

Reckless Anti-China Escalation: Taiwan Trade Talks the Latest Front in Washington's Anti-China Offensive

By [Liberation](#)

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The Biden administration's latest reckless anti-China escalation is playing out on the economic front with newly-unveiled negotiations for a trade deal with Taiwan. The Chinese government said today that it "firmly opposes" the talks, which were announced yesterday by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

The negotiations aim to reach agreements in key areas to boost the volume of trade between the two countries by minimizing regulations and making it more difficult to do business with China. The official announcement from the U.S. Trade Representative stated that the two sides would seek accord on "ways to address distortive practices of state-owned enterprises and non-market policies and practices." This is clearly a reference to China, whose state-owned enterprises play a key economic role and which pursues socialist policies that could broadly be defined as "non-market". Despite the extremely tense political situation, China is still Taiwan's most important trading partner - something the U.S. government and secessionist Taiwanese leaders want to change.

This new economic initiative comes just two weeks after Speaker of the House [Nancy Pelosi's high-profile visit](#), a profoundly provocative move that raised the specter of all-out war. Pelosi is the most senior U.S. political leader to visit the island in decades, a level of recognition that China considers a clear signal to those who want to permanently sever Taiwan from the mainland. The Biden administration made Pelosi's visit possible through a major show of naval and air power aimed at ensuring her safe arrival and departure.

The Chinese armed forces held large-scale military drills in the waters and airspace surrounding Taiwan in response to Pelosi's trip. But even still, another delegation of U.S. politicians led by **Senator Ed Markey** visited Taiwan this week. The political elite in the United States remains determined to move even further down the path towards catastrophic

confrontation between the two major world powers.

China is right to view Taiwan as part of its sovereign territory. Taiwan only has a separate government because the forces of dictator Chiang Kai-Shek retreated to the island after being defeated in 1949 in the Chinese Civil War, and massive U.S. military and political support allowed him to consolidate a lasting regime on the island. Taiwan is not ethnically distinct from the rest of China, its population speaks Chinese, and the Taiwanese government calls itself the “Republic of China”. The conflict is purely about politics – with the Taiwanese authorities representing the capitalist, pro-western forces that were long ago defeated in the civil war. This division of their homeland is of course considered to be unacceptable by China.

The new trade talks with the United States take aim at one of the only remaining avenues of positive interaction between Taiwan and the mainland. While Taiwan and the rest of China are geopolitically at odds, the two became increasingly commercially connected over the years as China emerged as an economic powerhouse. Trade between the two totaled over \$328 billion in 2021 – double what it was in 2011. Taiwan gets 21 percent of its imports from the mainland, and 56 percent of its exports go to the mainland. Deepening economic ties with the United States, and taking action against “non-market policies”, could reduce this proportion and remove one of the few remaining barriers to escalation.

Authorities in Beijing are concerned that any agreement that comes out of these negotiations could serve as a stepping stone towards a full-scale free trade agreement between Taiwan and the United States. Free trade agreements in general are aimed at protecting the interests of big business at the expense of the working class in all of the countries involved. Moreover, a U.S.-Taiwan FTA could be seen as essentially de facto recognition of Taiwan as an independent country – something that has the potential to trigger a war.

The Biden administration and the U.S. ruling class as a whole is addicted to escalation as it pursues its dangerous “new Cold War” policy against China. The people of the world need to force them to change course before it’s too late.

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