Pelosi's Taiwan visit is a reckless provocation

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26 July 2022

Behind the backs of the American public, the US military is preparing a provocation against China aimed at instigating a conflict that could lead to a full-scale world war between the world's two largest economies.

This provocation comes in the form of a planned trip to Taiwan by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the third-ranking figure in the US government.

Despite US President Joe Biden's publicly stated concerns about the provocative nature of the trip, *New York Times* journalist David Sanger, an unofficial spokesman for the US military/intelligence apparatus, reported Tuesday that "US officials said the planning for Ms. Pelosi's trip was moving ahead."

By all indications, sometime next month the octogenarian will strap herself into a C-130 cargo plane, possibly accompanied by an escort of F-35 fighters and supported by US aircraft carriers, and tempt fate by landing on Taiwan, amid warnings by Chinese military officers that they will "stop" her from entering the country.

This level of recklessness is a testament to the deep crisis and disorientation of the US political establishment, which is desperately lashing out in all directions in the face of an intractable social, economic and political crisis.

The dispatch of Pelosi, the highest-ranking US official to visit the island in a quarter century, is aimed at further undermining the one-China policy, which has been systematically dismantled by the Trump and Biden administrations, which have encouraged Taiwanese separatism as they have stuffed the island to the gills with weapons. Now, provocatively, Washington is acknowledging publicly a rising number of US military personnel on Taiwan.

In October 2021, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that US troops are stationed on Taiwan, and in December, the US doubled the number of troops stationed on the island. In March of that year, Nikkei reported that the United States was in discussions to station offensive missiles that would have violated the INF treaty on Taiwan.

On May 5, 2022, the US State Department removed wording on its official website stating that "the United States does not support Taiwan independence" and "acknowledging the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China."

The Biden administration has approved four massive arms sales to Taiwan so far, and a fifth, coming in at $108 million, is slated for imminent congressional approval.

Just as the United States has for years built up the Ukrainian military as a bastion against Russia with the aim of provoking the current disastrous war, the United States is transforming the island into an offensive launch platform for war with China, seeking to provoke China into military action against Taiwan.

These plans, years in the making, now threaten to break out into a shooting war. Both the United States and China have explicitly stated that they would go to war against each other over Taiwan. Asked in May whether the United States would use force to defend Taiwan, Biden replied, "Yes… That's the commitment we made."

Chinese officials have also made clear that they will 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."

In public and in private, Chinese officials have stated that they are considering a military response to Pelosi's trip, including intercepting her flight or sending Chinese aircraft to overfly the Taiwanese mainland.

The US military, for its part, is making preparations to deploy aircraft carriers and scramble fighter aircraft to support the operation.

Facing an unprecedented economic, social and political crisis at home, dominant sections of the US political establishment are seeking to massively escalate the global war that has erupted in Ukraine with the opening of a Pacific front.

Indeed, in a statement to the *New York Times*, Senator Chris Coons, a key Biden ally in the Senate, declared, "we may be heading to an earlier confrontation... than we

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thought."

Taiwan, an island less than 100 miles across, is one of the most important economic chokepoints in the entire world.

The island is home to 92 percent of the world's advanced semiconductor manufacturing. Every product made by Apple, including the iPhone, iPad and Macintosh computers, as well as graphics, artificial intelligence and computer vision processors from Nvidia and countless other hi-tech products rely on semiconductors produced in Taiwan.

The US auto industry, with its increasing focus on electric vehicles and driver-assistance technology, is heavily reliant on semiconductor manufacturing in Taiwan.

A military conflict over the island, even one that does not immediately trigger full-scale, high-intensity war between the US and China, would result in the disruption of semiconductor supplies and would trigger an economic crisis rivaling those of 2008 and 2020.

In an article published before the revelation of Pelosi's planned Taiwan trip, the *Financial Times* (FT) warned that major corporations are putting the odds of war over Taiwan at one in five. Pelosi's trip, and the fact that it is proceeding despite serious concerns raised by the White House, will inevitably drive this figure higher.

In an interview with the FT, an executive at a US technology firm warned, "Apply what we have seen in Russia to China and you have Armageddon for the Chinese economy and for the global economy."

The US military provocation around Pelosi's trip is driven by powerful and reactionary forces within the US state. Despite the stated opposition to the trip by President Joe Biden and statements to the press by his national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, America's foremost political generals have demanded the trip go ahead. Among these are:

• Admiral James Stavridis, former NATO supreme allied commander Europe, who declared, "We cannot allow China to decide whether or not senior US officials visit the island of Taiwan."

• Former Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who told CNN, "I think if the speaker wants to go, she should go."

• Former army officer, CIA director and secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who tweeted: "Nancy, I'll go with you… See you there!"

Pelosi's trip has been met with applause by the fascistic right in America:

• At the Trump-backed America First Policy Institute meeting in Washington, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich declared, "I commend Nancy," to thunderous applause.

• Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell declared, "If she doesn't go now, she's handing China… a victory."

• Republican Senator Tom Cotton, who penned the essay "Send in the Troops" urging the establishment of a military/police dictatorship in response to US protests against police violence in 2020, condemned Biden's concerns over the trip, declaring, "This pathetic self-deterrence is a mistake, and it will invite more aggression."

Newsweek commented that "A Nancy Pelosi Taiwan Visit Would be a Trump China Foreign Policy Triumph."

The escalation of the US conflict with China would further empower far-right forces in the United States. Trump's xenophobic anti-China demagogy, centered around the claim that COVID-19 is the "China virus," was a central component of his foreign policy, most fundamental tenets of which have been intensified and continued by Biden.

The US plans for war against China must be opposed. As horrific as the US-provoked war in Ukraine has been, a war over Taiwan, a central chokepoint of the global economy, would have vastly greater human and economic consequences.

The ruling classes of the US and its NATO allies, facing mounting domestic political opposition and a social, economic and political crisis to which they have no answer, are turning to war. The working class must be equally resolute in taking up the struggle against war as a critical component of the fight against social inequality and dictatorship.

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