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Chinese officials raise “military” response to planned visit by US House speaker



In yet another move by the United States to end the one-China policy that has governed its relations with China for decades, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi will travel to Taiwan next month, the *Financial Times* reported.

As part of the one-China policy, the US has had no formal diplomatic ties to Taiwan, and high-level US officials have not traveled to the territory. The Trump administration set about systematically dismantling the policy, sending Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to Taiwan in 2020. At the time, Azar was the highest-ranking US official to visit Taiwan in decades.

Pelosi, however, is second in the presidential line of succession, and would be far and away the highest-profile US official to visit Taiwan in over two decades.

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China's foreign ministry pledged to respond to Pelosi's trip with "resolute and strong measures."

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said, "If the United States insists on going ahead, China will have to take firm and forceful measures to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

China's *Global Times* newspaper, speaking for significant factions within the Chinese state and military, responded to the planned visit by declaring that the response from China would be "military but also strategic."

The newspaper quoted Hu Xijin, its former editor-in-chief, as proposing that China "should send military aircraft to accompany Pelosi's plane to enter the island of Taiwan and fly over the airport where Pelosi lands, and fly back to the mainland from the island."

He added, 'When sending PLA aircraft to fly across the island, we [China] must be fully prepared for an all-out military confrontation.'

He continued: "If the Taiwan military dares to open fire against PLA aircraft, then Taiwan military aircraft would be shot down and Taiwan military bases will be destroyed. So if the US and Taiwan authorities want all-out war, then the time for Taiwan liberation will come."

Were such a conflict to erupt, US President Joe Biden has indicated that the United States would go to war with China.

Asked in May whether the United States would use force to defend Taiwan, Biden replied, "Yes... That's the commitment we made." Asked the same question last October, Biden replied, "Yes, we have a commitment to do that."

The Chinese side has likewise expressed willingness to go to war over Taiwan. Last month, Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe told US officials at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, "If anyone dares to secede Taiwan from China, we will not hesitate to fight, and we will fight at all costs."

But Pelosi's planned visit is only the most provocative in a series of moves meant to massively escalate the US conflict with China.

On Friday, the Pentagon said the State Department had approved over \$100 million in US arms sales to Taiwan, and China has demanded that the US cancel the sale.

On Monday, the Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Benfold carried out a freedom of navigation exercise through the Taiwan Strait, triggering condemnation from Beijing.

Major US and global corporations have already begun pricing in the odds of a full-scale war between the two nuclear-armed powers. In an article in the *Financial Times* headlined, "Corporate jitters over Taiwan and China on the rise," the newspaper cites corporate risk analysis that put the odds of war in the near term at one in five.

The FT writes, "Consultants and China experts in the US have seen a wave of requests for briefings since the war in Ukraine began, as the Financial Times reported last week. Demand for political risk insurance over potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait is also rising sharply, according to reports."

The FT quoted an "executive at a western technology company" as saying, "The main lesson from Ukraine is that the west will hit an aggressor with very significant sanctions. Apply what we have seen in Russia to China, and you have Armageddon for the Chinese economy and for the global economy."

The Biden administration's reckless effort to stoke the US-China conflict has prompted warnings from former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who told Bloomberg in an interview, "Biden and previous administrations have been too much influenced by the domestic aspects of the view of China," adding that preventing "Chinese... hegemony" is not "something that can be achieved by endless confrontations."

Previously, Kissinger warned that the US-China conflict risked triggering a global "catastrophe comparable to World War I."

The massive escalation of tensions with China comes against the backdrop of the continued escalation of the US proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. During a visit to the

UK, Ukraine's deputy defense minister, Vladimir Gavrilov, pledged to use US-supplied heavy weapons to destroy the Russian Black Sea fleet and retake Crimea.

“We are receiving anti-ship capabilities and sooner or later we will target the fleet. It is inevitable because we have to guarantee the security of our people,” he said. “Russia will have to leave Crimea if they wish to exist as a country,” Gavrilov insisted.

Even as the Biden administration is flooding weapons to Ukraine in the US's proxy war with Russia, it is threatening to open up a new front in what is increasingly a globe-spanning conflict.

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