwanese to consult with Bergmann on formulating a general research and development plan—not limited to the nuclear field. To avoid “diplomatic difficulties,” they proposed to invite Bergmann as an IAEA expert and to organize his visit through this agency from which the official invitation was sent. The reply was that since Professor Bergmann no longer served in any official duty—and was in the US at that time—if the government of Taiwan wanted to invite him, it should approach him directly. Bergmann replied that he would be ready to come to Taiwan but only as a private citizen and only for a short period (a month or two). He also said (according to ISBR instructions, for reasons unknown) that such a visit would not be possible in 1967. The ISBR document notes that the correspondence shows that “they did not want him to go.” Who are “they”? Probably the Foreign Ministry and the newly organized IAEC now headed by Professor Israel Dostrovsky.

23 Eban to Bergmann, September 7, 1966, personal-classified, ISA 4047/47.
25 Bergmann had devised a similar detailed development plan for Israel. See Peres, From These Men, 200-209.
Israel’s Role in Taiwan’s Defense

Negotiations resumed in March 1967. In September, Lee Chia, described as the Taiwan Central News Agency Tokyo Bureau Chief, visited Israel. Officially affiliated with the ROC Government Information Office in charge of relations with the media—but also of promoting Taiwan’s policies—Lee Chia had moved to Tokyo in 1948 and by late 1977 was still there, among other things as president of the Foreign Correspondents Club in Japan. In 1967 he met with Israeli Foreign Ministry Asia Division officials, exploring ways to cement bilateral relations. Their impression was that Lee was possibly involved in intelligence collecting more than in distributing information, and that he may have been sent on a mission. After the visit, Eban approved the request of five Taiwanese scientists for undertaking advanced study at the Weizmann Institute of Science—without Bergmann’s knowledge, perhaps due to his (and others’) increasing reservations about Bergmann and perhaps also because of Bergmann’s previous affiliation with the institute. As mentioned above, by early April 1966, Bergmann had resigned as IAEC chairman and left the Ministry of Defense, although his—and Israel’s—relations with Taiwan seemed to accelerate. He continued to promote Israeli-Taiwanese cooperation—especially nuclear—apparently on a private and personal basis, despite Eban’s objections.

In October 1967, after the June War, a Taiwanese “economic” delegation visited Israel but it was also interested in meeting people of the defense complex. Foreign Ministry documents specified that the visit was not to be publicized. The head of delegation repeated earlier requests to invite Bergmann to Taiwan and received the same answer. Toward the end of the year General T’ang Chün-po, Ministry of Defense Chief of R&D, asked Bergmann to arrange his, and some of his staff, visit to Israel’s science institutions, defense complex and atomic energy units. Approved by Israel’s Ministry of Defense as

28 ISBR, May 6, 1968; Yegar, The Long Journey to Asia, 288. One of them was Dr. Tang Jiabin (T’ang Chia-pin), T’ang Chün-po’s second son. The Weizmann Institute of Science refused to provide access to information about the identity of the Taiwanese scientists’ stay there.
30 ISBR, May 6, 1968.
well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an unofficial ROC delegation led by General T’ang visited Israel for two weeks, from February 25 to March 12, 1968, introducing themselves as “members of the Shihmen Institute of Technology.” This innocuous name may have disguised the fact that the members of the delegation belonged to any of the institutes nearby, such as the National Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology mentioned above, and the newly formed (in 1968) Institute of Nuclear Energy research (INER)—just four kilometers from Shihmen Dam in Taoyuan County and near Jinshan Nuclear Power Plant, Taiwan’s first.

The delegation visited the Soreq Nuclear Reactor, Israel Military Industries (IMI), the Hebrew University, Weizmann Institute, the Technion, Israel Aviation Industry, electronic firms such as Tadiran, Elron, and Elbit, and RAFAEL (Armsments Development Authority). In addition, General T’ang visited IDF units (including an armor brigade) and high-ranking officers, and met Defense Minister Moshe Dayan at Bergmann’s apartment in Jerusalem. T’ang asked Dayan to permit Professor Bergmann to visit Taiwan again “for consultation in various areas.”

The delegation was interested in Israel’s research, especially in defense and nuclear fields; in its structure, resource allocation, and the proportion between basic and applied research; and in Israel’s experience in forging electronic industry. It explored possibilities of sending students to undertake advanced defense studies and of exchanging (or acquiring) knowledge and technologies—and especially in developing and producing propellants (thereby indicating an interest in developing missiles). The delegation created a strong impression that Taiwan wanted to extricate itself from its scientific and military dependence on the United States and that Israel could be a possible, albeit partial, substitute. Bergmann, who had privately provided the main channel for these exchanges, believed that Taiwan should be treated as a state whose importance was growing and with which Israel should develop all kinds of relations.

Yet the Foreign Ministry, headed by Abba Eban, was much more cautious and concerned about Beijing’s possible reaction to Israel’s expanding relations with Taiwan, primarily in “delicate matters.”

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
This was but one example of the tension between the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense that kept autonomous policy-making processes. Bureaucratic competition was not the only reason for the Foreign Ministry’s call for better supervision of the exchanges with Taiwan. Another and more fundamental reason was its frustration by Taipei’s attempts to acquire advanced Israeli conventional and non-conventional military technologies while at the same time associating with the Arabs (that supplied most of its oil import) and rejecting Israel’s economic, and even political, initiatives. In the spring of 1967, Jerusalem was supposed to launch confidential negotiations with Taipei regarding the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Frightened by a possible Arab reprisal, Taipei suddenly suffered cold feet and cancelled the meeting, claiming that the time was “inconvenient.”

Israel’s attempts to arrange meetings with Taiwan’s Foreign Ministry officials failed and Taipei blocked business transactions with Israel—despite initial signs of improving relations between Washington and Beijing that would soon lead to a greater diplomatic isolation of Taiwan.

Nevertheless, Bergmann continued to play a central role in Israeli-Taiwanese military exchanges. Bergmann visited Taiwan again in August 1968 (also related to missiles, see below). His visit was not endorsed by the Israeli Foreign Ministry although it had been coordinated with the Ministry of Defense. In his report of a conversation with Bergmann two weeks after his return (tagged “secret-personal”), Foreign Ministry Associate Director General Arthur Lurie wrote to Director-General Gideon Rafael that Bergmann had been consulted about research and development and about a “very big” scientific institute that they were about to set up, as well as about a planned “plutonium nuclear reactor.” He also wrote that Bergmann evaded elaboration on this issue and that the Taiwanese “were deeply impressed” by the reports of their delegation to Israel. “There is no doubt that a great part of their research is military oriented and it seems that the Formosans want to detach themselves from their

34  Arthur Lurie to the Director General, “Taiwan: Conversation with Prof. E.D. Bergmann” (Secret-Personal), September 1, 1968, ISA 4219/16. Rafael’s handwritten note is dated September 5.
exclusive dependence on the US in these issues.”\textsuperscript{35} Bergmann also reported that he had met Chiang Kai-shek for over an hour. In a hand-written “secret personal” note on the first page of this report, Director-General Gideon Rafael writes: “I am concerned that we expand the relations [with Taiwan] and particularly in delicate matters, beyond the desirable degree.”\textsuperscript{36} Nonetheless, when Taiwan’s Chungsan Institute of Science and Technology was officially inaugurated on July 1, 1969, Bergmann was hired as a consultant.\textsuperscript{37}

Moreover, in 1970, Bergmann arranged the visit of Chaim Herzog to Taiwan. A retired major general, former chief of Military Intelligence, ambassador to Canada and Britain and later ambassador to the United Nations (1975–1978), and president of Israel (1983–1993), Herzog came on a private basis but was the guest of Chiang Ching-kuo.\textsuperscript{38} Another indication of Israel’s significance was the dispatch of a liaison representative of Taiwan’s Intelligence Bureau who arrived in Israel in early 1969 (allegedly as a semi-official envoy of Taiwan’s Information Office), to work directly with the Mossad. Gideon Rafael, the Foreign Ministry director-general asked the director of the Asia and Oceania Division “to keep in touch with the Mossad in order to influence the contents of the relations with the man.”\textsuperscript{39} Although the Mossad was also represented in Taiwan, it was reportedly “lean and aimless.”\textsuperscript{40} In two separate visits to Israel in 1973, Taiwanese “professors,” probably on a collecting political intelligence mission inspired by Taipei, said that the government wanted to establish a consulate and a commercial office in Tel Aviv and asked whether El Al (Israel Airlines) would be interested in a route to Taiwan. Although Jerusalem agreed (probably for political

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Zhang Zhuli, “Taiwan zhu Yiselie wenxing zhencha qingbao: haitian 4 ci luoguo dalu” [Taiwan’s Israeli reconnaissance satellite covers mainland China four times every day], Qingshnan Cankao [youth reference], July 3, 2007.
\textsuperscript{39} Memorandum, February 2, 1969, ISA 4219/16; See also, Y. Shimoni, deputy director-general to Yitzhak Rabin, ambassador in Washington, “Relations with Taiwan,” October 12, 1971 (Secret), ISA 4602/4. Among other things he mentioned arms sales.
\textsuperscript{40} Confidential dispatch from Israel’s ambassador in Manila to the director of the Foreign Ministry’s Asia and Oceania Division, April 19, 1974 (personal copy).
rather than economic reasons) and there was no opposition from Washington—nothing was done.\(^{41}\)

While the Israeli Foreign Ministry deplored Taiwan’s “identification in most cases with the Arabs in its UN votes,”\(^{42}\) and was suspicious about Bergmann’s activism, Taiwan’s defense circles greatly appreciated him, and Israel in general. They said that thanks to his “generous assistance” (dingli xiangzhu), the Hsinchu Plan was “almost a copy” (fuzhi) of the Dimona nuclear base.\(^{43}\) These programs were coordinated by the Institute of Nuclear Energy Research (INER) that was established in 1968 (the year Taiwan signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty) as the top, and sole, organization in charge of the nuclear program, civilian and military. Appointed as its head, T’ang Chün-po could now promote links with Israel which he had begun to forge a few years earlier. According to the Taiwanese, in 1969 General T’ang had used Bergmann’s “personal network” (renmai wangluo) to buy a small (40,000 kilowatts) CANDU (Canada Deuterium Uranium) type heavy-water atomic research reactor from Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories, owned and operated by the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.\(^{44}\) Working closely (jinni) with Israel, T’ang managed to purchase cutting-edge (jianduan) nuclear technologies and advanced weapons R&D, including advanced missile systems. In fact, Israel’s technology exports were the main contributor and provided the main incentive to Taiwan’s ability to research and produce them. By that time Washington had become more concerned about the Hsinchu nuclear program, although Taiwan continued to secretly develop nuclear weapons through the Taoyuan Plan.

Taiwan’s nuclear program by no means enjoyed wall-to-wall support. Noteworthy among the firm opponents was Professor Wu Ta-you (Wu Dayou, 吳大猷), director of the Institute of Physics of

---


\(^{42}\) Moshe Erell (Israel UN delegation, director of the Asia and Oceania Division) to the Asia and Oceania Division, Foreign Ministry, “Formosa,” December 4, 1968 (Classified), ISA 4219/16.

\(^{43}\) Wang Feng, May 29, 2010.

\(^{44}\) Duane Bratt, The Politics of CANDU Exports (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 110-112. See also, Mitchell, “Taiwan’s Hsin Chu Program,” 298; and Wang Feng, p. 4.
the Academia Sinica (1963-1976) and a leading nuclear scientist. He made his strong reservations about the program known to ROC leaders and was joined by Professor Hsü Cho-yüün (Xu Zhuoyun, 許倬雲), a well-known historian. If they knew about Bergmann’s role in Taiwan’s military nuclear program, they never mentioned it, least of all in public. According to Taiwan sources, “Bergmann did not intend to give up” (bu dasuan fangqi) and convinced Chiang Kai-shek to continue—not necessarily for offensive purposes but allegedly for “deterrence.” He gave Israel as an answer to the program opponents and as an example of a small country that can cope with the difficulties involved which were raised by opponents—territorial, financial, and technological. To be sure, Bergmann’s embrace of Taiwan’s (and Israel’s) nuclear program did not rely on military considerations alone. He always underlined the economic benefits that nuclear energy provides, especially for small countries that depend heavily on oil import and water desalination. Yet there was no doubt about his priorities. Defense was always number one and other missions could be postponed or downgraded. He was once asked about the division between nuclear research for peaceful purposes and nuclear research for warfare purposes and answered:

This division is an illusion, which is not related to nuclear research but to the political sphere. Research for peaceful purposes is no different from research for warfare needs, the methods are the same, the basic knowledge is the same; the only question is the goal toward which the effort is directed. Obviously, not every state that develops atomic energy for peaceful purposes should develop atomic weapons. It could be the other way around. A state could develop nuclear weapons without paying attention to peaceful needs; but in fact, the

46 Wang, “Yiselie.”
47 Zhang Zhuli, “Taiwan;” Wang Feng, p. 3.

14
two researches are interrelated and the effort invested in one direction influence the other direction.48

Bergmann, Taiwan’s nuclear (and missile) program éminence grise, is hardly mentioned in US declassified CIA, State Department, or other documents.49 It is inconceivable that, given their high profile in Taiwan, the Americans did not know about his activities.50 In fact, from 1975 to 1978 an undercover CIA officer, Robert Simmons, reportedly ran an operation “that purloined Taiwanese government plans and files concerning its nuclear weapons aspirations.”51 Furthermore, a young cadet, Chang Hsien-i (Zhang Xianyi, 张宪义), who joined the INER in 1967, had been a CIA recruit.52 In September 1974, the CIA concluded that Taiwan would be able to produce nuclear weapons within five years. This was based, no doubt, on intelligence that Chang provided. Colonel Chang now promoted and INER deputy director, defected to the United States with the CIA’s assistance in December 1987. A junior officer aged 22 in 1967, by 1987 he had become intimately familiar with all of Taiwan’s nuclear secrets. He reportedly delivered “reams of documents” about Taiwan’s nuclear progress to the US, and it was in the wake of Chang’s defection that Washington at long last forced Taipei to abort its nuclear weapons program.53 He, and therefore his American operators, must have known about Bergmann.

49 For example: Defense Intelligence Agency, “Nuclear Energy Programs Japan and Taiwan,” ST-CS-02-398-74 (Secret), September 3, 1974, declassified but heavily sanitized, does not mention Bergmann. Yet his name may appear in still classified documents.
50 On the US awareness of Taiwan’s nuclear program, see: Richelson, Spying on the Bomb, 266-271 and 274-275. In over 700 of the book’s pages there is no mention of Bergmann in relation to Taiwan’s nuclear program. Bergmann had a few powerful friends in US nuclear circles. See: Seymour Hersh, The Samson Option: Israel’s Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy (New York, NY: Random House, 1991), 27, 85-86, 88, 142, and 248-249. Taiwan is not mentioned in the book.
51 Richelson, Spying on the Bomb, 275; Robert Ruhl “Rob” Simmons, a former military intelligence officer, joined the CIA in 1969 and, before moving to Taiwan, had served in Vietnam. He later (2001-2007) became a US senator.
Assuming that the US knew about Bergmann’s role in the Taiwanese non-conventional, and conventional, defense modernization, there are two explanations why Washington has kept quiet about it. The first is that by the time of Bergmann’s death in 1975, his activities in Taiwan had coincided with US interests, or at least had not undermined them, and the second is that his activities in Taiwan had not been that important or crucial for Taiwan’s military nuclearization—although this is not the Taiwanese view. In their view Bergmann contributed a good deal to Taiwan’s defense modernization. While healing relations with Beijing, the US had by no means intended to sacrifice Taipei. Aware or unaware, Israel served as a proxy by making a significant contribution to Taiwan’s defense without direct or even indirect US involvement. If Beijing had been aware of Israel’s role in Taiwan’s military nuclear program—a likely possibility—this could be regarded as an *incentive* to improve its relations with Israel and at the same time to block Chinese nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and elsewhere.\(^{54}\) Indeed, on February 22, 1979, an Israeli military-industrial delegation left for Beijing thereby launching over two decades of Israeli arms sales to China, probably with US knowledge if not blessings. Thus, once Taipei’s nuclear program could undermine the improving Sino-American relations, it was abrogated. Still, there is plenty of evidence that Washington tried hard to block other activities related to Taiwan’s nuclear program—but not Bergmann’s, perhaps because they were not considered too serious.

As mentioned above, Bergmann himself was a non-conventional figure. His Israeli academic colleague did not trust him, not only because of his personality but also because of his academic credentials which were not related to nuclear studies. In fact, in 1957, five years after its establishment, IAEC members—all leading

---

\(^{54}\) These considerations were raised by Richard Solomon, in charge of Chinese affairs at the US National Security Council, in a conversation with Israeli diplomats in Washington in early February 1976. Secret report from the Israeli Embassy in Washington to the Asia and Oceania Division, February 4, 1976, p. 4. Solomon raised similar considerations in a meeting a year before. Secret Cable no. 180, January 13, 1975, p. 3. There were indications that the Chinese explored possibilities for getting in touch with Israeli atomic scientists. Secret Cable no. 153, Israeli Embassy in Rome to the Foreign Ministry, January 27, 1975. Israel’s military relations with Taipei may have been another incentive for Beijing to explore military relations with Israel, around those years. Yitzhak Shichor, “Unlocking Sino-Israeli Relations: Seven Keys to One Deadlock” (unpublished paper).
Israeli scientists—resigned (for reasons that are beyond the scope of this article), leaving Bergmann not just the chairman but the only member for nearly ten years, until he finally resigned in 1966.\(^{55}\) Needless to say, while IAEC members may have been aware of his early encounters with Taiwanese representatives, they (and his successors at the newly-organized IAEC) may have had no idea about Bergmann’s nuclear escapades with Taipei. To this very day those associated with Israel’s nuclear establishment display reservations and suspicions about him.\(^{56}\) Colonel Immanuel (Manes) Pratt, who built and headed Israel’s Dimona Nuclear Reactor, declared Bergmann a “security risk.”\(^{57}\) Prime-Minister Moshe Sharett criticized him and even Shimon Peres, his ally and patron, said that Bergmann “was not careful and did not know what to say to whom. [...] He had to meet with foreign ambassadors and might not be careful in what he revealed to them.”\(^{58}\) His Taiwanese hosts may have been unaware of his shortcomings, although he never mentioned his relations with Taiwan in public. According to their testimonies, they followed his lead and copied his suggestions to the letter.

Ernst David Bergmann died on April 6, 1975, one day after the death of Chiang Kai-shek who had personally authorized his activities in Taiwan. Chiang Ching-kuo ordered T’ang Chün-po to represent Taiwan’s National Government at the funeral. He not only offered condolences but also presented a “funeral gift” (dianyi) of 50,000 US dollars.\(^{59}\) “Among the many wreaths laid at his graveside, one of the largest and most beautiful came from Taiwan. Professor Bergmann had especially close links with people in Nationalist China—ranging from Chiang Kai-Shek to university staff.”\(^{60}\) Taiwan–Israel nuclear cooperation (apparently Bergmann’s private enterprise which had never been officially endorsed by Israel) continued for a while as did conventional military cooperation—also

---

\(^{55}\) Raz, *The Struggle for the Bomb*, 212.

\(^{56}\) Based on personal communication.


\(^{58}\) Interview, quoted in Fenichel, Orchin, and Jensen, *Scientist in the Service of Israel*, 212.

\(^{59}\) Wang Feng, p. 4.

\(^{60}\) Peres, *From These Men*, 212. This is the only time Peres mentioned Bergmann’s relations with Taiwan in public.
promoted by him. Bergmann was followed by other Israelis who served as consultants for Taiwan. One of them, Brigadier-General Yitzhak Yaakov (Yatza), former head of the IDF weapons R&D program, visited Taiwan in the mid-1970s to continue Bergmann’s “scientific assistance.” Several visits followed. Yaakov had been invited by “the general,” “a respectable old man and Oxford graduate” who arranged for him a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek and sought his advice on R&D issues. Approved by the relevant authorities, “the General,” who had a representative in Israel, later visited Israel “as a scientist” and met with some of its top generals.  

Another Israeli who played a role in Taiwan’s nuclear program was Alvin Radkowsky, a US 1947 Ph.D. in nuclear physics who died in early 2002, aged 86. From 1938 to 1972 he served as chief scientist in the US Navy Bureau of Ships’ Nuclear Propulsion Division, collaborating with Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. From 1950 to 1972 he was also chief scientist in the US Atomic Energy Commission’s Office of Naval Reactors. In 1972 he migrated to Israel, taught Nuclear Engineering at Tel Aviv University (1972-1994) and at Ben-Gurion University—not far from the Dimona Reactor (1994-2002). In 1975, he became a high-level consultant to INER and visited Taiwan almost every summer, possibly until the late 1980s. His main contribution was using Thorium to fuel reactors for generating energy while blocking the possibility to produce nuclear weapons. However, since 1978 he also studied the feasibility of building nuclear powered submarines and destroyers but these studies soon ended since Taiwan lacked the capability to produce submarines and warships.  

A 1979 CIA report

61 Yitzhak Danon, “Yatza, the Lawyer and the Three Dimensions” [in Hebrew], Globes, April 24, 2001, http://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=486336; See also Uzi Eilam, Eilam’s Arc: Advanced Technology—the Secret of Israeli Power [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahranoth, 2009), 169. The English version, Eilam’s Arc: How Israel Became a Military Technology Powerhouse (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 84, does not mention Bergmann in this context; See also Yatza (Itzhak Yaakov), The Memoirs of Mr. Zero Squared [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahranoth, 2011), 252-254 and 299. He later served as a special World Bank advisor to Taiwan and South Korea when they underwent their rapid high-technology industrialization. He did not identify “the general,” but he was probably T’ang Chüin-po who attended Bergmann’s funeral (Yatza may have confused Oxford and Cambridge).

also noted that “Taiwan probably lacked sufficient fissile material for even a single nuclear explosive device.” This comment was made in relation to a mysterious nuclear explosion off the coast of eastern Africa on September 22, 1979. The report could not determine who had been involved in the test, but mentioned Israel, Taiwan, and South Africa (that provided both with regular uranium shipments).\footnote{Director of Central Intelligence, “The 22 September 1979 Event,” Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, MORI DocID 1108246 (January 20, 1980), Secret, approved for release in June 2004, yet very heavily sanitized.}

**THE MISSILES CONNECTION**

By the late 1950s, Taipei had recognized the lack of naval firepower as a major military weakness. When other countries had already deployed standard advance missile boats as regular military equipment, Taiwan’s main naval weapons still remained “World War II antiques” (\textit{gudong}).\footnote{This paragraph draws on “Liăng’an shihua—xueji de rensheng: Han Guangwei huiyi lu xiongfeng—yixing feitan xitong de yanfa jingguo (1968-1993)” [Two-Sided History—a Life of Learning: Han Kuang-wei (Han Guangwei 韓光渭) Xiong Feng Memoirs—The Research and Development Process of a Model Missile System], \textit{Wang Pao}, August 7-15, 2010, http://city.udn.com/59263/4109036 (nine installments).} After a Soviet Styx missile had sunk an Israeli destroyer in the 1967 Six Day War, Israel began to develop anti-ship missiles, and in August 1970 its vessels were equipped with the new Gabriel missiles, called \textit{Tianshi} (Angel) in Taiwan. By 1966 Taiwan had become actively interested in missile technology derived primarily from the German World War II V-1 and V-2 rockets and then from the German HS-293 anti-ship missiles,\footnote{These are also World War II airborne radio guided gliding missiles.} under the leadership of Han Kuang-wei (Han Guangwei). Born in Shandong in 1930, he received his Ph.D. from the US Naval College in 1961, and stayed as a visiting research associate at the University of California-Berkeley in 1964-65. Since 1966, he served as a scientist at the Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology, and was appointed in 1982 as deputy director of the System Development Center (until 1995). In 1985 he was promoted to rear admiral.\footnote{Executive Yuan, \textit{Who's Who in the ROC}, 391,http://www.ey.gov.tw/en/Upload/WebArchive/4695/Who's%20Who%20in%20the%20ROC.pdf.} Much like T’ang, Han was in constant touch with Bergmann, who spent a whole month in Taiwan, from July 15 to August 15, 1968. In a letter to the rector
of the Hebrew University dated June 4, 1968, Bergmann wrote: “I was invited by the Formosa Government [sic] for consultation on organizing national research in this country.” His host was Taiwan’s Atomic Energy Council and he stayed at the Grand Palace Hotel in Taipei. Among others, Bergmann may have tried to organize another group of Taiwanese scientists to come to Israel. On October 9, 1968, Abraham Harman, president of the Hebrew University (and former ambassador to Washington, 1959–1968), wrote to Bergmann as follows: “The Taiwan Affairs. I spoke with Gideon Rafael [director general of Israel Foreign Ministry] and concluded that you will hand him a more specific proposal—who are we talking about and what disciplines. The Foreign Ministry is ready, in principle, to approve it.”

Bergmann suggested that in addition to developing an atomic bomb and nuclear ballistic carriers, the ROC military was in urgent need of tactical anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles. He proposed that Taiwan should begin by launching a national government project focusing on the less complicated anti-ship missiles. In reverence (chongjing) of Chiang Kai-shek and reflecting the friendly relations with the ROC, Bergmann had not only promoted the Hsiung Feng (Xiongfeng, Brave Wind) anti-ship missile project but recommended that it should be based on the Gabriel technology and design. Furthermore, he coordinated the negotiations with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) that had developed and produced the Gabriel missiles. Jerusalem finally agreed to sell three sets of Gabriel missiles to Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek was personally involved. A Chungshan and naval team was sent to Israel and returned in late August 1969 after signing the contract. Described as “a scientific advisor on various topics,” Bergmann was again in Taiwan from December 20, 1970, to January 10, 1971, having been invited “for lectures and consultations.”

Perhaps in response to rumors about Israel’s activities in Taiwan, the issue was raised at the Knesset (Parliament) in questions to Foreign Minister Abba Eban (July 15, 1970). Eban admitted that there are “practical relations with Taiwan, in a variety of fields,

---

67 Bergmann Personal File, Hebrew University Archives. He used to stay at the Presidential Suite.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
between civilians and institutions on a non-governmental level. On a governmental level there are occasional and restricted contacts, mainly at the UN.” He reiterated that Israel had recognized the PRC in 1950 and added that, although the issue of diplomatic relations with Taiwan “is not on the agenda at this stage, nothing prevents the constant development of practical relations.” In fact, by that time Jerusalem had begun initial explorations for improving its relations with Beijing following Nixon’s election as US president and his decision to transform Sino-US relations.

