

Taiwan backs Israel while US war drive against China continues

Ben McGrath
31 October 2023

As Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza proceeds with the full backing of the United States and its imperialist allies, Washington has made clear that there will be no let-up in the drive to war against China in the Indo-Pacific. This includes continuing to stoke tensions over Taiwan and furthering the military buildup in the region.

Washington and Taipei have sought to cast Beijing as insufficiently opposed to "terrorism," that is, failing to fully back the Israeli government's slaughter in Gaza. On this basis, the Tsai Ing-wen administration in Taiwan is attempting to sow fears that Beijing could launch a "surprise attack" on the island.

The claim is transparently absurd. It has gone hand in hand with the lie that the Palestinian uprising was unprovoked and Israel's response is legitimate self-defense.

On October 7, when the Palestinian uprising began, Taipei's Foreign Affairs Ministry stated, "Taiwan strongly condemns the indiscriminate attacks against the Israelis carried out by Hamas. We stand in solidarity with Israel and denounce all forms of terrorism."

The following Thursday, Taipei's defense ministry announced the creation of a task force to supposedly draw the lessons of the conflict in Gaza and how they could be applied to mainland China. Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng stated that a heavy emphasis was being placed on intelligence gathering, which the government considers "highly important so that we can work out countermeasures beforehand."

In addition, Israel's de facto ambassador to Taiwan Maya Yaron, who heads the Israel Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei, has praised Tsai's government while fanning the anti-Beijing flames. On October 26, she stated, "Taiwan is really a good friend

for Israel and we truly appreciate everything that we receive. I'm in close touch with the foreign minister (Joseph Wu), I think people are very concerned."

Contrary to the Taiwanese claims, Beijing has taken a cautious approach to events in the Middle East and has done nothing to support the Palestinians, as they are being massacred by the army of an advanced industrial state.

Beijing has merely pointed to the obvious, stating that Israel's indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza is "beyond the scope of self-defense." Criticizing this stance, Yaron continued: "This is actually something that is very disturbing with China."

Others within the Taiwanese political establishment have complained that the island's soldiers, particularly its reservist troops, are insufficiently trained and prepared to go to war. They have pointed to the Israeli military as an example to follow.

Su Tzu-yun, a leading analyst at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research in Taipei, said that while Israelis were supposedly eager to fight for their country, the same could not be said for the Taiwanese. Su stated, "There is a need for us to encourage such patriotic morale within our people, especially the youngsters, to safeguard Taiwan in the event of a cross-strait conflict."

A lack of support for war against mainland China exists within the Taiwanese working class, particularly young people who would be forced to the front lines of a bloody conflict. Reflecting this sentiment, conscription service time for men had been cut to four months in 2013, with plans to move to an all-volunteer armed forces. This proposal was eventually scrapped due to a lack of recruits and President Tsai announced in December 2022 that mandatory military service would increase to one year beginning in 2024.

The Biden administration and its Department of Defense are seeking to use the Taiwanese population, in a similar way to how Ukraine has been used as a proxy for the US-NATO war against Russia. In practice, this would mean turning the Taiwanese people into cannon fodder for Washington's interests. Just as they have flooded Ukraine with advanced weaponry and signaled their determination to fight Russia to the last Ukrainian, so the Biden administration is rapidly militarising Taiwan to stoke a conflict.

Taipei has ordered \$US1.55 billion in military equipment from the US this year alone, which includes parts for fighter jets, munitions, drones and a variety of missiles. As part of the \$US105 billion Biden demanded for Ukraine and for Israel, a total of \$US7.4 billion has been earmarked for Taiwan and other US allies in the region.

All of these statements and actions expose the fraudulent claims that Taiwan represents a democratic alternative to Beijing. Rather than denounce the genocide that is taking place there, Tsai's government is giving its support to Israel and placing the blame for the conflict on the Palestinians, who rose up against a fascistic apartheid regime. Taipei openly backs the oppressors while providing a cover for US imperialism to pursue its interests in the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific.

However, some within Washington are concerned that more must be done regarding Taiwan and have presented Israel's war on Gaza as an opportunity to pursue this. Joseph Bosco, who sits on the advisory board of the Global Taiwan Institute and has close connections to the Pentagon, wrote in an October 24 opinion piece for the *Hill* that the conflict in Gaza "should also be seen as a time of strategic clarity... Taiwan must be secure from the threats of Communist China—either Beijing must unequivocally renounce the use of force or Washington must unambiguously state it will defend Taiwan."

Such a declaration would drastically raise tensions with Beijing, which is unwilling to allow Taiwan to become a base for US military operations or to allow the West to set a new precedent for carving away Chinese territory. Washington already regularly challenges and has all but overturned the "One China" policy, which has governed cross-strait relations for decades. Under that policy, upheld by previous US

administrations and the international community for decades, Beijing was de facto recognised as the sole legitimate government of all China, including Taiwan.

Through the arming of Taipei, the encouragement of high-level visits to the island, and regular military exercises around the island, the US has upended this previous status quo.

Over the past weeks, Washington has also deployed additional military resources to the region, including a recent visit by a B-52 bomber to the Korean Peninsula with accompanying drills alongside South Korea and Japan. It has also dispatched a second aircraft carrier strike group to the Indo-Pacific. This is based on a similar phony claim that North Korea is planning its own surprise attack in order to justify the buildup of the US military presence in the region, all of which is aimed at China.

Ultimately for Washington, Israel's success is seen as sending a signal to Beijing. Washington wants to make clear that it will stop at nothing, including the destruction of an entire defenseless population, to achieve its aims. As such, it will not stop at risking the danger of nuclear war and global destruction either.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact