

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2011 05:08 AM
To: NEWS-Mahogany; SES-O
Subject: Taiwan general jailed for life in China spying case (Reuters)

TAIPEI, July 25 (Reuters) - A senior Taiwanese military officer has been jailed for life for spying for China in a case that underscores persistent mistrust between the two political rivals even as economic ties boom.

Major-General Lo Hsien-che was found guilty of giving information to the Chinese five times in exchange for bribes, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said in a short statement. It did not say what information was given or what bribes received.

Lo had been arrested in February . He can appeal against the sentence, the statement said. He is believed to be one of the highest-ranking Taiwanese military officials accused of espionage for China.

Media reports have said that Lo passed information to a female Chinese agent while stationed in Thailand between 2002 and 2005 in a so-called "honey trap" operation. The reports said Lo had passed on information about communications systems.

Economic ties between Taiwan and China have burgeoned in recent years, but China still views the self-ruled island as territory that it must take back, by force if necessary.

Earlier on Monday the Taiwanese ministry said two Chinese fighter jets had on June 29 briefly crossed a line in the centre of the Taiwan Strait that is considered a boundary between the airspaces of both sides, but had turned back.

Taiwan scrambled fighters in response, but said the Chinese action was not deliberate or provocative.

China reacted with fury last year when the United States decided to proceed with weapons sales to Taiwan, freezing defence ties. The island has since requested advanced fighter jets, but the United States has yet to make a decision.

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