



White House Orders US Carrier Strike Group To Stay Near Taiwan Longer Than Planned, Says China ‘Overreacting’

Description

USA: The United States says it's watching ongoing Chinese military drills around Taiwan very closely, while condemning the latest series of ballistic missiles fired over the island as a severe provocation and escalation. The White House has ordered the Ronald Reagan carrier strike group to stay in the area.

US National Security Council (NSC) spokesman John Kirby said in statements to MSNBC Thursday: “We’ve been watching this very, very closely. It’s concerning. It’s not just concerning to us, but it’s concerning, of course, to the people of Taiwan. It’s concerning to our allies in the region, especially Japan.”

“The provocateur here is Beijing. They didn’t have to react this way to what is completely normal travel by congressional members to Taiwan... The Chinese are the ones who are escalating this,” Kirby added. He warned further, “One of the things that’s troublesome about exercises like this or missile launches like this is the risk of calculation, **the risk of a mistake that could actually lead to some sort of conflict,**” he said.

Location (as of yesterday) of 3 US Navy carrier/expeditionary strike groups—USS Ronald Reagan, USS Tripoli & USS America —currently operating in Asian waters around ??.
Map also shows the locations of the 2 Chinese PLA Navy carriers: Liaoning & Shandong.
(via [@IndoPac_Info](#)) pic.twitter.com/2YoHZS4R41

— Franz-Stefan Gady (@HoansSolo) [August 4, 2022](#)

Kirby in a press briefing at the White House also said it's Beijing that “chose to overreact” to Nancy Pelosi’s visit:

“We condemn these actions, which are irresponsible and at odds with our long-standing goal of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the region,” Kirby

*told reporters at the White House. **“China has chosen to overreact and use the speaker’s visit as a pretext to increase provocative military activity in and around the Taiwan Strait.”***

Both Taiwan officials, but more importantly Chinese officials and state media have acknowledged that effectively a **blockade** of the self-ruled island is in progress.

And somewhat alarming for the prospect of ‘inadvertent’ aggression between the PLA and US navies, Kirby affirmed that the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group plans to **continue ‘freedom of navigation’ maneuvers through the Taiwan Strait.**

According to more details on the [US strike group](#),

On Thursday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and its strike group “to remain in the general area to monitor the situation,” Kirby said.

***“They’ll be there for a little bit longer than they were originally planned,”** said Kirby. “I won’t get ahead of the ship’s schedule but the president believed it was a prudent thing to do, to leave her and her escort ships there just a little bit longer.”*

*The U.S. will also conduct “standard air and maritime transits **through the Taiwan Strait in the next few weeks**, consistent with our long-standing approach to defending the freedom of the seas and international law,” he added.*



File image of USS Ronald Reagan pictured during an exercise with South Korean warships, via AP.

So the strike group will linger longer as the PLA conducts unprecedented in size live fire drills, which will only increase the chances of an ‘incident’ between the two rival superpowers as Taiwan’s population continues to be on edge.

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Update(11:17ET): In another ominous sign signaling China intends to escalate its threatening and retaliatory military drills now encircling Taiwan, state-run *Global Times* has cited a source saying that a **PLA aircraft carrier group with a nuclear-powered submarine has now joined the ongoing exercises off Taiwan.**

Additionally, the English-language government mouthpiece GT is now calling the five-day drill that have commenced a rehearsal for a “reunification operation” – and says that after Pelosi’s provocative and damaging visit, “**exercises blockading Taiwan are to “become routine”.**

This as Japan’s Foreign Ministry has said Thursday evening (local time) that **five missiles fired by China have landed within Japan’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ).** Taiwan’s defense ministry, has meanwhile said 22 more Chinese air force jets have buzzed its airspace.

China firing long range rockets from Fujian across Taiwan Strait pic.twitter.com/N2trr4gjft

— Carl Zha (@CarlZha) [August 4, 2022](#)

Another angle of Chinese long range rockets firing across Taiwan Strait today
pic.twitter.com/RpZutl9SKe

— Carl Zha (@CarlZha) [August 4, 2022](#)

Further, videos of the PLA firing missiles over Taiwan are now circulating on social media, appearing to show local citizens in some locales filming and watching **as if it’s a patriotic spectacle...**

The PRC government has also released official footage of some of its latest ballistic missile launches which landed in waters off the self-ruled island...

