

Anti-China legislation on Taiwan introduced in US House of Representatives

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A “Taiwan Peace and Stability Act” was tabled in the United States House of Representatives on June 17 in the latest bipartisan effort to intensify pressure on Beijing over the self-ruled island of Taiwan. The purpose is to further challenge the “One China” policy and deepen preparations for war against the mainland.

The leading Democrat and Republican on the Asia subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ami Bera and Steve Chabot, respectively, introduced the legislation, which is of a piece with the anti-China bill that recently passed the Senate with bipartisan backing.

The latest bill states: “In order to ensure the longevity of US policy and preserve the ability of the people of Taiwan to determine their future independently, it is necessary to reinforce Taiwan’s diplomatic, economic, and physical space.” Behind this double-speak, Washington intends to strengthen Taiwan in order to maintain its separation from China.

Taiwan is considered a crucial aspect of Washington’s future war plans against the mainland. Earlier this year, the Pentagon called for the stationing of offensive missiles on Taiwan and other nearby islands.

The legislation accuses Beijing of “coerc[ing] actors into adhering to its ‘One-China Principle.’” It cites countries that have broken off relations with Taipei in favor of Beijing since 2016 as supposed evidence of this “coercion.”

Without openly rejecting it, the bill represents a challenge to the legitimacy of the “One China” policy, which has governed cross-strait relations since Washington formally cut ties with Taipei in 1979 and acknowledged Beijing as the government of all of China.

Last August, the Trump administration announced

“significant adjustments” to Washington’s interpretation of the “One China” policy. Since taking office, President Joe Biden, backed by the Democratic and Republican Parties, has continued where the Trump White House left off, taking further steps that chip away at the “One China” policy.

Three sections of the bill call for the US to deepen its involvement with Taiwan. The first instructs the US State Department to develop strategies “to advance Taiwan’s meaningful participation in a prioritized set of international organizations.” In particular, it cites the World Health Organization (WHO) as a potential body for furthering Taiwan’s involvement on the international stage.

Both Washington and Taipei have used the lie that Taiwan warned of the dangers of COVID-19 in a December 31, 2019 email to the WHO, but was ignored, while Beijing attempted to cover up what was taking place. The mention of the WHO is also meant to further the spurious claims that China is responsible for the global pandemic.

The second section calls for developing economic relations with Taiwan, no doubt to take advantage of Taiwan’s semiconductor industry, a key element of Washington’s war plans. The US hopes to maintain control of the supply of semiconductors for its own military and economic ends. The push is also aimed at pressuring Taiwanese companies to cut ties with the Chinese mainland, an aspect of the economic warfare being carried out, first by Trump and now Biden.

The third section calls for deepening US military relations with Taiwan. It accuses Beijing of “attempts to intimidate Taiwan, including through high rates of PRC [People’s Republic of China] sorties into air space near Taiwan, and PRC amphibious assault exercises near Taiwan.” It states that the government should

evaluate “the feasibility of expanding coordination with US allies and partners to enhance deterrence over a cross-Strait conflict.”

This is a call for Washington to further develop war plans with allies in the region, such as Japan, which occupied Taiwan from 1895 to 1945. In addition, the section calls for increasing Taiwan’s ability to wage “asymmetric” warfare against Beijing.

Washington’s accusations against Beijing are entirely hypocritical. Since the Obama administration’s 2011 announcement of its “pivot to Asia,” successive administrations in Washington have pursued military build-ups, regular naval drills in the South China Sea, and “freedom of navigation” operations to challenge Beijing’s territorial claims.

At the end of Trump’s term, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo lifted all restrictions on meetings between US and Taiwanese officials, a policy that Biden has continued. The current administration has demonized China with phony claims of genocide in Xinjiang, accused Beijing of creating the COVID-19 virus in a Wuhan laboratory, and sent naval vessels through the narrow Taiwan Strait at a record rate.

Under Biden, the United States sent its Palau ambassador to Taiwan, the first time a sitting ambassador has visited the island since 1979. Most recently, three senators visited Taiwan aboard a US military aircraft to announce the donation of COVID-19 vaccines to the island after Taipei accused Beijing, without evidence, of blocking vaccine purchases.

Biden’s nomination for assistant secretary of state for East Asia Daniel Kritenbrink suggested during a hearing on June 15 that Washington could consider abandoning the “One China” policy. He stated: “I do think that maintenance of that status quo and of that security is a dynamic situation. As the threat from [China] grows, as Beijing’s aggressive and bullying behavior vis-à-vis Taiwan grows, I think that our response has to be calibrated as well.”

This supposed “bullying” largely consists of Beijing’s regular sorties into Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). However, Admiral Lee Hsi-ming, the former chief of the general staff of Taiwan’s military, stated earlier this year that these flights were “more about political messaging than about military operational significance.” An ADIZ is declared

unilaterally by governments, without basis in international law, and does not constitute territorial air space.

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley stated during a Congressional hearing on June 17 that, despite recent claims China would soon invade Taiwan, “there’s little intent right now, or motivation, to do it militarily.” He added: “I think China has a ways to go to develop the actual, no-kidding capability to conduct military operations to seize through military means the entire island of Taiwan, if they wanted to do that.”

Milley’s comments are not a call for defusing tensions with China, but the very opposite. Believing it has the upper hand at the moment, US imperialism is provocatively ramping up tensions with Beijing, while intensifying efforts to hit China economically.



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