

## Taiwan's Top Diplomat Says U.S. Aid to Ukraine Is Critical for Deterring China

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Joseph Wu, the foreign minister of Taiwan, said on Thursday that a halt in U.S. arms shipments to Ukraine would embolden China in its aggressions against Taiwan and fuel propaganda from Beijing that the United States is an unreliable partner.

“When people ask us whether it is OK for the United States to abandon Ukraine, the answer is no, because the world is operating not in a black-and-white way, or if you only look at one theater at a time,” he said. “The world is interconnected.”

If Russia is able to occupy more of Ukraine and claim victory, he added, “it would be seen as a victory of authoritarian states because Russia, China, North Korea and Iran are now linked together.”

Mr. Wu’s comments, made in a wide-ranging hourlong interview in Taipei, come as the Biden administration tries to get Congress to pass a supplemental funding package that would give \$60 billion of aid to Ukraine.

Many House Republicans are staunchly opposed to giving more aid to Ukraine, adopting the “America First” posture embraced by former President Donald J. Trump, a pro-Russia candidate who has pressed them to reject the package. For months they claimed they would be willing to consider providing more assistance for Kyiv if the Biden administration imposed severe immigration restrictions at the United States border with Mexico. But at Mr. Trump’s urging, they balked at a funding package that would have done that, calling the border measures too weak.

The package also includes \$8 billion of aid to counter China in the Asia-Pacific region, \$1.9 billion of which would refill stocks of U.S. weapons sent to Taiwan. And it includes \$14.1 billion of military aid to Israel.

Some Republican lawmakers contend that China is a bigger threat than Russia and that the funding proposed for Ukraine should go toward countering China. But other Republican officials in Congress and many Democrats make the same argument as Mr. Wu: that Taiwan’s security is linked to that of Ukraine, because China will see weakness on the part of the United States — and a greater chance of success in a potential invasion of Taiwan — if Ukraine is defeated.

Chinese leaders have said for decades that Taiwan, a de facto independent island, must be brought under the rule of the Communist Party, by force if necessary. Xi Jinping, China’s leader, has continued to promote that position.

The U.S. and Taiwanese governments have been trying to deter China from notions of invading Taiwan, including through military buildup in the region and bolstering alliances with other democratic nations.

If the United States abandons Ukraine, Mr. Wu said, China will “take it as a hint” that if it can keep up sustained action against Taiwan, “the United States is going to back off, the United States and its allies are going to back off.” The thinking among Chinese officials would be this, he said: “OK, since Russia could do that, we can do that as well.”

“So the U.S. determination in providing support to those countries suffering from authoritarian aggression is very important,” Mr. Wu said.

After U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 2021, China pushed propaganda through traditional state-run media and social media that “the U.S. commitment to anything is not firm,” Mr. Wu said.

China has also spread disinformation stressing Russian narratives of the war, Mr. Wu said, including the idea that the expansion of NATO forced President Vladimir V. Putin to attack Ukraine, and that the United States is ultimately not committed to supporting Ukraine.

On the eve of Russia’s invasion in February 2022, Mr. Putin visited Mr. Xi in Beijing, and their two governments announced a “no limits” partnership.

Mr. Wu said some Central and Eastern European nations seeking to forge anti-authoritarian partnerships had strengthened their relations with Taiwan during the war.

His comments on the need for the United States to keep supporting Taiwan echo those of other senior Taiwanese officials. In May 2023, Bi-khim Hsiao, then Taiwan’s de facto ambassador to the United States and now the incoming vice president, made similar arguments to reporters in Washington.

And in February, Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, Democrat of Illinois, said during a visit of American lawmakers to Taiwan that the current president, Tsai Ing-wen, and the president-elect, Lai Ching-te, made clear to the lawmakers that “if for some reason the Ukrainians do not prevail, that will only encourage hostilities against Taiwan.”