

09 February 2018

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House of Commons  
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Thank you for your letter of 24 January about the announcement by China's civil aviation authority to launch four new civilian air routes over the Taiwan Strait.

My colleagues, Rt Hon Mark Field and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, answered Parliamentary questions on this issue in the Commons and the Lords on 24 January and 29 January respectively, and in doing so set out the government's current position and action to date.

We understand that the opening of the four new air routes in the Taiwan Strait on 4 January is a cause of concern for the authorities in Taiwan. The Taiwanese have highlighted the proximity of these routes to existing Taiwanese routes connecting the islands of Kinmen and Matsu to the island of Taiwan, and told us they have concerns on the grounds of both national security and aviation safety. Effective consultations between neighbouring Flight Information Regions (FIRs) are essential to underpin aviation safety in all parts of the world.

On the issue of cross-Strait relations, we are concerned by any move which creates tensions. In line with our long-standing position on Taiwan, we encourage both sides of the Taiwan Strait to engage in dialogue to resolve this issue, as they did in 2015. My officials have raised this issue with the Chinese Embassy.

Also in line with our long-standing position on Taiwan, we support Taiwanese participation in international organisations – such as the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) – where there is precedent for Taiwanese involvement, where Taiwan can contribute to the global good, and where there is no pre-requisite of nationhood for participation. I understand Taiwan was invited to participate in the ICAO assembly in 2013, but was not invited in 2016.

**THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP**