

# Taipei and Washington continue to challenge Beijing's redline over Taiwan

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Cross-strait tensions between mainland China and Taiwan and the danger of war continue to rise, instigated by the United States. Emboldened by a string of US provocations in recent weeks, Taipei is now conducting its own dangerous antagonizing of Beijing.

On Saturday, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen delivered a speech to commemorate the Double Ten (October 10) National Day, marking the 1911 Wuchang Uprising. It marked the turning point of the first Chinese revolution, which led to the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, now the formal name for Taiwan. Tsai's speech was a carefully worded declaration of support for US actions in the region aimed at Beijing.

Tsai refused to acknowledge the "One China" policy while calling for "parity" between Taipei and Beijing. She stated, "As long as the Beijing authorities are willing to resolve antagonisms and improve cross-strait relations, while parity and dignity are maintained, we are willing to work together to facilitate meaningful dialogue."

The Taiwanese leader highlighted the recent visits of US officials Alex Azar and Keith Krach in August and September respectively. These are the two highest-ranking US officials to visit the island since 1979 when Washington ended formal relations with Taipei and recognized Beijing—a de facto acknowledgement of the "One China" policy.

Tsai also pledged to fully cooperate with the US push to "decouple" its economy from China and hailed Washington and Taipei's increasing economic cooperation. She stated, "The rapid dismantling and realignment of global supply chains is now irreversible," and that Taipei would work "to achieve full and comprehensive participation in the realignment process, making Taiwan an indispensable force in

global supply chains."

Beijing regards Taiwan as a breakaway province and views the developing relationship between Taipei and Washington with consternation. Since agreeing to the 1992 Consensus, both Beijing and Taipei accepted the "One China" policy, but agreed-to-disagree over which government is the rightful head of that nation. A violation of this policy could lead to the outbreak of war.

Highlighting this fact, China sent a Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft into Taipei's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) on Saturday and Sunday, making 17 such flights in less than a month. The number of such flights grew in August and September around the visits of Azar and Krach, as Beijing sought to make clear it would not accept any challenge to the "One China" policy. ADIZs, however, are declared unilaterally and have no legal standing. Beijing's flights into this territory have been in international airspace.

Legislators and government officials in Taipei and Washington are also increasingly and openly calling for formal relations. On October 6, Taiwan's parliament, the Legislative Yuan, unanimously passed two resolutions proposed by the opposition Kuomintang (KMT), calling for increased US military backing and for a resumption of diplomatic relations between Washington and Taipei.

The move is significant in that the KMT typically advocates closer relations with Beijing, arguing that increased economic ties between the island and the mainland will address the declining economic and social issues facing Taiwanese workers and youth. That the party is adopting positions more closely aligned with the ruling Democratic Progressive Party is an indication that it increasingly feels under pressure from

Washington.

The first resolution states, “Once the [Chinese Communist Party] threatens Taiwan’s security and socio-economic system, at the request of the Taiwan government, [the US] will regard the aforementioned CCP’s actions as a threat to peace and stability in the Western Pacific, and assist our country [sic] to resist through diplomatic, economic, and *direct military methods.*” (emphasis added)

The second resolution states, “The Tsai Ing-wen government should take the restoration of diplomatic relations between the US and the Republic of China as the objective of diplomacy with the United States and actively promote it.” It builds on the numerous provocations carried out by Washington, noting the visits of Azar and Krach.

The resolutions are similar to a non-binding resolution proposed in September in Washington by Republican congressman Tom Tiffany, which stated, “Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should resume normal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, negotiate a bilateral free trade agreement with Taiwan, and support Taiwan’s membership in international organizations.” Washington’s ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft at the end of September also called for Taiwan’s “full participation at the UN.”

Furthermore, US National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien, speaking October 7 at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, claimed China was engaged in the largest naval build-up since Germany prior to World War I in order “to push us back out of the Western Pacific, and allow them to engage in an amphibious landing in Taiwan.”

He called on Taiwan to significantly increase military spending. The US is already planning a new \$7 billion arms package to Taipei. O’Brien chastised Taiwan, saying, “You can’t just spend one percent of your GDP, which the Taiwanese have been doing—1.2 percent—on defense, and hope to deter a China that’s been engaged in the most massive military buildup in 70 years.”

O’Brien omitted to say that over the past decade under both the Obama and Trump administrations, Washington has been engaged in a buildup and militarization of the Asia-Pacific and encouraged allies like Japan, India, and Australia to take increasingly

militarist stances against Beijing. This military buildup is precisely what is causing concern in Beijing.

Beijing is unwilling to allow Taiwan to be turned into a launch pad for a US-led war against the Chinese mainland. When the US-backed dictator Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan in 1949 after defeat in the Chinese Civil War, the likelihood of a US invasion from the island, dubbed by US General Douglas MacArthur an unsinkable aircraft carrier, was not out of the question. Throughout the 1950s to 1970s, Washington waged brutal wars of subjugation on China’s borders against Korea and Indochina.

Initiated by President Richard Nixon in 1971, Washington’s formal recognition of Beijing eight years later represented a tactical shift in an attempt to undermine the Soviet Union and later to take advantage of China’s exploited working class as Beijing moved to restore capitalism. Now, Washington sees Beijing as one of its biggest economic competitors that must be brought under its control, even at the risk of global conflict. Taiwan is being put on the frontlines of any future conflict.



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