

U.S. thought Taiwan got wrong batteries

by UPI

WASHINGTON - E-mail indicates U.S. officials initially thought wrong helicopter batteries were shipped to Taiwan, not parts for ballistic missiles, officials said. U.S. government officials familiar with communications between the two countries said at some point between August 2006 -- when Taiwan received the shipment -- and last week -- when the United States learned of the error -- Taiwan opened the packages and noticed that the items inside included nose cones used with U.S. intercontinental ballistic missiles, The Washington Post reported Thursday. "Last week they said they didn't think they could destroy these items and said it was warhead-related material," said the official, speaking to the Post anonymously because the incident is under investigation. "That was the first time there was any indication we weren't dealing with a battery. All the alarm bells went off at that point." After Taiwanese officials reported four packages they received from the U.S. military weren't the expected helicopter batteries, U.S. officials suggested Taiwan dispose of them, the official said. U.S. military officials said Wednesday Defense Logistics Agency workers apparently did not determine the materials sent to Taiwan were classified because unclassified inventory codes were on the outside of the packages, indicating they contained batteries.

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