

Dangerous Shift in Sino-US Relations: China Severs Diplomatic, Military Ties With US Over Taiwan Missile Deal

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China snaps diplomatic, military contacts with US

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Beijing - Enraged by the USD 6.5 billion American arms sales package to Taiwan, China today cancelled its planned military and diplomatic contacts with the United States, accusing the Bush administration of "poisoning" the atmosphere which led to the latest stand-off.

"The US side's act has seriously blocked bilateral exchanges and contacts in various fields, including high-level visits between the two armed forces. The US side should take full responsibility for the current situation of damaged military-to-military ties," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said in a statement.

Condemning the planned sale of weapons to Taiwan, an island which China claims is a rebel province, Qin said the American side should take full responsibility for the damage of ties between the two countries and their respective armed forces.

He said China always valued the relations with the US armed forces, and had made active efforts to promote the Sino-US military exchanges.

The United States is Taiwan's most important ally and largest arms supplier. Taiwan, an island of some 23 million people, relies on sophisticated American weapons to keep pace with China's massive arms buildup across the Taiwan Strait.

The US government, in spite of China's strong objection, on Friday notified the US Congress about its plan to sell arms to Taiwan, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The US arms package includes Patriot III anti-missile system, E-2T airborne early warning aircraft upgrade system, Apache helicopters, Javelin missiles, Harpoon submarine-launched missiles, and some airplane accessory parts, it said.

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