

US-China relations

US prepared to address 'aggressiveness' of Chinese military

Warning comes after Beijing conducted two 'unsafe' intercepts of American forces



The US Navy on Sunday released a video of what it described as an 'unsafe interaction' in the Taiwan Strait, where a Chinese warship passed in front of a US destroyer © US Navy/AFP/Getty Images

Felicia Schwartz in Washington 9 HOURS AGO

The US is prepared to address China's "increasing level of aggressiveness" in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea after Beijing conducted two "unsafe" intercepts in recent days, a senior official said on Monday.

The warning from John Kirby, National Security Council spokesperson, underscores increasing US alarm over dangerous interactions between US and Chinese forces in international air and sea lanes. It comes as Beijing has rebuffed American attempts to re-establish military communications between the countries.

Kirby said the intercepts were "part and parcel" of an "increasing level of aggressiveness" by [China](#)'s People's Liberation Army, particularly in the area around the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

"We're prepared to address it," Kirby added, describing China's actions in recent days as "unacceptable".

"They have happened with more frequency than we'd like," he said of the intercepts. "Not all of them are unsafe and unprofessional, but these two were."

Kirby's comments came after the US Navy on Sunday released a video of what it described as an "unsafe interaction" in the Taiwan Strait, where a Chinese warship

described as an "unprovoked" interception in the Taiwan Strait, where a Chinese fighter jet passed in front of a US destroyer. Last week, the Pentagon accused a Chinese fighter jet of an "[unnecessarily aggressive manoeuvre](#)" over the South China Sea.

China has [warned western militaries](#) to stay out of waters and airspace near its borders if they want to avoid dangerous run-ins with the PLA.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Tuesday accused the US of "bullying" around China's territorial airspace and waters, saying Washington's "provocations" were "the root cause of air and water security issues".



A Chinese fighter jet flies in front of a US Air Force plane © US Department of Defense Handout/Reuters

Kirby said on Monday that such episodes could lead to miscalculation and urged Beijing to participate in US efforts to restart military talks. He added the US was operating in international territory and would continue to do so where permitted by law.

Two senior US officials — assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs Daniel Kritenbrink and National Security Council senior director for China and Taiwan affairs Sarah Beran — met Chinese officials in Beijing on Monday as part of Washington's efforts to step up engagements to manage the relationship between the powers.

The officials raised concerns about the intercepts and also discussed efforts to improve communication between Beijing and Washington.

"The two sides had candid and productive discussions as part of ongoing efforts to

maintain open lines of communication and build on recent high-level diplomacy between the two countries,” the state department said.

CIA director Bill Burns travelled to China last month to try to stabilise the fraying diplomatic ties, the Financial Times [reported last week](#).

Meanwhile, the Biden administration has been trying to reschedule a trip to Beijing that secretary of state Antony Blinken abruptly cancelled after China sent an alleged spy balloon over the US earlier this year. Beijing has refused to allow the trip to go ahead.

Chinese defence minister Li Shangfu also declined to meet US defence secretary Lloyd Austin at a conference in Singapore this past weekend because Washington has refused to lift sanctions on him, although the pair shook hands and exchanged pleasantries during a dinner at the event.

In his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Austin criticised China for the recent air incidents.

Additional reporting by Maiqi Ding in Beijing

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