

Chinese politics & policy

China warns west against 'adding fuel to fire' in Ukraine war

Beijing calls for peace talks ahead of Wang Yi visit to Moscow as it outlines its own rival security order



China's foreign minister Qin Gang called for countries to stop suggesting that the war in Ukraine could be a precursor to an invasion of Taiwan by Beijing © Greg Baker/AFP/Getty Images

Joe Leahy in Beijing and **Kathrin Hille** in Taipei 8 HOURS AGO

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China has warned western countries against “adding fuel to the fire” in Ukraine and reiterated calls for peace talks ahead of an expected visit to Moscow by Beijing’s most senior diplomat Wang Yi.

The comments, from foreign minister Qin Gang, came as Beijing moved to institutionalise its so-called Global Security Initiative, a proposed alternative international defence framework that observers see as a challenge to the US-led order.

“We will continue to push for talks and provide [China](#)’s wisdom for [finding] a political solution to the Ukraine crisis,” Qin told a seminar in Beijing on Tuesday.

He also warned “relevant countries” against shifting the blame on to China for [the war](#) and suggesting “today Ukraine, tomorrow Taiwan” — a reference to concerns that Beijing might invade its smaller neighbour, over which it claims sovereignty.

The diplomatic push by China, which has announced that it will release its own peace plan for Ukraine to mark the first anniversary of the conflict on Friday, has been

received with deep scepticism in the west.

US secretary of state Antony Blinken warned that China was strongly [considering supplying Russia with arms](#) after meeting Wang at the Munich Security Conference at the weekend. Beijing countered that Washington was the one fuelling the war by providing Ukraine with weapons.

China's leader Xi Jinping has not called Ukraine's president Volodymyr Zelenskyy since Russia's full-scale invasion began, despite speaking to Vladimir Putin multiple times and touting a "no limits" partnership between Moscow and Beijing.

Russian state-owned news agency Tass reported that Wang would arrive in Moscow on Tuesday afternoon. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that Putin might meet the Chinese diplomat.

Drew Thompson, a China expert at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, said China's peace plan would probably aim to maintain the status quo, repeating warnings against [the use of nuclear weapons](#) while avoiding admonishing Moscow.

"I don't think it will be particularly impactful but at the same time it's not going to empower Vladimir Putin," Thompson said.

Beijing also released a paper on the [previously announced Global Security Initiative](#), a forum that analysts believe could be intended to rival the western-led Munich grouping.

Beijing "encourages the founding of a global security forum to provide a new platform for governments, international organisations, think-tanks [. . .] to participate in global security governance", it said in a concept paper on the initiative, which Xi launched in April last year.

The paper also proposed "holding high-level [meetings] on the Global Security Initiative to strengthen policy communication in the field of security, promote intergovernmental dialogue and co-operation, and further foster synergy in the international community to address security challenges".

Analysts said that while the document mainly rehashed principles that had been part of China's foreign policy for years, the push for regular conferences and government consultations was a novel development.

"It should be like the Munich Security Conference, but that is organised by the west,

and China would like to have its own,” said Zhang Guihong, a professor and executive director of the UN Studies Centre at Fudan University in Shanghai.

Zhang added that Beijing was likely to start organising regular meetings of foreign, defence and interior ministers from countries affiliated with the GSI.

This would emulate the format of China’s [Global Development Initiative](#) — which is intended to help developing countries with poverty alleviation and other issues — and regional groupings created by Beijing such as a co-operation forum with African nations.

“Most importantly, this will be with developing countries from our neighbouring region, from Latin America and Africa,” Zhang said.

Additional reporting by William Langley in Hong Kong and Maiqi Ding in Beijing

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