It is quite likely that the Israeli Foreign Ministry was unaware of the arms sale to Taiwan or, at least, overlooked it. In 1971 Gideon Rafael, still Foreign Ministry director general, expressed his opposition to the missile transaction and to the Taiwanese team’s visit, arguing that Beijing would consider it “a serious provocation.” He believed that Israel should concentrate on forming relations with the PRC, unlikely as it was then. Foreign Minister Eban agreed and asked Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan to delay any action with regard to arms sales to Taiwan pending further consultations. In October 1971, Yaakov Shimoni, deputy director general for Asian and African Affairs, briefed Yitzhak Rabin, Israel’s ambassador to the US, on Israel’s relations with Taiwan. Despite Taipei’s hostile attitude toward Israel, “over the last years Israel responded in a quite far-reaching way to Taiwan’s wish to set up unofficial relations.” He added that a semi-official representative of Taiwan’s “information system who was probably connected to its intelligence system” is in Israel. He also admitted to “sales in the defense field.” Less than two weeks later, the PRC was admitted to the United Nations, at Taiwan’s expense. Although eventually Israel voted for the admission (and consequently against Taiwan), no progress was made with Beijing and there was no need to stop exchanges with Taiwan. In 1977 Israel signed an agreement with Taiwan for the

---

71 Director General to the Foreign Minister, “Gabriel’ Sale to Taiwan,” August 2, 1971, Abba Eban Center for Israeli Diplomacy, Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, container C-20, File F-187.
license production of Gabriel-2 missile. This agreement was based on the Gabriel performance during the October 1973 war. Unlike the June 1967 War, no Israeli boat was hit, whereas 15 enemy boats were sunk. All 50 Soviet-made Styx missiles that were launched against Israeli Navy boats missed or were intercepted.

In addition to some 200 Gabriel missiles bought from Israel in 1979, Taiwan purchased the technology to engage in its own license-production, using its own raw materials and R&D. Production began in 1980 and by 1992 over 523 Gabriel-2 missiles (Hsiung Feng) and 77 launchers had been manufactured. This was the first modern weapon system to be developed in Taiwan (as the Taiwanese put it), leading not only to an “extraordinarily significant” upgrade of Taiwan’s defense industries but also to the reduction—partly and temporary—of Taiwan’s reliance on US arms supplies. Given Washington’s about-face with regard to the PRC, Taipei was concerned about a looming US withdrawal from the Straits and welcomed alternative sources of military technology and weapons. In a sense, the Israeli sales to Taiwan also helped Washington to further smooth its relations with Beijing.

It was widely speculated that, because of the striking similarity between the Hsiung Feng, displayed for the first time in the double-ten (October 10) 1978 parade, and the Gabriel, Israel was the source not just of the technology but of the missile itself. Taiwan insisted later that the Hsiung Feng was only based on the Israeli Gabriel. Still, this cooperation offered many opportunities for Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology scientists to visit the Israeli institutes that had developed the missile. One of them was Yen Chen-hsing (Yan Zhenxing, 閻振興), who had been president of the Chungshan Institute until 1965. Born in 1912, he was minister of Education (1965 to 1969) and president of the National Taiwan University from

---

75 Hau Pei-tsun, *Banian canmouzong zhang riji* [Diary of eight years as chief of the general staff], (Taipei: Tianxia Wenhua, 2000), 68 (dated: March 12, 1979).
77 Wang Feng 1, no. 3 (May 29, 2010).
1970 to 1981. Han Kuang-wei concludes his articles by expressing his gratitude to the Israeli colleagues (*tongren*) and to those Israeli companies that provided assistance to Taiwan.

Taiwan was also interested in the Shafrir-2 air-to-air missile developed and built since the early 1970s by Israel’s RAFAEL Armament Development Authority (renamed in October 2007 Advanced Defense Systems). By 1977 some 450 Shafrir-2 missiles had been delivered to Taiwan to arm its US-made F-100 and F-105 fighters.\(^\text{78}\) Later export versions—renamed Python, starting with No. 3—were sold to the PRC in the 1980s. Once again, this sale had been made possible by the US refusal to sell Taiwan Harpoon and air-intercept 9L Sidewinder missiles. US policymakers, unwilling to irritate Beijing with which they were about to establish diplomatic relations, did not try to prevent Israel, whose missile technology had been genuine, from penetrating Taiwan’s military market. In fact, they may have tacitly welcomed Israel’s military transactions with Taiwan. Taiwan’s T’ien Chien (Sky Sword, *Tianjian*) air-to-air missiles are probably based on the Shafrir-2.

**OTHER CONNECTIONS**

As early as 1961, Israel’s Ministry of Defense and Foreign Ministry granted Belgian F.N. (Fabrique Nationale d’Armes de Guerre) permission to sell “considerable quantities” of Uzi submachine guns, manufactured under Israel Military Industries (IMI) license, to Taiwan.\(^\text{79}\) Although indirect, this was perhaps the beginning of Israel-Taiwan military relations. Following Israel’s recognition of the PRC in January 1950, all relations with Taiwan were cut off. Taipei refused to give visas to Israelis, even for official meetings as well as import licenses. Israel, on the other hand, allowed personal contacts with Taiwan’s representatives. By 1966 Taiwan moderated its policy and “there is certain scientific cooperation that may be strengthen.”\(^\text{80}\)

\(^{78}\) SIPRI arms transfer data base, accessed March 20, 2012.

\(^{79}\) Ministry of Defense director general to Foreign Ministry director general (Secret), April 3, 1961, ISA, 3334/37; Foreign Ministry director general to Ministry of Defense director general (Secret), April 15, 1961, ISA, 3334/37.

\(^{80}\) Director of the Asia Division to Heads of Missions, February 11, 1966, classified, ISA, 4047/47.
Israel's vote in 1965 at the UN General Assembly against admitting the PRC and implicitly for the ROC (earlier Israel had used to abstain) won Taiwan's appreciation leading to hints “that it was about time to establish diplomatic relations.”

Unofficially, relations with Taiwan were undertaken by the Mossad (Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations) that by the late 1960s had already been present in Taiwan and could help facilitate visits, as well as other exchanges, by Israelis.

