

Pelosi Plays with Fire Like a Bull in a China Shop

By [Ed Rampell](#)

Global Research, August 09, 2022

[CovertAction Magazine](#) 8 August 2022

Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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How many Chinese fought in the Civil War? That is, the U.S. Civil War, 1861-1865?

As Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi sticks her nose into the Taiwan Strait, this is an interesting and illuminating question to ponder. Second in line to the U.S. presidency, Pelosi’s August 2 visit to Taiwan is the highest-level trip there since her predecessor, the rabidly reactionary ex-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich’s foray a quarter of a century ago to this island still claimed by Beijing, located about 100 miles east of the Chinese mainland.

[As CovertAction Bulletin reported](#),

“1979 was the last time that a U.S. head of state or member of the ruling party visited Taiwan. Since the 1970s the official policy of the U.S. has been the One China policy, and this visit undermines this very policy.”

In Taipei, Pelosi met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and addressed the parliament as part of her Asia jaunt at taxpayer expense, which has greatly upset the People’s Republic of China—as if our beleaguered planet did not already have enough problems to deal with.

[A Reuters report](#) uses words such as “enraged” (in the headline) and “furious” to describe Beijing’s reaction to Pelosi’s interloper excursion and quoted China’s foreign ministry as saying the trip “has a severe impact on the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and seriously infringes upon China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

[The Washington Post reported](#):

“China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs added of Pelosi’s trip that ‘China firmly opposes and sternly condemns this, and has made serious démarche [a complaint through diplomatic channels] and strong protest to the United States.’”

The *Post* added:

“Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a meeting in Shanghai that U.S. politicians who are ‘playing with fire’ on the issue of Taiwan will ‘come to no good end,’ according to a transcript released by the Foreign Ministry.” Wang has [also called the U.S.](#) “the world’s biggest saboteur of peace.”

Echoing this sentiment, Foreign Ministry [spokesperson Hua Chunying tweeted](#):

“Making themselves an enemy of the 1.4 billion Chinese people will not end up well. Acting like a bully in front of the whole world will only make everyone see that the U.S. is the biggest danger to world peace.”

During a two-hour-plus phone call on July 28 between Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Joe Biden, Xi [warned in no uncertain terms](#):

“The position of the Chinese government and people on the Taiwan question is consistent, and resolutely safeguarding China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity is the firm will of the more than 1.4 billion Chinese people. The public opinion cannot be defied. Those who play with fire will perish by it. It is hoped that the U.S. will be clear-eyed about this. The U.S. should honor the one-China principle...”

According to its Defense Ministry, the PRC has [ramped up](#) “targeted military operations” that “include joint air and sea drills in the north, southwest and southeast of Taiwan, long-range live firing in the Taiwan Strait, and missile test-launches in the sea east of Taiwan, the [People’s Liberation Army’s] Eastern Theatre Command said.”

Media commentators have used the [“B” word](#) to describe Beijing’s strategic response, with the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* stating: “China is set to launch an unprecedented military drill that effectively blockades Taiwan until Sunday afternoon following [U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to the island](#).” Some economic sanctions, too, are being imposed on Taipei.

East Meets West Meets Geopolitical Gamesmanship

After a circuitous route, Pelosi arrived in Taipei aboard a U.S. Air Force passenger jet where she was met by Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. According to the [U.K.’s Daily Mail](#):

“Eight U.S. F-15 fighter jets and five tanker aircraft took off from a U.S. base in Okinawa to provide protection for Pelosi’s flight, NHK reported.”

The *Military Times* noted:

“U.S. officials have said the American military will increase its movements in the Indo-Pacific region during Pelosi’s visit. The aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* and its strike group were in the Philippine Sea on Monday, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.”

President Tsai Ing-wen [gave Pelosi “an award](#)... on behalf of the Congress, the ‘Order of Propitious Clouds with Special Grand Cordon,’” Taipei’s highest civilian honor.

