



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on February 26, 2024

Media Claim Taiwanese Leaders Are Unhappy With U.S. Commitment to Ukraine

U.S. lawmakers who visited Taiwanese leaders this week have reportedly been met with worry and questions over Washington's security commitments in the wake of its stalled support for Ukraine.

"Taiwan is extremely interested in Ukraine, and extremely worried that we might walk away from Ukraine," U.S. Representative Mike Gallagher, who led the congressional delegation's visit to Taipei, told reporters on February 23.

Gallagher, a Wisconsin Republican who oversees the House Select Committee on China, said the visit was meant to show Washington's unwavering support for Taiwan regardless of who wins the U.S. presidential election in November.

The five-member delegation met with incumbent Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and President-elect Lai Ching-te, among other leaders, during a three-day visit to the self-governing island. Such trips in recent years have led to an escalation in tensions between Washington and Beijing, which has pledged to reunify with its breakaway province, by force if necessary.

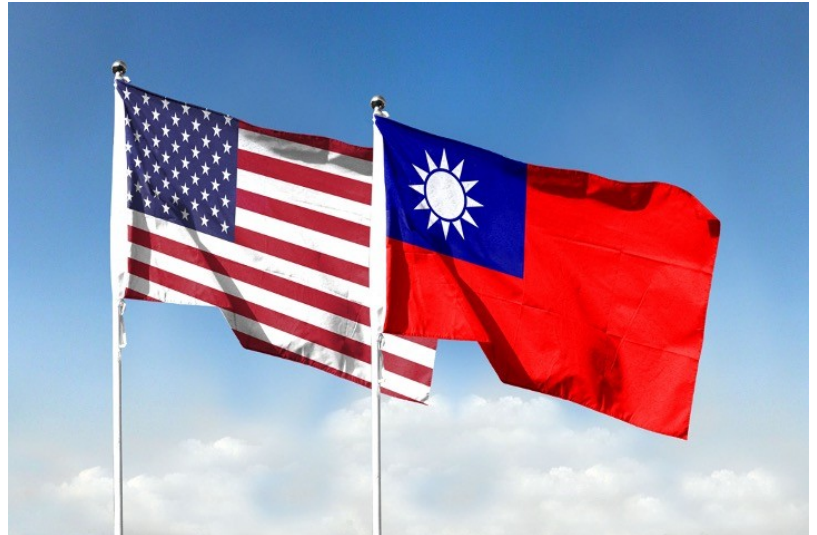
Gallagher said America's failure to continue backing Ukraine in its conflict with Russia could have a destabilizing ramifications in the Taiwan Strait. U.S. President Joe Biden has vowed to continue supplying weapons to Kyiv for "as long as it takes," but conservative Republican lawmakers have resisted his request for an additional \$60 billion in emergency funding. Last month, Washington ran out of Ukraine aid funding, after using \$113 billion in previously approved spending bills.

"The outcome in Ukraine matters not only for Ukraine and American credibility, but for deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, for cross-strait deterrence," Gallagher said. He also claimed that a "de-facto alliance" between Russia, China, and Iran has tried to undermine Washington's structure of international alliances, heightening the importance of steadfast support for Ukraine and Taiwan.

Taiwanese lawmaker Wang Ting-yu told *The Wall Street Journal* that ditching Ukraine would "encourage the dictators in Beijing, in North Korea and in other countries. They will realize that the global leader doesn't have the strength to keep its patience to support its allies."

Gallagher bemoaned that the U.S. still has not eliminated a \$2 billion backlog of deliveries under its weapons sales to Taiwan. He said Washington's defense-industrial base must be revitalized, adding that setting up manufacturing partnerships in Taiwan could mitigate the production shortage.

"Unlike Ukraine, Taiwan is an island and would be harder to resupply," the congressman said. "We need to learn the lessons of why deterrence failed in Ukraine and apply them to the Indo-Pacific so we



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don't find ourselves having to fight a war."

Gallagher added that he wants the Taiwanese people to have confidence that "America stands with them, even as we sort through a very intense political season domestically." He also sought to send a message to Beijing "that if Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party were to ever make the incredibly foolish decision to attempt an invasion of Taiwan, that effort would fail."

For its part, China urged the U.S. to stop all "interference" in Taiwan's affairs after the group of U.S. lawmakers met with Taiwan's Tsai. Asked about the visit, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning urged Washington to take into account the "extreme complexity and sensitivity of the Taiwan question."

"China opposes any form of official interaction between the U.S. and Taiwan authorities and rejects U.S. interference in Taiwan affairs in whatever form or under whatever pretext," she said, calling on American officials and legislators to "stop official contact with Taiwan and stop sending any wrong signal to the separatist forces for 'Taiwan independence.'"

Tensions are rising between the island and Beijing. Last week, a Taiwanese coast guard vessel pursued a speedboat belonging to a pair of mainland fishermen, who were accused of trespassing. The smaller boat capsized during the chase and both men drowned, and Chinese officials said Taiwan had used "violent and dangerous methods."

Though Taiwan has governed itself since 1949, the vast majority of countries, including the United States, do not acknowledge it as an independent state.

Washington has, nevertheless, kept informal diplomatic and security relations with Taipei, and has approved various military sales worth billions in recent years, repeatedly sparking China's ire. Earlier this week, the U.S. State Department approved a deal for \$75 million in advanced communications and logistics gear, prompting a negative reaction from Beijing.

The proposed transfer threatens to "undermine China's sovereignty and security interests," and would "harm China-U.S. relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Ming told reporters.

Citing sources, Reuters reported earlier this year that the U.S. used last year's largest-ever joint drills with Australia to accumulate new stockpiles of equipment in the country in preparation for a potential conflict with China over Taiwan.

As per U.S. officials interviewed by Reuters, the war materiel was accumulated during the Talisman Sabre exercises last July and August. The drills, which were conducted in and around Australia, involved more than 34,000 troops from 13 nations and focused on enhancing combat readiness and logistical capabilities.

The equipment from the exercises included 330 vehicles and trailers and 130 containers stored in the southeastern part of Australia, Reuters reported. The news outlet added that in the event of a conflict, this would be enough to supply about three logistics companies with a combined strength of 500 or more soldiers. Alternatively, the equipment could be employed during future drills or to address a potential natural disaster.

Numerous officials interviewed by Reuters cited logistics as an Achilles' heel in the U.S. military that China could exploit in the event of a conflict, potentially by bombing refueling ships and jet fuel depots. Such tactics, the officials warned, could permit Beijing to cripple Washington without having to deal with the majority of U.S. forces. The Chinese Embassy in the U.S. did not directly comment on the



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Reuters report, but told the news outlet that Washington should “stop enhancing military contact with the Taiwan region” and “stop creating factors that could heighten tensions in the Taiwan Strait.”



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