US considers deploying carriers to support House speaker's Taiwan trip - Washington Post

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24 July 2022

The US military is considering "moving aircraft carriers or sending fighter planes for close air support" as part of a potential trip by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan, the *Washington Post* reported Saturday.

The discussions about US military actions in support of Pelosi's trip were first reported in an op-ed by Josh Rogin, who wrote:

> The U.S. military is devising options for protecting Pelosi's delegation, who—as is normal procedure for congressional delegations to Taiwan—would be flying on a military plane. The measures under consideration include moving aircraft carriers or sending fighter planes for close air support. That, in turn, could be misinterpreted by the Chinese side as an aggressive rather than a defensive measure.

The discussions take place amid warnings by Chinese officials that the scheduled trip by Pelosi could trigger a military clash between Chinese and US forces.

In a separate article, the *Post* reported: "The Biden administration is increasingly concerned that a planned trip by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan next month could spark a major crisis across the Taiwan Strait, and the White House and an array of national security officials have briefed Pelosi and her team about the risks of traveling now, administration officials said."

In a separate article, the *Post* quoted Evan Medeiros, a former top White House China expert in the Obama administration, as saying, "The Taiwan issue… could spark war—including nuclear war—between the two largest economies in the world."

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden said military officials believed it was "not a good idea" for Pelosi to visit Taiwan.

But despite Biden's public comments and public warnings to the press made by White House officials, including National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Pelosi has not publicly called off the trip. Asked to comment, she said that "it's important for us to show support" to Taiwan. Asked about Biden's comments, Pelosi replied, "maybe the military was afraid our plane would get shot down or something like that by the Chinese."

Last week, Hu Xijin, the former party secretary of the *Global Times*, proposed 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."

On Saturday, the *Financial Times* (FT) reported that Chinese officials told the US that Pelosi's trip would be met with a "possible military response."

Over the weekend, Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, demanded further US action against China, declaring, "The message is the Chinese military, in the air and at sea, have become significantly more and noticeably more aggressive in this particular region."

Pelosi's trip, first reported by the *Financial Times*, would be the first visit by a House speaker to Taiwan since 1997. On Friday, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman threatened "strong countermeasures" to

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Pelosi's trip, adding, "We mean what we say."

The planned trip has triggered a crisis within Biden's own party, with the FT reporting that "US national security adviser Jake Sullivan and other senior National Security Council officials oppose the trip because of the risk of escalating tension across the Taiwan Strait."

The Republican Party and its media allies have strongly endorsed Pelosi's trip and criticized the White House's concerns about it. "This pathetic self-deterrence is a mistake, and it will invite more aggression," said Sen. Tom Cotton (Republican from Arkansas).

The *Wall Street Journal* wrote, "And now that both she [Pelosi] and Mr. Biden have raised the prospect of a military threat, any decision to stay home would look like a retreat under Chinese pressure. Mrs. Pelosi almost has to take the trip now."

Retweeting Rogin's report on the military preparations for Pelosi's trip, retired Admiral James Stavridis, one of the US's leading public ex-military officers, declared, "We cannot allow China to decide whether or not senior US officials visit the island of Taiwan."

The discussions of a visit by Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan are part of a systematic effort by the United States to overturn the One China policy, under which the United States has maintained no formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

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. This policy has continued under Biden, but Pelosi would be by far the highest profile official to visit Taiwan in decades.

Even as significant sections of the US political establishment are demanding a clash with China, the United States is massively intensifying the conflict with Russia. Last week, the White House confirmed that the Pentagon is actively discussing sending US/NATO fighter jets to Ukraine, breaking with Biden's categorical rejection of an earlier proposal.

Over the weekend, Adam Smith, the chair of the House Armed Services Committee, told Radio Free Europe that the United States and its allies would send Ukraine up to 30 long-range missile launchers, including the HIMARS and M270, nearly double what has already been sent.

The simultaneous escalation against Russia and China comes three weeks after New York City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) released a 90-second public service announcement (PSA) giving instructions to city residents on what to do in the event of a nuclear attack on America's largest city.

The video begins with the narration, "So there has been a nuclear attack. Don't ask me how or why, just know that the big one has hit."

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