In late 1974, one of the top issues on the agenda for the ROC armed forces was the acquisition of automated air defense systems to reform air defense reaction time and battle management of aircraft and missiles against attacking aircraft—based on US recommendations which regarded it as “a sound investment.” Although the two main prospective contractors were US companies (Litton and Hughes), Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense insisted that its delegation should visit not only the US but also other countries, including Israel. The Taiwanese wanted the US “to facilitate ROC military visits to third country air defense sites.” A Hughes representative said that “the equipment to be viewed at third country sites was almost entirely of Hughes manufacture” but added that visits “to sites in Israel would probably be more difficult to arrange.” The US, however, declined to approach concerned governments on this matter. “We do not wish to appear as intermediary on behalf [of the] ROC with countries which recognize [the] PRC. In [the] case of Israel, given contacts which already exist we believe [that the] ROC, working with Hughes, would be capable of approaching [the] Israelis if [a] visit there deemed necessary.” (Emphasis added).

---

81  Ibid.
82  Foreign Ministry deputy director general (Aviezer Chelouche) to the director general, “Report on a Visit to Taiwan” [in Hebrew], April 25-28, 1968, Secret, ISA, 4219/16, p. 1; Confidential dispatch from Israel's ambassador in Manila to the director of the Foreign Ministry's Asia and Oceania Division, April 19, 1974 (personal copy).
Parallel to developing the Hsiung Feng missiles, in 1979 Israel delivered to Taiwan two Dvora class fast patrol boats, manufactured by Israel Aviation Industries (IAI). Used as prototypes, between 1980 and 1986 Taiwan produced its own version of fast attack missile crafts, the Hai Ou (Seagull), that are almost identical to the Dvora and armed with two Hsiung Feng missiles. Fifty Hai Ou boats were built and by the late 1990s they began to be phased out after over twenty years of service although, reportedly, by 2010, 47 were still operational. Taiwan also acquired other Israeli weapons such as LAR-160 127mm multiple rocket launchers, Galil rifles, ammunition, and a variety of electronic equipment. Much of this was acquired through the services of Shaul Eisenberg who was engaged in business in East Asia since World War II. Born in Harbin in 1923, in 1975 Yaacov (Yana) Liberman had become the managing director of the Eisenberg’s Yi Nien Trading Company in Taipei that represented some of Israel main arms producers, including Israel Aviation Industry, Elbit, Tadiran, Israel Shipyards, and Rafael. By 1985 when he left, these companies had sold Taiwan sophisticated communication equipment, facilities for a battery factory, knowhow, and command and control electronics worth a total of US$560 million. Summing up his experience in Taiwan, Liberman admitted:

Selling this equipment was not easy and the general political climate in Taiwan was not at all pro-Israeli. There were some exceptions and certainly Israel had some friends, especially in the science-oriented community. But the majority of highly placed Government officials, including the army and air force, were dealing with Israel strictly because of necessity rather than choice.

84 Jerusalem Post, February 16, 1985. In those years, Eisenberg also facilitated Israel’s arms sales to the PRC; See also, Jonathan Goldstein, Jewish Identities in East and Southeast Asia: Singapore, Manila, Taipei, Harbin, Shanghai, Rangoon and Surabaya (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 84-87.
Indeed, not all of Israel’s attempts to sell weapons to Taiwan were successful. Taipei, that wanted to diversify its arms suppliers, was displeased by Israel’s attempts to force its way into the Taiwanese arms market at the expense of other potential suppliers. Hau Pei-tsun (郝柏村), Taiwan’s chief of the General Staff in 1981-1989 grumbled about Israel’s “secret attempts” to convince him to purchase Israel’s M48A5 obsolete tanks instead of the US-made M-60 tanks, and Israeli-made torpedoes instead of the Netherlands Navy’s M-37 torpedo. In his diary he remarked that Israel had been mainly interested in profit and that whereas Taiwan wanted the most advanced military technology, Israel treated Taiwan as a backward market for downstream outdated military equipment through which it could eliminate its competitors (taotai junqi de xiayou). Nonetheless, this cooperation continued.

Much of this cooperation was given a boost after Washington decided, in August 1982, to gradually phase out its military relations with Taiwan. Subsequently, Taiwan’s Air Force indigenous defense fighter Ching-Kuo (or AIDC F-CK-1, named after President Chiang Ching-kuo) and, possibly, its 300 F-5 fighters, were upgraded by installing Israeli El-Op Head Up Display (HUD), produced in Taiwan under license. In addition to arming ROC Navy’s Yang destroyers with Gabriel missiles, Israel also sold Taiwan Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)-produced Reshet fire-control and command systems and retrofitted some 13 old Taiwanese military vessels. A plan for an underground shelter system to protect Taiwan’s aircraft, armaments, and fuel reserves reportedly relied on an Israeli model.

Eventually aborted, the possibility of Israeli aircraft sale to Taiwan had emerged after the mid-1970s. The Israel Aircraft Industries Kfir—an all-weather, multirole combat aircraft based on a modified French Mirage 5 airframe, with Israeli avionics and an Israeli-made version of the General Electric J79 turbojet engine—entered Israeli Air Force service in 1975. Taiwan’s initial interest in the

87 Hau, Banian, 254 (dated: January 1, 1983).
88 Ibid., 1152 (dated: June 22, 1986).
89 Ibid., 367 (dated: July 23, 1983).
91 Shichor, “Israel’s Military Transfers,” 73 and note 19 on p. 89.
Kfir is indirectly reflected in the US approval of the sale. Soon after US Vice President Walter Mondale ended his visit to Israel in July, 1978, the US State Department spokesman said that the US will “look favorably upon Israel’s sale of its Kfir warplanes to Taiwan should those two governments agree on a contract.”[^92] Although Washington had considered selling its F-4 Phantom jets to Taiwan, it now, in a reversal of its earlier position, would not mind if Israel made the sale. It is likely that the US modified attitude had to do with its improving relations with Beijing, on the eve of Deng Xiaoping’s forthcoming visit and the establishment of diplomatic ties. A sale of US fighter jets to Taiwan would have undermined this process. Israel, which at that time still did not have any relations with Beijing, could act as a proxy. While Taiwan began to diversify its military suppliers and to experiment with self-sufficiency in view of the US rapprochement with China, Washington needed a reliable, indirect and dependent proxy for supplying Taiwan militarily. As a long-standing US ally with proved experience in advanced military research, development and production—whose quest for diplomatic relations with Beijing had consistently been rebuffed by the late 1970s—Israel provided a perfect choice.[^93] Maintaining diplomatic relations with China, West European countries could find it difficult to play this role.