Pelosi’s reckless, completely unnecessary pot-stirring brinkmanship has been met with disapproval and sparked controversy at home. According to *The Washington Post*:

“Virtually all the senior members of President Biden’s national security team have privately expressed deep reservations about the trip and its timing, said a White House official.”

“The arrogance of power is especially ominous and despicable when a government leader risks huge numbers of lives in order to make a provocative move on the world’s geopolitical chessboard. Nancy Pelosi’s plan to visit Taiwan is in that category. Thanks to her, the chances of a military confrontation between China and the United States have spiked upward,” [observed longtime peace activist and author Norman Solomon](#).

Even late-night comic Trevor Noah chimed in on *The Daily Show*:

“Nancy Pelosi is going to get us all killed... Now’s not a good time to start World War III.” (Uh Trev, is there ever a *good* time?)

Civil and Uncivil Wars

Why is Pelosi blithely playing with fire and acting like the proverbial “bull in a China shop”?

Let’s circle back to this commentary’s original question: How many Chinese fought in the U.S. Civil War? This may sound facetious, but [some 58 Chinese, almost all immigrants](#) and none of them known to be officials of the Middle Kingdom, actually did see military action during the War Between the States, mostly in the Union Army and Navy.

Oddly, two sons of the Siamese twins Chang and Eng—who rose to fame and fortune through the Barnum and Bailey Circus and owned slaves on a farm in North Carolina—fought for Dixie, as did three other Chinese men.

Chinese Yankee by Ruthanne Lum McCunn tells the true story of Hong Kong-born Thomas Sylvanus (Ah Yee Way), an orphan brought to America for schooling in the mid-1850s, but enslaved in Baltimore. Only sixteen at the outbreak of war, Thomas ran north, joined the Freedom Army, and was blinded in the first major campaign. He failed to fully recover his sight and, deemed incapable of performing the duties of a soldier, was discharged. Yet he re-enlisted twice, saved his regiment’s colors during the bloodbath of Spotsylvania, was lamed at Cold Harbor, and survived nine months’ imprisonment in the dreaded Andersonville stockade.

Having said this in the interest of historical accuracy, the fact is that out of the millions of Americans who fought for the North and South during the Civil War, only a miniscule handful were of Chinese ancestry, and none is known to have officially represented the Chinese government. Nor did Empress Dowager Cixi or other powerful Forbidden City leaders [travel during 1861-1865 to Washington](#) or Richmond, the Confederacy’s capital, to intervene in the U.S. Civil War.

Furthermore, in the summer of [1861, Secretary of State William Seward sternly cautioned against](#) foreign intervention in America’s domestic affairs while the Union fought the secessionists, boldly warning: “If any European Power provokes a war, we shall not shrink from it. A contest between Great Britain and the United States would wrap the world in fire.” (Note that Seward doesn’t even so much as mention China in his warning.)

Pelosi's Background of Power and Privilege

On the other hand, imperialists like Nancy Pelosi have absolutely no idea that they are perpetually meddling in other people's affairs and should mind their own business. They are not cognizant of it; the notion does not even cross their cerebral cortex. Like the Europeans who crisscrossed the world, claiming and conquering lands whether their inhabitants wanted to be dominated or not, it simply never occurs to interlopers like Pelosi that they have absolutely no right to stick their noses where they do not belong.

Multi-millionaires and powerful pols like Pelosi are so convinced of their superiority, inevitability and indispensability that they have absolutely no understanding they are overstepping their boundaries because, in their limitless self-esteem and self-conception, the world is their oyster.

The snooty Pelosi is so self-assured of her own sense of entitlement that she is often dismissive of the free press, treating reporters rudely if they dare question her royal highness. What is the source of Madam Speaker's high self-regard?

Pelosi, who has served in Congress longer than any other California Democrat, is a creature of power and privilege who was born into the D'Alesandro dynasty. The 82-year-old's father Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., served as a Democratic congressman (1939-1947) and mayor of Baltimore (1947-1959)—a position her brother also held.

