

Tense military standoff as US House Speaker Pelosi lands in Taiwan

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In a reckless provocation that deliberately heightens war tensions with China, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi landed in Taiwan late last night aboard a military aircraft accompanied by her congressional delegation.

Despite concerns over the potential for a military clash or conflict with China, the Biden administration came together with the entire US political and military establishment in backing Pelosi's trip. As Pelosi landed in Taipei, an aircraft carrier strike group led by the USS Ronald Reagan, with its full complement of fighter aircraft, attack helicopters and other weapons systems, was positioned in waters off Taiwan's east coast.

The USS Ronald Reagan was accompanied by a guided missile cruiser USS Antietam and a destroyer USS Higgins. The US Navy also reported that the amphibious assault ship, the USS Tripoli, was also operating in the area. Two US Air Force planes were reportedly sent to Malaysia, where Pelosi held talks yesterday as part of the military preparations for her trip to Taiwan.

US officials, the American media and Pelosi herself promoted the lie that her trip and the accompanying military operation was "routine," and her presence in Taipei did not deviate from decades of American policy and diplomacy.

Pelosi's trip is anything but routine. She is the highest-ranking US official to visit Taiwan in more than a quarter century. Her visit is just the latest in calculated steps taken by the Trump and Biden administrations to undermine the One China policy that has been the foundation of political relations between the US and China since formal diplomatic ties were established in 1979.

Under the One China policy, Washington de facto recognised that Beijing as the legitimate government of all China, including the island of Taiwan. It broke off

diplomatic relations with the military dictatorship in Taipei and withdrew its military forces from the island. At the same time, the US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act to allow unofficial, low-level contact with Taipei and the sale of so-called defensive weapons to Taiwan.

Over the past six years, all that has dramatically changed. Top-level talks and visits have been openly resumed; the US has for the first time publicly acknowledged the presence of American troops on the island; and arms sales, including of manifestly offensive weaponry, has escalated along with the frequency of US warships passing through the narrow Taiwan Strait.

Biden has deliberately ignored repeated Chinese warnings that US actions were jeopardising the relations between the world's two largest economies and profoundly destabilising the Indo-Pacific region. In a phone conversation with Biden last week, Chinese President Xi Jinping warned that the US was "playing with fire," if it allowed the Pelosi's trip to take place.

Shortly after Pelosi landed in Taipei, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi again warned that the actions of American politicians were incendiary over the issue of Taiwan. "This will definitely not have a good outcome. The exposure of America's bullying face again shows it as the world's biggest saboteur of peace," he said.

China's Defence Ministry told the media that its military was now on high alert and would launch "targeted military operations" in response to Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Chinese military drills, including live-fire exercises, have already taken place in the South China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait separating Taiwan from the Chinese mainland. Chinese warplanes reportedly flew close to the median line in the Taiwan Strait.

“The Chinese side has stated on many occasions the serious consequences of visiting Taiwan, but Pelosi knowingly made a malicious provocation to create a crisis,” the Defence Ministry said.

In response to Pelosi’s visit, China has retaliated economically with the announcement yesterday of a ban on imports from more than 100 Taiwanese food companies.

Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan and the escalating confrontation with China take place as the US and NATO accelerate their proxy war with Russia in Ukraine. Driven by an unprecedented economic and political crisis at home, US imperialism is recklessly risking nuclear war in its drive to undermine, destabilise and break up what it regards as the two chief threats to its global hegemony—Russia and China.

Just as the US through the encroachment of NATO goaded Russia into invading Ukraine, so Washington calculates that it can provoke China into a debilitating war over Taiwan by ending the ambiguous status of the island and drawing it into the US camp. Taiwan is not only critical strategically immediately adjacent to the Chinese mainland, but is pivotal in the international production of semi-conductors. The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company produces more than 90 percent of the world’s most advanced chips used broadly in commercial and military applications.

As US imperialism prepares for conflict against China, it is winding up the same cynical and hypocritical “human rights” propaganda used as the pretext for all its criminal interventions and wars of the past three decades. Pelosi, who has a long record as an anti-China hawk, tweeted on her arrival in Taipei that her visit was to honour “unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan’s vibrant democracy.”

In an op-ed comment for the *Washington Post*, Pelosi declared that the Taiwan Relations Act was one of the most important pillars of US policy in the Asia Pacific that “set out America’s commitment to a democratic Taiwan ... [and] fostered a deep friendship rooted in shared interests and values.”

In reality, the US had not the slightest interest in democratic values in Taiwan in 1979, nor does it today. Even as it forged a de facto alliance with Beijing against the Soviet Union, Washington sought to protect the brutal military dictatorship on Taiwan that it had

helped create when Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) fled the mainland in the wake of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Taiwan in 1979 was under martial law and remained so until 1987. While Taiwan today has the trappings of elections, its police state apparatus remains in place.

The Taiwanese administration has rolled out the red carpet for Pelosi. She was met at Taipei airport by Taiwan’s Foreign Minister Joseph Wu and the US representative in Taiwan, Sandra Oudkirk. She has addressed Taiwan’s National Assembly and has met with President Tsai Ing-wen today.

However, outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel where Pelosi stayed last night, according to a *Guardian* report, she was greeted not only by supporters but opponents of her visit. “Hundreds of people gathered outside the hotel and across the road, with supporters and protesters separated by a wide cordon and dozens of police officers. Protesters shouted ‘Yankee, go home’ and carried signs calling the speaker a warmonger,” the reported stated.

Separated by the Chinese mainland by a narrow strip of water, there are widespread fears among the Taiwanese population of the dangers of conflict. As is the case in Ukraine, US imperialism is willing to plunge the island into a disastrous war and sacrifice countless lives as it pursues its criminal ambitions for global domination.



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