
China threatens to sever ties with any US firm linked to selling weapons to Taiwan

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The Chinese foreign ministry has warned that American firms would be banned from doing business in China if they are involved in any arms deals with Taiwan.

"In order to safeguard national interests, China will impose sanctions on US companies involved in arms sales to Taiwan," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters on Monday. *"The Chinese government and Chinese companies will not cooperate and do business with these US firms,"* he added.

Answering reporters' questions, Geng said the details about such companies and the timeline of any penalties against them will not be disclosed at present.

Beijing warned Washington last week *"not to play with fire"* and to cancel a planned \$2.2 billion arms deal with Taiwan, accusing the US of interfering in China's domestic affairs.

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The Pentagon is looking to make a major sale of weapons to Taiwan, including 108 M1A2T Abrams tanks and 250 Stinger missiles, as well as mounted machine guns and ammunition.

The planned arms sale would violate Beijing's 'One China' principle, which views Taiwan as an integral part of China.

Relations between Beijing and Taipei have deteriorated since Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-

wen, a member of the island's pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, took office in May 2016. China suspects her of seeking formal independence with support from Washington.

The Taiwanese leader, who arrived in New York City on Friday on a two-night "transit" stop on her way to visit four Caribbean nations, dismissed the Chinese criticism of both her visit and the arms deal.

"We don't need our neighbor to make irresponsible remarks," she told reporters, according to Taiwan's official Central News Agency.

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Tsai has also rejected Chinese pressure to reunite Taiwan and China under the "one-country, two-systems" framework that governs Hong Kong.

She said: "Hong Kong's experience under 'one country, two systems' has shown the world once and for all that authoritarianism and democracy cannot coexist."

Beijing has urged Washington to abide by the 'one China principle' and to *"not allow Tsai Ing-wen's stopover, cease official exchanges with Taiwan, and refrain from providing any platform for separatist Taiwan independence forces."*