FLASH: 5 ballistic missiles launched by China fell into Japan’s exclusive economic zone during military drills near Taiwan. Japan lodged a diplomatic protest in response. Take a look:pic.twitter.com/LXBxEB3Q5j

— Steve Hanke (@steve_hanke) [August 4, 2022](#)

Beijing is also threatening tougher sanctions to come against Taipei, in order to squeeze the pro-independence movement in Taipei. GT frames the latest economic punishment measures as follows:

*Following the Chinese mainland's suspension of imports of several agricultural products from the island of Taiwan, which is viewed as a sort of punishing fallout from US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit, residents from the island's agricultural and business sectors, as well as some local netizens, have **expressed dissatisfaction with the secessionist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)**, given the close connection between the island and the huge mainland market.*

*Starting on Wednesday, Chinese mainland customs authorities **suspended the entry of citrus fruits including grapefruits, lemons and oranges, as well as two types of fish (chilled large head hairtail and frozen horse mackerel)** from the island, in accordance with regulations and food safety requirements.*

Taiwan TV EBC shows video filmed by fishermen off Keelung, northern Taiwan, of China's live fire drills. Boat captain said he turned around back to Port when he saw this.

pic.twitter.com/DbPrCutfuK

— Bill Birtles (@billbirtles) [August 4, 2022](#)

China is saying this is only the beginning of the 5-day military exercises, identifying major military assets that have joined, including the following:

- J-20 stealth fighter jets
- H-6K bombers, J-11 fighter jets
- Type 052D destroyer
- Type 056A corvette
- DF-11 short-range ballistic missiles
- Early warning aircraft
- DF-17 hypersonic missiles.

Meanwhile, the US also has serious military assets near Taiwan, including the USS Ronald Reagan carrier group...

US Airforce spy plane Boeing RC-135 on the way to observe Chinese military exercise around Taiwan island pic.twitter.com/qnAljtE4MW

— Carl Zha (@CarlZha) [August 4, 2022](#)

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China has kicked off its latest round of war drills Thursday aimed at encircling and pressuring Taiwan in the wake of this week's House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visit to the self-ruled island, the day after she departed and continued on her Asia tour to South Korea.

According to China's *People's Daily*, this has included PLA command **dispatching "hundreds" of fighter jets to enter airspace off the northern, southwestern and southeastern airspaces of the island**

, at a moment Taiwan's defense forces are on a heightened state of alert. On Wednesday some half a dozen jets were reported as having breached the 'median line' separating the Taiwan Strait. Beijing is promising in essence this is only the beginning.

WATCH: More than a hundred PLA warplanes including fighter jets and bombers conducted joint reconnaissance, air assault and support missions, and more than 10 destroyers and frigates conducted a joint blockade, alert patrol and reconnaissance, around Taiwan island on Thu. pic.twitter.com/xa0YU4K5U5

— Global Times (@globaltimesnews) [August 4, 2022](#)

And more alarming, China launched a series of ballistic missiles into waters off Taiwan, with some having flown over the island. "Taiwan has confirmed that mainland China launched 11 Dongfeng series missiles into waters north, south and east of the island on Thursday afternoon, a day after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi left Taipei," [South China Morning Post](#) reports.

"The island's defence ministry said the 11 DF series missiles were fired between 1.56pm and 4pm. **It is the first time mainland missiles have flown over the island.**"

Taipei's defense ministry immediately condemned the severe provocation: "The defence ministry condemned the irrational actions to undermine regional peace," a statement said. Taiwan further called on Beijing to be "self-restrained".



Via The Telegraph/@Military_News4

Taiwanese media outlets are reporting of the unprecedented missile flyover of the island:

People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command Spokesman Shi Yi that afternoon announced that the PLA's Eastern Theater Command Rocket Force launched a "multi-regional and multi-model exercise" in the waters off the coast of eastern Taiwan, according to China's state-run TV broadcaster CCTV. Shi claimed that the guided missiles all "hit their targets accurately."



Map source: The Telegraph

Already there has been a 'close call' incident between the two militaries:

Earlier, it [Taiwan's military] revealed suspected Chinese drones had flown above the Kinmen Islands, Taiwanese territory off China's southeastern coast, and it had fired flares to drive them away.

Major General Chang Zone-sung of the military's Kinmen Defense Command told the Reuters news agency that the Chinese drones came in a pair and flew into the Kinmen area twice on Wednesday night, at about 9pm (13:00 GMT) and 10pm (14:00 GMT).

Warning flared were then fired: “We immediately fired flares to issue warnings and to drive them away. After that, they turned around. **They came into our restricted area and that’s why we dispersed them,**” the Taiwanese general said.

While China had quickly started snap drills as Pelosi’s Air Force plane – reportedly with US fighter jet escort – landed in Taipei earlier this week, Thursday marks the start of more expansive live-fire drills around the whole island, slated to **last five days**.

The next five days will include live-fire drills and missile tests surrounding the island in these reported locations, as detailed in Chinese state media publications...



Meanwhile, China is furious over a prior day Group of Seven (G7) statement condemning its military drills. The G7 warned Beijing not to use Pelosi’s [visit as](#) “**pretext for aggressive military activity in the Taiwan Strait**”.

In protest, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi has within the last hours canceled what was to be a face-to-face summit with his Japanese counterpart. At the same time **increased cyberattacks** are being reported against Taiwan government websites in local media.

by Tyler Durden

Category

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