

US will send warships through Taiwan Strait “in the coming days,” US Naval Institute reports

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9 August 2022

Amid the military standoff in the Taiwan Strait triggered by the visit of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan last week, the US is planning to send warships through the Taiwan Strait “in the coming days,” the publication of the United States Naval Institute reported Tuesday.

On Monday, the Pentagon confirmed earlier statements by the White House that the US was planning another so-called “freedom of navigation exercise,” with Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl stating, “We will continue to do Taiwan Strait transits, as we have in the past, in the coming weeks... We will continue to do freedom of navigation operations elsewhere in the region.”

The United States has stationed a carrier strike group, led by the USS Ronald Reagan, in the waters near the island, flanked by the amphibious assault carrier USS Tripoli. The USS America Expeditionary Strike Group is currently in port nearby in Sasebo, Japan.

In recent years the United States has increased the tempo of its provocative operations near Chinese waters, on the other side of the world from the American mainland.

But none of these operations, which routinely involve American and Chinese warships shadowing each other and issuing radio warnings, have ever taken place in such a tense military and political climate.

Chinese forces have indefinitely extended live-fire military exercises around Taiwan that began after Pelosi’s visit, and are concentrating on “honing the capabilities of joint blockade under complex electromagnetic environment,” the *Global Times* reported.

China’s two aircraft carriers are operating in the area

of Taiwan, but have not yet been reported to have joined the drills.

The *Global Times* reported that the Chinese aircraft carriers are expected to join the drills, and are “expected to deter and cut off routes of external force interference from the east side of Taiwan island.”

Following Pelosi’s trip, the Chinese government and Chinese military forces have cut off communications with their US counterparts, giving the looming standoff between US and Chinese forces an even greater element of danger and unpredictability.

Even prior to Pelosi’s visit, Chinese officials had argued to their US counterparts that the Taiwan Strait should not be considered international waters, raising the prospect that the Chinese navy would seek to block US warships or aircraft from transiting the strait.

The *Global Times*, paraphrasing a Chinese military expert, noted that “The PLA can set new navigation restriction zones amid its consecutive exercises around Taiwan island, and this will deny US warships from entering the Taiwan Straits from a tactical level.”

It continued, “The US must realize the PLA will not give in an inch when it comes to safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and the major core interests like the Taiwan question, Song said.”

Given this supercharged military climate around the Taiwan Strait, a further US freedom of navigation operation would take on a far higher level of danger.

The announcement comes amid warnings in sections of the media over the increasing likelihood of a US war with China over Taiwan.

Writing in the *Financial Times*, columnist Gideon Rachman warned that, “In the past a US-China war over Taiwan seemed like a real possibility—but no more

than that. Now an increasing number of experts believe that a US-China conflict is not just possible but probable.”

He cited a statement by James Crabtree, the Asia director for the International Institute of Strategic Studies, who warned, “On our current course some kind of military confrontation between the US and China over the coming decade now looks more likely than not.”

On Tuesday, a series of media reports reported on a war game carried out by the Center for Strategic and International Studies gaming out the consequences of a US war over Taiwan.

Although the participants were not allowed to use nuclear weapons, the hypothetical war was by far the most destructive US military conflict since World War II.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that “In the first three weeks after invading Taiwan, China sank two multibillion-dollar U.S. aircraft carriers, attacked American bases across Japan and on Guam, and destroyed hundreds of advanced U.S. jet fighters.”

In the simulated exercise, “Chinese missiles sink a large part of the US and Japanese surface fleet and destroy ‘hundreds of aircraft on the ground’.”

“However, allied air and naval counterattacks hammer the exposed Chinese amphibious and surface fleet, eventually sinking about 150 ships,” one participant told the *Journal*.

He continued, “To get a sense of the scale of the losses, in our last game iteration, the United States lost over 900 fighter/attack aircraft in a four-week conflict. That’s about half the Navy and Air Force inventory.”

Critically, the war game did not calculate the number of lives that would be lost in such a conflict, but the minimal scenario with such losses would mean the death of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of lives of people in China, Taiwan and Japan, as well as American sailors and airmen.

Yet despite this horrific prospect, the United States is relentlessly seeking to escalate tensions with China, seeing in war a way out of its protracted economic crisis and the growth of opposition within the working class at home.

Even as the US is escalating its conflict with China, it is encouraging its puppet government in Ukraine to escalate the war with Russia. In the same press

conference reiterating US plans to sail through the Taiwan strait, the US for the first time acknowledged sending HARM anti-radiation missiles to Ukraine.

That same day, an explosion occurred at an arms depot in Crimea, in what the Kremlin denied was a Ukrainian attack.

Speaking just hours after the explosion, Ukrainian president and US proxy Volodymyr Zelensky said, “This Russian war against Ukraine and against all of free Europe began with Crimea and must end with—with its liberation. Today it is impossible to say when this will happen. But we are constantly adding the necessary components to the formula of liberation of Crimea ... I know that we will return to the Ukrainian Crimea.”

Russian officials have made clear that they would consider an invasion of Crimea as an existential threat. Earlier this year, Malcolm Chambers warned, “Faced with losing Crimea, Putin might consider [the use of nuclear weapons] a worthwhile gamble.”

The systematic and simultaneous US efforts to escalate its conflicts with Russia and China threaten all of humanity with a disaster of monumental proportions. These plans must be opposed by workers all over the world.



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