

“Playing With Fire”: China’s Military Warns US Over Taiwan Arms Sales

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China’s military has predictably slammed Washington’s recent approval to send \$2.2 billion in arms to Taiwan, announced [Monday](#). The PLA warned among other things that the move “severely undermined Sino-US military-to-military relations” at an already sensitive juncture in relations. Additionally, as we [reported previously](#), Beijing authorities are preparing potential sanctions against any US firms found to be involved in future Taiwan weapons sales.

“The People’s Liberation Army is strongly dissatisfied by and resolutely opposes Washington’s recent approval of a \$2.2 billion arms deal for Taiwan, an action that has seriously undermined Sino-US military relations,” according to Senior Colonel Wu Qian, a spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, as reported in [Chinese state media](#).

Earlier this week the US State Department [approved](#) the possible sale to Taiwan of M1A2T Abrams tanks, Stinger missiles and related equipment at an estimated value of \$US2.2 billion despite vocal Chinese criticism of the deal.

The PLA’s Friday statements continued:

“China’s adamant opposition against US arms sales to Taiwan has always been clear and consistent,” Colonel Qian said.

“The wrongful actions by the US have seriously violated the one-China principle and the three Sino-US joint communiques, and they have interfered with China’s domestic affairs and violated its sovereignty and security interests.”

As a reminder, [one month ago](#) China’s Foreign Ministry urged the United States to halt the sales to avoid harming bilateral ties, saying it was “seriously concerned”.

And now Beijing appears to be taking [more aggressive action](#):

Beijing said on Friday it will issue sanctions against the US companies involved in the latest arms sale to Taiwan, as tensions between China and the United States continue to rise.

The foreign ministry said in a brief statement that the move by Washington had violated China’s territorial sovereignty and national security.

“To protect our national interest, China will impose sanctions on the US companies involved in the arms sale,” ministry spokesman Geng Shuang was quoted as saying.

And separately, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi said during a state visit to Budapest on Friday that the US must stop “playing with fire”.

“We urge the US to fully recognise the gravity of the Taiwan question ... [and] not to play with fire on the question of Taiwan,” the foreign minister [told a news conference](#).

The proposed sale also comes at a perilously sensitive moment: at the start of June, during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, China’s Defense Minister Wei Fenghe [warned the United States](#) not to meddle in security disputes over Taiwan and the South China Sea.

He had also launched into a bellicose attack on opponents to China’s expansionist plans towards the South China Sea and Taiwan, declaring: “If they want to fight, we will fight till the end”.

Though long seen by Beijing as China’s “renegade province,” the United States remains Taiwan’s primary arms supplier, despite having no “official” or formal ties other than the crucial [Taiwan Relations Act](#) (TRA), which has loomed large in Sino-US relations of the past decades.

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