Young [Nancy managed the book of people who owed her father political favors](#) and attended JFK's inauguration.

After relocating by 1969 to the West Coast, Pelosi, who holds a degree from Trinity College in Washington, D.C., became a Democratic Party fundraiser and then state party chairwoman. In 1987, at the age of 47 after her two kids had gone off to college, Pelosi first ran for Congress in California's 5th Congressional District (long represented by liberal firebrand Phillip Burton) where her posh home was not even located, so her husband, moneybags Paul Pelosi, bought a new home in upper-class Pacific Heights so she would qualify to represent the district in which she was running.

According to the *New York Post*, Paul ran a "venture capital and investment firm Financial Leasing Services Inc. Over the years he's made countless bets on high-profile companies his wife is supposed to regulate, like Amazon, Apple and Google."^[1]

[According to Time political correspondent and Pelosi biographer Molly Ball:](#)

"Pelosi's most formidable rival [in 1987's special election] would be Harry Britt, a gay socialist former aide to Harvey Milk who had succeeded Milk on the Board of Supervisors. The AIDS crisis was at its height, ravaging the community. Britt had a chance to be the first openly gay man elected to Congress in history, at a time when President Reagan refused even to acknowledge the disease. It was time, Britt contended, for gay men and women to be represented by one of their own, not merely a sympathetic outsider."

Thus, during the AIDS epidemic, Pelosi went to Washington by running to the right of and defeating an LGBTQ founder and vice chair of Democratic Socialists of America 36% to 32% in a three-way race.

To be fair, Pelosi has done some good in her time in Congress—she [opposed the Iraq war and the Bush administration's efforts to privatize Social Security](#), for example, was [one of the House architects behind the 1994 assault weapons ban](#), helped pass the Affordable Care Act, Dodd-Frank bill regulating Wall Street and Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal Act allowing gays to serve openly in the military and ripped up a copy of President Trump's "State of the Union" speech on live TV.

However, Pelosi has also served as [the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee](#), rubber-stamping criminal CIA covert interventions. Although she is viewed as a doyenne of the Democratic Party's liberal wing, this prototypical "corporate liberal" attained power by, according to a [Britt campaign brochure](#), taking donations from "oil companies, highrise developers, Washington lobbyists and other special interests" in order to defeat a candidate far to her Left.

Profiteer Pelosi, the Free Marketeer

Although she has flip-flopped on the issue, [Newsweek reports](#):

"Pelosi said she was against prohibiting lawmakers from owning and trading individual stocks. 'We are a free market economy,' she said. 'They should be able to participate in that.'"

Newsweek notes:

"Pelosi has so far disclosed 48 transactions made by her family worth more than \$50 million... Pelosi is currently one of the 25 wealthiest members of Congress, according to *Business Insider*."

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a DSA member, [tweeted](#):

"It is absolutely ludicrous that members of Congress can hold and trade individual stock while in office. The access and influence we have should be exercised for the public interest, not our profit. It shouldn't be legal for us to trade individual stock with the info we have."

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The access and influence we have should be exercised for the public interest, not our profit. It shouldn't be legal for us to trade individual stock with the info we have. <https://t.co/Z3UZej2eC2>

— Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (@AOC) [December 8, 2021](#)

According to one of AOC's hometown newspapers, the right-wing *New York Post*, "the speaker—whose estimated worth tops \$100 million—and hubby Paul Pelosi have amassed as much as \$30 million from Big Tech stock trades, even as she's supposed to be regulating that industry... The rules guard against conflict-of-interest trading by congressional *staff*, and some lawmakers acknowledge the conflict (for themselves as well as her) and want to ban lawmakers and their families from trading stocks. Yet Pelosi defends the practice."

