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China mulls measures against Taiwan: Sources

12/31/2016



Taiwan acquired the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missile system as part of a \$6.5 billion arms sale in 2008.

Senior Chinese military officers say the country's army is considering strong measures to prevent Taiwan from moving toward independence as warming relations between the self-ruled island and the US raise concerns in Beijing.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the officers said on Saturday that the issue of Taiwan had turned into a hot topic within the upper echelons of China's People's Liberation Army over the past few weeks.

One of China's possible measures was conducting military exercises near Taiwan while another was adopting a series of economic measures against the island, they said.

Earlier this month, a direct contact by phone between US President-elect Donald Trump and Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen sparked China's protests.

The 10-minute telephone call also cast doubt on the new US administration's commitment to the "One China" policy that regards Taiwan as part of China.

Washington cut formal diplomatic ties with Taipei in 1979 and recognized Beijing as the sole government of "One China."

"If Trump challenges 'One China' after becoming president, this would cross our red line," said another informed Chinese source.

Meanwhile, an unidentified official at the Chinese Defense Ministry's news department said that Beijing's 2005 Anti-Secession Law authorizes the use of force against Taiwan if it formally secedes.

In response to a question regarding China's possible measures, Taiwan's Defense Ministry spokesman Chen Chung-shi said, "We are fully prepared, and plan for the worst while preparing for the best."

Taiwan won't give in to China threats: Tsai

In another development on Saturday, the Taiwanese leader stressed in her end-of-year address that Taipei will not succumb to pressure.

Tsai said, "We won't bend to pressure yet we also won't return to the old path of confrontation."

She further called on China to engage in "calm and rational" talks in a bid to find a "reasonable" solution to the dispute.

The Taiwanese leader is scheduled to transit through the US in her January trip to Central America, but Beijing has asked Washington to block Tsai's stopovers in Houston and San Francisco.

China and Taiwan are physically separated by the Taiwan Strait in the Western Pacific Ocean. They split politically following the 1927-1950 Chinese Civil War and there have been no formal cross-strait diplomatic relations ever since.