Nonetheless, Taiwan, presumably interested in an explicit and direct US commitment, refused to play the game and the deal was off, though not for long. Beijing, needless to say, was unhappy with the proposed deal. At a reception in New York, Chaim Herzog, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, was introduced to visiting PLA officers, offering them to start a dialogue with Israel based on “common interests.” The representative of the PLA Air Force responded by saying that the [Israeli] intention to supply the Kfir to Taiwan (“about which he had read”) was “not helpful.”[^94] As a matter of fact, the proposed deal (and Israel’s earlier military transactions with Taiwan) may have been very helpful in paving the ground for Israel’s arms sales to the PRC which were launched just a few months later and paved the ground

[^92]: “U.S. Favors Israel’s Sale of Kfir Warplanes to Taiwan,” Jewish Telegraphic Agency, July 6, 1978.
[^94]: Confidential Cable no. 792 from Israel’s UN Mission, New York, to the Foreign Ministry, April 28, 1978.
for forthcoming diplomatic relations. Indeed, Richard Holbrooke, US Assistant Secretary for East Asia, warned Israel’s ambassador to the US Ephraim Evron, in May 1979 that Israel’s sale of the Kfir to Taiwan would reinforce its power and military capability and “would create a huge problem for the Chinese” who “would undoubtedly regard it as a provocation.” Off the record he said that “if he were an Israeli he would have avoided selling weapons to Taiwan so as not to irritate China. History,” he concluded, “is on China’s side, not Taiwan’s.”

In 1991 Taipei tested yet again the decade-old US decision to phase out military supplies to Taiwan by signaling its interest in acquiring advanced fighters for its ageing Air Force. Potential choices were French Dassault’s Mirage-2000, US General Dynamics’ F-16D, and 40 Israeli IAI’s Kfir C7 fighter-bomber jets. The Israeli offer should have been more attractive to Taipei since the unit’s price was about one quarter of the competitors’ offers with the entire deal estimated at no more than $800 million. The planes were available for immediate delivery (the French Mirage would have been available only in 1995) and the sale received US approval. Disillusioned by the Tiananmen Massacre and free from any serious Soviet threat, Washington was still cautious not to upset Beijing and preferred to use the Israeli convenient proxy. But that was not what Taiwan wanted, nor what the Israeli Foreign Ministry wanted.

In retrospect, it appears that the Israeli Kfir option may have been used by Taipei merely as leverage against France, and particularly against the US, to overcome their reluctance to upset China and supply Taiwan with advanced aircraft. Andrew Yang, at that time an assistant research fellow and military affairs specialist at the National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung (later Taiwan’s deputy minister of National Defense and then minister, though for just a few days) said that if the Mirages were unavailable, acquisition of the Kfirs would “help plug Taiwan’s air defense gap at least on a temporary basis,” provided the Israeli aircraft came with upgraded radar and

weapons systems. Yet, while outwardly interested in the Kfirs, what Taipei really wanted was a clear-cut reaffirmation of Washington’s commitment to Taiwan’s defense—something that Israel could by no means provide. Ultimately the gamble paid and Taiwan obtained both French and US aircraft. In March 1992—just two months after diplomatic relations between Jerusalem and Beijing had been established—Taipei notified Israel that it did not intend to buy the Kfir. Whether reflecting retaliation against Israel, or concerns about future Arab oil supply, Taipei’s rejection of the Kfir was not a serious blow for Israel. On the contrary.

Indeed, Taiwan’s message took Israel off the hook. It now faced the same dilemma that the US has been facing: maintaining relations with the PRC was incompatible with arms sales to the ROC. On August 3, 1992, Prime Minister Rabin discussed with senior Israeli officials not just the implications of the deal (already rejected by Taiwan) but also, more probable, the future of Israel’s military relations with Taiwan. Given Beijing’s protests and threats to downgrade the recently established diplomatic relations (conveyed to Israel by its first ambassador to Beijing, Zev Sufott), the discussion’s conclusion must have been that Israel’s military relations with Taiwan had no future. In fact, in 1991, during the China-Israel dialogue on the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Chinese raised the issue of Israel’s contacts with Taiwan. “We assured our hosts that the only contacts between Israel and Taiwan were of a commercial and non-governmental nature.” The Chinese were undoubtedly aware that this was far from the truth but they insisted that it should be the truth from now on. To be sure, when PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen arrived in Israel in September 1992, Rabin told him that “Israel had decided not to sell Kfir aircraft to Taiwan.” (Emphasis added). He asked that China would not sell weapons to Arab states.” Thanking Rabin for this decision Qian responded that “China will

98  “Israel Gets U.S. Consent to Offer Jet Fighters to Taiwan,” Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1992.
not sell any weapons to the region.”101 Yet, Chinese arms sales to the “region” (which Qian never defined), first and foremost to Iran (but also to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan), have continued. Some later trickled to Syria and to the hands of the Hizbullah in Lebanon and the Hamas in Gaza—and fired at Israel.

Disappointed by Beijing’s continued arms sales to the Middle East, in 1993 Israel tried again to penetrate Taiwan’s defense market by taking part in a number of military exhibitions and by offering its Ofeq-3 spy satellite services. However, these overtures failed not only because of US objections and obstructions but also because of protests and warnings from Beijing—which in turn convinced Jerusalem to downgrade its defense relations with Taiwan.102 Nonetheless, Taipei has later become a major customer of Israel’s EROS A and B satellites (Earth Remote Observation System), launched in December 2000 and June 2006, respectively. Though a commercial satellite, it covered China four times a day providing accurate surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities that Taiwan has contracted since 2001.103 On the other hand, according to Defense News, Israel may have turned down Taiwan’s request for promoting cooperation in developing space research programs. Reportedly, a Taiwanese delegation that arrived in Israel on June 18, 2005, in an attempt to pursue this cooperation and to obtain “high resolution satellite photography equipment for our future space programs,” reached a dead end—at least publicly.104

Despite Prime Minister Rabin’s commitment not to export arms and military technology to Taiwan and notwithstanding Beijing’s warnings, there have been attempts to sidestep these restrictions. Details of one attempt, which is still classified, involved Shimon Sheves, director general of the Prime Minister Office (July 1992–late

May 1995). Reportedly, it involved representatives of a “foreign Far Eastern country” (Taiwan, whose implication in the affair was censored in Israel) who got in touch with Israeli businessmen attempting to make a large-scale acquisition from Israel’s defense industries. Estimated at $2 billion, the deal was to cover the production of Israeli military equipment in Taiwan. In return, Taiwan insisted on an official visit of its president (Lee Teng-hui) to Israel. Sheves, who was supposed to facilitate the visit (and the deal—allegedly for a bribe), met with these representatives in Taiwan and in London in 1994. Initially unaware of the implications of the deal, Rabin was informed about it and was also alerted (on September 11, 1994) by Foreign Ministry officials who expressed their objections to the forthcoming visit and warned Rabin about the potential damage to Sino-Israeli relations. Consequently, the visit was postponed several times and finally cancelled—together with the deal.\(^\text{105}\)