A Chip Off the Old Blockhead

[The Post also observes:](#)

“From 2007 to 2020, the speaker and her spouse raked in between \$5.6 million and \$30.4 million (the rules don’t even require exact disclosure) from just five Big Tech firms: Facebook, Google, Amazon, Apple and Microsoft.”

Microsoft has been [one of Pelosi’s top campaign contributors](#), donating \$113,822 to her since 1989.

Congress may have dropped the ball on the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and Biden’s Build Back Better Act but, in July 2022, Congress somehow managed to pass the \$52 billion [Pelosi-backed CHIPS Act of 2022](#) to strengthen domestic semiconductor manufacturing.

According to the Australian Broadcasting Corp., during her Taipei foray, Pelosi [“said a U.S. bill on computer chips was a good opportunity for more cooperation with Taiwan.”](#)

The world’s number 1 and 3 largest manufacturing companies that produce the microchips that power Big Tech, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company and United Microelectronics Corporation, are [based in Taiwan](#). Mere coincidence or self-dealing? Could this have something to do with Pelosi’s insistence on going to Taiwan, even if it means upsetting the international apple cart? Hmmm, inquiring minds want to know...

Perpetual Busybodies, Endlessly Intervening in Others’ Internal Affairs

It never dawns on one percenters like Pelosi, who have such high opinions of themselves, that they simply do not belong in a quarrel on the other side of the world. The distance between Taipei and San Francisco is 6,449 miles; between Taipei and Washington, D.C., 7,864 miles.

The closest U.S. territory to Taiwan is the American colony of Guam—one-third owned and operated by the Pentagon—located 1,711 miles away, while Hawaii—where the U.S. military owns and operates 21% of Oahu, including Pearl Harbor—is 5,142 miles from Taipei.

Imperialist busybodies like Pelosi need to mind their own business, and let the people of China, as well as the Formosans (the Indigenous people of Taiwan who are almost always left out of the discussion) settle their own differences and disputes among themselves.

As we can clearly see by this latest outsider incursion, this foreign intrusion into what are essentially domestic matters and squabbles only exacerbate and heighten their problems. (Hey, how did those Iraq and Afghanistan invasions end up working out?)

Furthermore, these eternal trespassers want to do so without being held accountable for their encroachments. Thus, like Orwellian Newspeak, we are now witnessing the birth of new definitions. Consider this [France 24 headline](#): “White House warns China against escalation over Pelosi’s... Taiwan visit”

Now, words like “escalation” and “retaliation” mean how a country that has been provoked by a superpower provocateur dares to respond to the offending party’s provocative actions. In this imperialist doublethink, countermeasures to blatant provocations are characterized

as “escalation.” MSNBC hack Andrea Mitchell chimed in, insisting that no matter what Pelosi did, “They [PRC] started it!” The imperialists sure can dish it out, but they cannot take it. The elite must never ever be held accountable for their actions.

Although the U.S. media correctly point out that the People’s Republic of China considers Taiwan to be a “breakaway, renegade” province of China proper that is now “self-ruled,” I have not seen/heard/watched a single report that discussed the Chinese Revolution that spawned this conundrum and split.

In a nutshell, the Chinese Civil War was fought between the USSR-backed Chinese Communist Party and the U.S.-backed Kuomintang (KMT) from about 1927 to 1949, pitting China’s peasants and workers against its elite. In 1949, the CCP led by Chairman Mao Zedong triumphed and, with its tails between its legs, the KMT, led by Chiang Kai-shek, a man of legendary corruption, fled across the Taiwan Strait and established a military dictatorship on that island, where martial law lasted almost four decades.

Now Pelosi, an old Cold Warrior whose world view was formed during the 1950s, is using a retread of the tired old anticommunist sloganeering, which in the past pit [“the free world” against “communism” and “Red China.”](#)

Although the CCP still politically rules the PRC, given China’s tremendous market reforms and development, Pelosi currently rephrases the tired old Cold War mantra as: “America’s solidarity with the 23 million people of Taiwan is more important today than ever, as the world faces a choice between autocracy and democracy.”

