

US Director of National Intelligence confirms end of “strategic ambiguity” over Taiwan

Andre Damon
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Testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee Thursday, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines confirmed that US President Joe Biden was stating the official position of the US government last year when he pledged to send US troops to war against China if it invaded Taiwan.

During the hearing, Utah Republican Representative Chris Stewart said, “In the past, the President has said pretty clearly that we would respond with military action if China were to invade Taiwan. And then shortly after that the administration kind of walked back those comments, but it didn’t occur just once, it occurred several times.”

He asked Haines, “has there been a change in the administration’s policy regarding ambiguity?”

Haynes replied, “you are right in recognizing the president’s comments on this issue,” adding, “In this particular case, I think it is clear to the Chinese what our position is based on the president’s comments.”

On four separate occasions, US President Joe Biden said that the United States would go to war with China over Taiwan. In September, Biden was asked during an interview, “so unlike Ukraine, US forces, US men and women, would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion?”

Biden replied, “yes.”

After this and each of the previous statements, the White House issued a clarification, saying that Biden’s remarks did not reflect the official policy of the United States.

Asked to clarify Biden’s remarks in September, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that Biden was answering a “hypothetical” question, adding, “When the President of the United States wants to announce a policy change, he will do so. He has not done so.”

Haines’ statement makes clear that Biden’s remarks were in fact the official policy of the United States, and the policy of “strategic ambiguity” has been ended. Previously, the US was deliberately ambiguous as to whether it would join Taiwan in a war with China—a policy that sought to rein in Taipei as well as Beijing.

Haines was testifying alongside CIA Director William Burns, FBI Director Christopher Wray, and representatives of the NSA and DIA in one of multiple hearings held by the House and Senate this week focusing on the US conflict with China.

Their testimony was based on the annual threat assessment issued by the Director of National Intelligence that declared that China is seeking to become “a major power on the world stage” and is working to “undercut U.S. influence.”

In remarks before the House Homeland Security committee Thursday, congressman August Pfluger declared:

The US is now locked in a pure competition with the CCP in which the Chinese government is seeking to place itself at the top of the global world order while degrading America’s power militarily, diplomatically and economically.

In a separate hearing Wednesday by the House Homeland Security special subcommittee on the Chinese threat, Representative Tony Gonzales, who had just returned from a visit to Taiwan as part of a congressional delegation, declared “I know what war looks like, we’re at war.”

He went on to say,

I mean, this is a war, maybe a Cold War. But this is a war with China, with the People's Republic of China every single day, are invading Taiwan via their cyberspace. ...I spent five years as as an air crewman flying against China. I know exactly. When they come out and they intercept our aircraft. They're doing that every single day. And there's a danger in that because everything is fine until there is an accident, a spark, if you will, that turns a Cold War into a hot war.

During a House of Representatives Intelligence Committee hearing Thursday, members discussed openly what a war with China would look like. Democratic Congressman Jim Himes noted, "Rand did a study in which they estimated that Chinese GDP in the event of a conflict would contract by a staggering 25 to 35 percent. US GDP could contract by 5 to 10 percent, if there was conflict in the Taiwan Strait."

That study was titled "War with China: Thinking Through the Unthinkable." The study concluded:

Each side's increasingly far-flung disposition of forces and growing ability to track and attack opposing forces could turn much of the Western Pacific into a "war zone," with grave economic consequences.

But, on the upside, the report noted, the war might potentially be "mild," involving "tolerable" losses.

Belligerent threats against China at the House and Senate hearings were coupled with efforts to scapegoat China for the COVID-19 pandemic. In his opening remarks to a hearing Wednesday by the Senate intelligence committee, Virginia Democratic Senator Mark Warner declared, "Let's be clear, despite China's denials, it is entirely fair for us to ask whether the virus that has killed at least 6.8 million people so far, might have been accidentally released from a lab in Wuhan."

The abandonment by the White House of "strategic ambiguity" goes together with the de facto ending of the one-China policy, which effectively recognized that

Taiwan was a part of China and pledged not to encourage Taiwanese separatism.

Under the national defense authorization passed last year by the White House, the United States has pledged to directly arm Taiwan. It is also quadrupling the number of troops stationed on Taiwan and will be training Taiwanese troops in Michigan, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

The United States, which has already provoked a war with Russia in Ukraine that has led to over 200,000 casualties on both sides, is rapidly moving to escalate its conflict with China, a nuclear-armed power and the world's second-largest economy, with incalculable consequences for the whole of humanity.



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