

US Hosting ‘Open Secret’ Military Exercises with Taiwan

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It’s certainly not breaking news that [the United States is trying to prevent China from restoring full sovereignty over all of its territories](#), primarily Taiwan. The Chinese breakaway island province is not only of historical, legal and national value, but also of prime strategic importance. When in the hands of Beijing’s enemies, Taiwan is a major security hurdle, as it exposes the entire southeast China’s “soft underbelly”, particularly the neighboring province of Fujian. This doesn’t only slow down (or even prevent) normal economic development, but it also requires the mobilization of significant resources used by the military to ensure the security of the crucial area.

On the other hand, if Beijing restores its full sovereignty over the island, be it in a similar manner to Hong Kong (or Macao), or perhaps within a new, even more lax framework [that eliminates the threat posed by the US](#), Taiwan would become a significant springboard for pushing the belligerent thalassocracy’s forward-deployed forces that are jeopardizing China’s interests in the Asia-Pacific. Obviously, Washington DC is trying everything in its power (short of direct war, for now, at least) to prevent this scenario, which is why it’s pushing Taipei to a sort of crawling confrontation with mainland China or at the very least trying to prevent the rapprochement between the two.

Military involvement of the US is a major component of this “China containment” strategy, as the Pentagon planners like to call it. This includes not only [the arming of Beijing’s breakaway island province](#), but also providing training to its forces. This was usually done in Taiwan, but since China has warned repeatedly that it will not tolerate the presence of any major US forces (or those of its other vassals and satellite states), Washington DC found a workaround. Namely, according to various regional sources, Taiwanese troops attended somewhat rare joint military exercises with their US counterparts this summer. It’s important to note these were held on American soil.

[On September 4, the Taipei Times reported](#) that the drills were held in Michigan last month, in the August 5-19 timeframe, involving approximately 7000 soldiers from both sides. Although most American troops taking part in the exercise (dubbed “Northern Strike”) were members of the Michigan National Guard, some of them were unnamed units under the direct command of the Pentagon. This indicates that the troops in question must have been special forces used in various covert operations. For its part, Taipei sent the entire joint battalion of its 333rd Infantry Brigade. Both sides have indicated that such military drills will be held in the future on a more regular basis.

According to Taipei Times, [which in turn cited Sankei Shimbun](#), a Japanese news source, the reason why the US hosted Taiwanese troops is that it’s supposedly “wary of provoking China”. This is allegedly because “the Michigan exercises were led by the National Guard — a strategic reserve force that is normally overseen by US state governments — instead of the US Armed Forces”. However, according to their own inadvertent admission, this was a bogus attempt of presenting the exercise as not involving the US federal troops, because the drills were directly overseen and commanded by the Pentagon. Normally, National Guard units are under the control of their respective states.

In other words, Washington DC’s supposed attempt to not anger Beijing is nothing but a mere formality. The source further added a rather unfortunate analogy by comparing the drills to previous US National Guard exercises with the Kiev regime forces held on a regular basis since 2014. For its part, there’s very little value in these formal American military distinctions, particularly as the Pentagon is directly involved. It also marks a significant shift in the way the US is using its Asia-Pacific vassals. The adoption of the so-called “Ukrainian model” indicates that Taipei is also expected to fight “to the last Taiwanese” (TTLT). [This is part of America’s revised strategic posturing that refocuses on its regional satellite states.](#)

Taipei Times also admitted that the exercise isn’t exactly a new development and that the preparations for it were an “open secret”, pointing out that “as early as 2021 foreign media have reported on joint military training between Taiwan and the US at Camp Grayling in Michigan”. The [Institute of National Defense and Security Research fellow Su Tzu-yun](#) was quoted as the source of this claim, further adding that when asked in July whether the US National Guard helped train Taiwanese troops, US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Ely Ratner stated that “discussions about the issue should be kept behind closed doors”. And indeed, American and Taiwanese officials are yet to comment on the exercises.

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