

‘Very Concerned’: World on Edge as Nations Warn of Potential Global Conflict

China sent a record number of fighter jets into Taiwanese airspace Monday, setting off alarms across the globe and incurring a warning from Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-Wen of “catastrophic consequences” for the region should the democracy fall. Beijing claims Taiwan as a province and has pledged to take it by force if necessary.

The most recent incursions came just hours after the U.S. State Department urged Beijing to “cease its military, diplomatic, and economic pressure and coercion against Taiwan.”

“The United States is very concerned by the People’s Republic of China’s provocative military activity near Taiwan, which is destabilizing, risks miscalculations and undermines regional peace and stability,” State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement. Japan’s foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi followed the statement from the U.S. and a similar one from Australia by saying he hopes for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between China and Taiwan but that Japan is weighing scenarios in order to make its own preparations.

China’s People’s Liberation Army has sent nearly 150 aircraft into Taiwan’s defense zone in all, with Monday’s incursion marking the fourth straight day of such violations of Taiwanese airspace, per BBC News, which added that “Some analysts say the flights could be seen as a warning to Taiwan’s president ahead of the island’s national day.”

Taiwan’s ministry of defense said it detected at least 52 flights from Beijing during daylight hours Monday: 36 fighter jets and 12 H-6 bombers along with two transport and two

surveillance aircraft. It later reported another four fighter jets crossing into the zone after dark, per The Guardian.

In an essay for *Foreign Affairs* magazine, Tsai noted: “As countries increasingly recognize the threat that the Chinese Communist Party poses, they should understand the value of working with Taiwan. And they should remember that if Taiwan were to fall, the consequences would be catastrophic for regional peace and the democratic alliance system. It would signal that in today’s global contest of values, authoritarianism has the upper hand over democracy.”

But Tsai also issued a stern warning: “Taiwan does not seek military confrontation. It hopes for peaceful, stable, predictable, and mutually beneficial coexistence with its neighbors. But if its democracy and way of life are threatened, Taiwan will do whatever it takes to defend itself.”

Washington-based analyst Gerald C. Brown said the timing of the activity to coincide with Taiwan’s national day was not surprising, but the size of the missions “caught people off guard.” The spokesperson for China’s ministry of foreign affairs, Hua Chunying, condemned the comments by the U.S. on the incursions, stating China would “resolutely crush all attempts at Taiwan independence.” {eo}

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