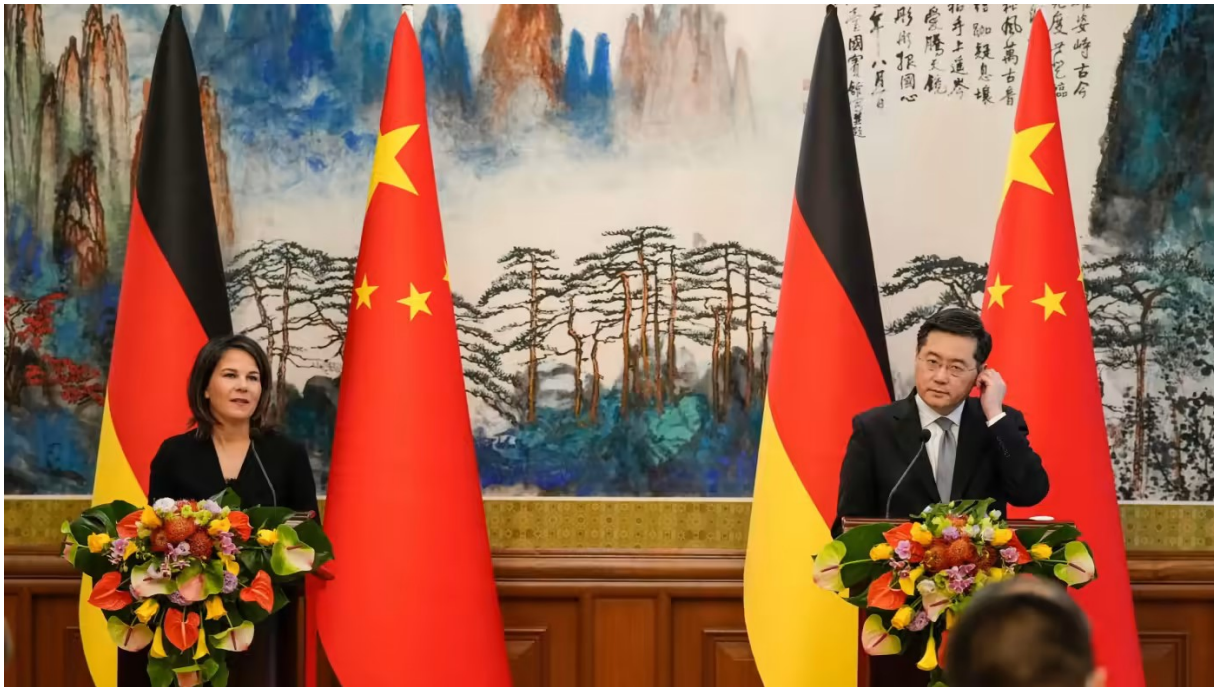


Chinese politics & policy

German foreign minister warns China on Taiwan

Annalena Baerbock strikes different tone to French president Emmanuel Macron



German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock, left, and Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang during a press conference in Beijing on Friday © Pool/AFP/Getty Images

Joe Leahy in Beijing and **Guy Chazan** in Berlin 2 HOURS AGO

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Germany's foreign minister has warned China not to use military force against Taiwan, striking a different tone from French president Emmanuel Macron who has been criticised for saying Europe should distance itself from the issue.

Annalena Baerbock said after a meeting in Beijing with China's foreign minister Qin Gang on Friday that conflicts must be solved peacefully and that Berlin was "concerned" about the situation in [**Taiwan**](#).

"A military escalation in the Taiwan Strait, which 50 per cent of world trade flows through daily, would be a horror scenario for the whole world," said Baerbock, who is in China on a three-day visit, her first since taking office in late 2021.

"Conflicts can only be solved peacefully," she added. "A unilateral, to say nothing of a violent, change of the status quo would be unacceptable to us as Europeans."

Baerbock's tougher stance on Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory and has threatened to take by force, follows [**controversy over a Beijing visit**](#) by Macron, during which he warned that Europe should not get "caught up in crises that are not

ours”.

Some European politicians criticised the timing of Macron’s remarks, which came as tensions between the US and China escalated over Taiwan and at a time when Europe continues to be dependent on American support for Ukraine in the war with Russia.

[Baerbock](#)’s comments were echoed by the EU’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who also sought to convey a tougher message on Taiwan.

The EU’s position on Taiwan had not changed, Borrell said in a speech published on Friday. He had planned to deliver the speech in Beijing this week but his trip was cancelled after he caught Covid-19.

The EU remained committed to its “one China policy”, which recognises Beijing as the sole legal government of China. But on Taiwan, “any attempt to change the status quo by force would be unacceptable”, he said.

Qin acknowledged the rise in tensions around Taiwan, but blamed “separatists of the island’s independence movement”, who were receiving “help and support from foreign powers”. “That is the basic root of the trouble in the Strait [of Taiwan],” he said.

Baerbock also urged China to persuade Russia to end the war in Ukraine, saying Chinese president Xi Jinping’s [recent trip to Moscow](#) had shown that no other country had more influence on Russia. “The decision as to how it uses this influence directly affects Europe’s core interests,” she said.

She said that just as China had successfully worked to reconcile Saudi Arabia and Iran, the west was hoping Beijing could play a similar role to end the war in Ukraine, adding that it had a “special responsibility” to do so as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Baerbock noted China’s recent [peace initiative for Ukraine](#). “But I have to say openly that I wonder why, as part of its positioning, China has yet to demand of the Russian aggressor that it stop the war,” she said. “We all know that President [Vladimir] Putin can do that any time.”

She also warned China not to send weapons to Russia. In a joint press conference, Qin responded that China “is not supplying any weapons to the parties in the conflict and won’t do so in the future, either”.

He said Beijing had strict controls over the export of so-called dual-use products that

have both a civilian and military application. Qin said China's role in Ukraine was to "promote reconciliation" and try to initiate peace talks. "We will not pour oil into the fire," he said.

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