Thereafter, Israel’s military relations with Taiwan were supposed to have stopped, at least as far as publicly known. Israel’s defense industry representatives were recalled in the early 1990s and SIBAT, Israel Ministry of Defense International Defense Cooperation Taipei Office, in charge of assisting military exporters, was closed down in 1996. Brigadier General Dani Arditi, who led the Strategic Division in charge of IDF International Cooperation at the IDF General Staff Headquarters, noted that Israel had strategically decided a decade ago to forge closer relations with China and minimize its relations with Taiwan. In 1994–97 he was accredited to Taiwan as a defense attaché and senior representative of the Defense Ministry. Yet, there is little doubt that Taipei was still interested in Israeli military technology—perhaps less for confronting China and more for driving a wedge between it and Israel.\(^\text{106}\) In fact, there are hints that these relations did continue, quietly, yet concrete information is very limited. For example, UK sources disclosed that Israel sold Taiwan an unknown number


of Searcher II UAVs.\textsuperscript{107} In addition to exchanging military missions, there may have been other military transfers though on a rather small scale. There is little doubt that Beijing has been aware of Israel's military transactions with Taiwan, although they rarely responded, least of all in public. At a Sino-Israeli "strategic dialogue" held in Beijing in early April 2005 "the Chinese expressed concerns about Israeli defense exports to India and Taiwan." PRC officials cautioned the Israelis "not to encourage a regional arms race" and objected strongly to any missile defense sales to Taipei.\textsuperscript{108} Needless to mention, both Taiwan and Israel routinely exchange military representatives. Also, as mentioned above, Beijing itself has continued to supply weapons to some of Israel’s Middle Eastern enemies.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

In terms of their value, Israel's overall military transactions with Taiwan have never been particularly impressive, not relative to other military suppliers and not relative to Israel's own arms export. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), arms transfer data, the total value of Israel's major arms transfers to Taiwan, was around $850 million. In comparison, Israel's defense export in 2012 alone reached $7.47 billion;\textsuperscript{109} US arms supplies to Taiwan in 1980–1992 (for which Israeli arms transfers to Taiwan are recorded) were $5.54 billion, or 69.7 percent; Israel came second with $850 million (10.7 percent); Netherlands third ($628 million or 7.9 percent); Germany was fourth with $312 million (3.9 percent), and Switzerland fifth ($278 million or 3.5 percent). These suppliers accounted for 95.7 percent of all military transfers to Taiwan in that period (see Tables 1 and 2). Since not all arms deals are quantifiable or made public, these figures are likely to be an understatement. In the case of Israel’s military transactions—quality is occasionally not less important than quantity, and much harder to measure. Rather

\begin{flushright}
108 US Embassy Tel Aviv to State Department, confidential cable, April 14, 2005, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05TELAVIV2329_a.html; See also, “China Watches as Ties Grow between Taiwan, Israel,” \textit{Taipei Times}, February 20, 2006.
\end{flushright}
than just hardware, technological knowledge and software of the kind provided by Ernst David Bergmann, as well as by other Israeli scientists and engineers, may have played a more important role in Taiwan’s defense modernization. To a great extent, Israel provided a model: “We can hardly imagine that there is any country in the world, perhaps except Israel, that can stay in a state of perpetual readiness for the outbreak of war.”¹¹⁰

### Table 1: Israel’s Arms Transfers to Taiwan, 1980–1992 (in million US dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALUE</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

### Table 2: Major Arms Suppliers to Taiwan, 1980–1992 (in million US dollars and percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPLIER</th>
<th>1. UNITED STATES</th>
<th>2. ISRAEL</th>
<th>3. NETHERLANDS</th>
<th>4. GERMANY</th>
<th>5. SWITZERLAND</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALUE</td>
<td>5,540</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>7,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.

Ultimately, this is probably the main reason for Taipei’s interest in Israel and the primary incentive for pursuing military relations with it. Long after Israel cut short these relations in the early 1990s, Taiwan has remained interested. Around 2005 it has still been reported that “Taiwan is seeking closer […] security ties with Israel.” According to Parris Chang, Taiwan’s National Security Council (NSC) deputy secretary-general, “Israel’s national security situation mirrors Taiwan’s

and Tel Aviv should serve as a model for Taipei.”

Aware of the official constraints, NSC personnel “are seeking consultations from private Israeli defense and security organizations.” Chang said: “Israel is willing to sell Taiwan weapons, however, Taiwan is more interested in Israel’s vast expertise in military and intelligence matters than in military hardware.” Chang added that he wanted to arrange training by Israeli experts and promote defense cooperation. “Taiwan has approached Israel for unofficial security and defense consultation.” The cable suggests that “Taipei appears to be already receiving security assistance from retired Israeli experts.” Chang mentioned Israel’s Inter-Disciplinary Center (IDC) and the Jewish Institute of National Security Affairs (JINSA, a Washington-based organization) that “have many retired experts in the field of national security and defense that can help Taiwan enhance its deterrence.” He noted that “Taiwan is most interested in civil defense and psychological warfare issues.”

Indeed, on July 2, 2013, the Israeli Commercial Attaché in Taiwan issued a circular for Israeli companies saying that Taiwan’s Government has recently become more concerned about internal security and preparation for war. These concerns include prevention of terrorist attacks, protection of infrastructure facilities and information on the Internet, collection of and cooperation in intelligence, and interest in relevant technologies.

---

111 This and the following quotations and information are from a confidential cable no. 05TAIPEI1086_a, sent from the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), Washington’s unofficial embassy, on March 14, 2005, http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/05TAIPEI1086_a.html.
113 Foreign Trade Administration, Ministry of Economics, July 2, 2013.
EPILOGUE

In June 1997, I attended another conference on “Foreign Military Assistance to the PRC and Taiwan, ROC,” organized by RAND’s Center for Asia-Pacific Policy and CAPS (the ROC Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies) held at Oxford. During the conference one of the Taiwanese participants (who at that time was still a government official based in Washington) approached me, took me aside and asked me to deliver a message to the Israeli Ministry of Defense saying that Taiwan was still very much interested in acquiring Israeli arms and military technology. He insisted that this message should be confidential and kept secret—not from Beijing, with which Israel had already maintained diplomatic relations for over five years—but from Washington. I told him that this was practically impossible, but I nevertheless delivered the message. Yet, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had already promised Beijing not to engage in military transactions with Taipei and, to the best of my knowledge, this promise is still being kept, at least officially. As to the Bergmann “shrine” at the Fengshan Military Academy, I was recently informed that the building had been demolished and no one could tell me the whereabouts of his picture. Sic transit gloria mundi.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


He Liwei [David Ho]. Hedan MIT: Yige shangwei jieshu de gushi [‘A’ bomb made in Taiwan: The story is not over]. Taipei: Women Chubanshe, 2015.


