

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 17, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As Russia continues its aggression in Ukraine, some foreign policy experts on China optimistically believe that Russia's failure to quickly overrun Ukraine and the unity the West has demonstrated should make China think twice about invading Taiwan. However, we are concerned that Beijing may be learning different lessons from the ongoing crisis, and the risk of a People's Liberation Army assault on Taiwan remains unabated, if not heightened. To proactively deter China from attempting an invasion of Taiwan, we call on your administration to commit unequivocally and publicly to uphold Taiwan's security and the intent of the United States to act in the event of Chinese military aggression against the island.

In the weeks leading up to, and during, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, your administration was slow to provide adequate lethal aid for Ukraine's defense and has imposed sanctions on Russia only incrementally. Every action taken by your administration to provide needed equipment to Ukraine for their self-defense has been slow-walked, hand-wrung, and ultimately reliant on Congressional pressure to finally be realized. Furthermore, the half-hearted sanctions your administration placed on Russia carve out the most vital sectors of the Russian economy, namely oil and gas and financial services, and appear designed to ensure a continuous flow of Russian energy to international markets. Your administration's reaction to Russia's aggression allows Russia the time and resources to continue its brutal war.

Additionally, your administration's messaging and posturing has sent an unambiguous signal to Moscow that there are definite red lines that the United States will not cross – some just to appease Russia through self-imposed restrictions. By taking American military involvement off the table early in the crisis and amidst Vladimir Putin's nuclear sabre-rattling, your administration assumed a self-defeating posture that has lingered throughout your response. We encourage you not to act in the tradition of your party to establish redlines without reason or credibility, as evident in President Obama's self-imposed chemical weapons redlines in Syria that were summarily ignored.

The way your administration is handling the Russian invasion of Ukraine has immense repercussions on Taiwan's security. China is taking note of the slow, manipulatable, and self-defeatist posture of the United States in a scenario very similar to the one it envisions vis-à-vis

Taiwan. Tensions across the Taiwan Strait have worsened in the past year, and today Chinese leaders are considering “armed reunification” of Taiwan more seriously than at any time in the last five decades.¹ Your administration’s inability to forestall the Russian invasion and unwillingness to impose truly devastating cost on Russia as its aggression unfolds gives Beijing good reason to believe that the United States would be even more circumspect in its reaction to a Chinese attempt to perform “armed reunification” with Taiwan.

To be sure, Russia’s military failure in Ukraine is teaching Beijing a lesson. From watching Russia, they are learning that they need more firepower, better logistics, more sophisticated influence, and an increased budget for contingencies. From watching the United States, China is learning that deep integration in the global economy can result in a slow and hesitant response from the West, especially the United States, that could create opportunities for them. We must disabuse them of the latter lesson.

Taiwan remaining a self-governing democracy free of Beijing’s domination is vital to the security interests of the United States. Taiwan is the first barrier for China’s potential military expansion into the Pacific. The island occupies an irreplaceable position in sensitive supply chain for information and communication technology, manufacturing 92% of the world’s advanced semiconductor chips.² Finally, the credibility of America’s commitment to maintaining security for its allies and partners matters, especially following your administration’s failures that have led to the collapse of a pro-Western government amid the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and inability to prevent or respond adequately to a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

I commend your initiative in establishing the trilateral security pact AUKUS to counter the expansion of China’s influence in the Pacific. However, even with this positive progress your administration has continued to convey conflicting messages to Beijing about Taiwan, for the most part to placate Beijing. You have personally commented more than once that the United States would come to Taiwan’s defense in case of a Chinese attack, only for your White House staff to walk back your comments afterwards. In your Democracy Summit last December, the White House demonstrated undue deference to China by cutting the video feed during the Taiwanese digital minister’s presentation when she showed Taiwan in a different color to China.³

Against the backdrop of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and in the aftermath of your disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, reaffirming and consolidating US deterrence in the Taiwan Strait is of paramount importance. We ask that you provide strategic clarity by making it crystal clear to Chinese leaders, and the world, that there should not be even the slightest doubt that the United States will bring all elements of our national power to bear in defense of Taiwan’s security without hesitation if called upon.

Respectfully,

¹ <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-06-03/china-taiwan-war-temptation>

² <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3174010/taiwans-premier-calls-chip-protection-laws-be-passed-earliest>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/curious-case-map-disappearing-taiwan-minister-us-democracy-summit-2021-12-12/>



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