

US-China relations

China warns of potential conflict with US over containment strategy

Foreign minister Qin Gang calls on Washington to commit to 'guardrails' around Taiwan



China's foreign minister Qin Gang accused the US of hypocrisy over its support for Ukraine while demanding that Beijing not provide Russia with weapons © Lintao Zhang/Getty Images

Kathrin Hille in Taipei 10 HOURS AGO

China's foreign minister has warned of a clash with the US unless Washington ceases its attempts to contain Beijing, highlighting the Chinese Communist party's concerns over escalating tension between the rival superpowers.

"If the US doesn't hit the brakes and continues to barrel down the wrong track, no amount of guardrails can prevent the carriage from derailing and crashing, and there will surely be conflict and confrontation," Qin Gang said on Tuesday.

The foreign minister's remarks, made at a press conference during the annual session of [China](#)'s rubber-stamp legislature, followed a highly unusual direct criticism of the US by China's leader Xi Jinping.

"Western countries, led by the US, are implementing all-round containment, encirclement and suppression against us," Xi told delegates of China's top political advisory body on Monday, according to state media. While Xi frequently uses nationalist rhetoric, he rarely mentions the US directly in criticising Washington's policies.

The statements from Xi and his top diplomat came after the US last month [shot down a Chinese high-altitude balloon](#) that had intruded into its airspace, an episode that

foiled the latest bilateral attempt to stabilise relations.

US and Chinese interests collide on a wide range of issues including Taiwan, Russia's [assault on Ukraine](#) and global technology leadership.

Growing concerns in Washington that Beijing could pose the biggest threat to US security have driven efforts to counter its influence, including export controls and sanctions targeting Chinese technology companies, strengthening ties with allies in the Indo-Pacific region and stronger support for Taiwan.

In a sign of how dangerous Beijing's and Washington's conflicting positions have become for Taiwan, the country's president Tsai Ing-wen has convinced US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy [to meet her in the US](#) instead of hosting him in Taipei over fears that such a visit could trigger military retaliation from Beijing.

Referring to Washington's stated desire to prevent a conflict, Qin said the most important "guardrails" were for Washington to recommit to the "essence" of previous joint communiqués on Taiwan — a body of partly ambiguous diplomatic language that the two sides have interpreted in different ways for decades.

"Why talk big about respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity on the Ukraine question but then not respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity in the question of China's Taiwan?" he said. "Why on the one hand demand China not provide weapons to Russia, but on the other hand sell weapons to Taiwan in long-term violation of [joint communiqués]?"

Beijing claims Taiwan as its territory, though it has never ruled the country, which it has threatened to take by force if Taipei refuses to submit to its control.

In a snub of Washington's warnings [not to provide weapons or munitions to Moscow](#), Qin praised China's close partnership with Russia for blazing a trail of trust between major powers and creating a "model" for international relations.

"With China and Russia joining hands, the move towards a multipolar world and more democratic international system has gained momentum and global strategic balance and stability have gained a guarantor," Qin said. "The more turbulent the world is, the more China-Russia relations should keep moving forward."

Invoking exchanges with ordinary Americans during his term as China's ambassador to the US, Qin said: "What should be determining China-US relations is the shared interests, shared responsibilities and the friendship between our peoples and not US domestic politics and hysteric new McCarthyism."

Additional reporting by Maiqi Ding in Beijing

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