Which part of our much-vaunted system do the Pelosis of the world want to export to China, et al.? The electoral college? The fact that Americans have no direct vote for president? The unelected Supreme Court with life tenure that is stripping away our rights and freedoms?

The Senate filibuster and other measures such as two senators per state, no matter what the size of their population, enables minority rule? The right to purchase weapons of war to perpetrate mass slaughter in our schools, malls, places of worship, July 4th parades, the Las Vegas strip, etc.? Student debt? Earth’s highest incarceration rate in the land of the “free”?

To return to the U.S. Civil War metaphor, in reality, Madam Speaker is following in the footsteps of Madame Chiang, and backing the side that would be equivalent to the Confederacy.

U.S. ruling circles may be alarmed at how “aggressive” modern China has supposedly become, but if one were to compare Beijing’s military posture to that of Washington’s incessantly interventionist foreign policy and militarism, with 750-plus bases girdling the globe and endless invasions, colossal Pentagon budgets, drone warfare, covert ops, cruel sanctions and so on, it would be laughable. In the 21st century alone, America has slaughtered at least hundreds of thousands of human beings with completely unnecessary wars inflicted in Iraq and dubious other military adventures throughout the Middle East, Afghanistan and beyond. China’s military stance and defense budget is truly dwarfed by that of the bloody American empire, willy-nilly endlessly interfering around the world, as arguably the most destabilizing force in the world today, pursuing the same outdated Cold War strategy and realpolitik it has essentially practiced since 1949, still pitting Washington against Beijing and Moscow.

Running Dogs

Like all bullies Washington hates to pick on somebody its own size. The nuclear-armed United States prefers to invade smaller, helpless countries—Reagan’s counterinsurgency in Central America and the invasion of tiny Grenada are the more cowardly America’s speed.

But when it comes to other big powers like Russia and China, perpetually throwing your weight around does not always work. Taunting and bullying will only get you so far. After the Bush regime promised Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not “move one inch east of Germany,” starting in the 1990s, Boris Yeltsin and then Vladimir Putin began warning the West against NATO expansion that eventually pushed right up to Russia’s borders.

When somebody is nuclear-armed and dangerous like Putin, it is incumbent upon wise statesmanship to listen to what your adversary is telling you and warning you against. This is not in any way to justify (but perhaps to explain) Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but a clear failure of statecraft and diplomacy led to this horrific turn of events.

Now, not content with triggering a war involving Moscow, entitled globetrotters like Nancy Pelosi traipse around the planet on the taxpayers’ dime and pick a fight with another mighty nuclear power with substantial armed forces. Unlike Grenada, China can fight back and will not be pushed around.

What is really behind Washington’s anxiety is that China seems to be on the rise, while America is in decline. To be sure, the PRC—like the U.S.—is an imperfect entity with lots of room for improvement. Critics could point to Hong Kong, the Uyghurs, mass surveillance, the zero-tolerance Covid policy, policies toward Taiwan and much more. But this is really *absolutely none of America’s business*. Should Beijing, Moscow, et al., base their foreign relations with Washington on the mistreatment of George Floyd, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor and the countless other African Americans slaughtered and abused by U.S. law enforcement?

And just as Western policy makers triggered the Russian bear, when it comes to the Pelosis of the world, rash decision makers who misbehave like pitbulls in China shops may learn the hard way that when it comes to China, if you travel from afar to smash a beehive with a baseball bat, you just might get stung. In the immortal words that may have originated with East German youth at a 1950 Berlin march: “Yankee, Go Home!” And while you’re at it, fix your own troubled household, instead of searching for endless enemies and troublemaking abroad.

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Ed Rampell is an L.A.-based film historian and critic who also reviews culture, foreign affairs and current events. Ed can be reached at edrampel@gte.net.

Note

1. Most recently DUI Paul has been in the news for his drunk driving escapades.

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