

US military making plans should Pelosi visit Taipei

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 28 July 2022 05:24 -



US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi talks with reporters at the Capitol in Washington on Thursday last week.

Photo: AP

US officials said they have little fear that China would attack US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's plane if she flies to Taiwan.

However, Pelosi would be entering one of the world's hottest spots, where a mishap, misstep or misunderstanding could endanger her safety, so the Pentagon is developing plans for any contingency.

The officials said that if Pelosi travels to Taiwan — still an uncertainty — the military would increase its movement of forces and assets in the Indo-Pacific region.

They declined to provide details, but said that fighter jets, ships, surveillance assets and other military systems would likely be used to provide overlapping rings of protection for her flight to Taiwan and any time on the ground there.

Any foreign travel by a senior US leader requires additional security, but officials this week said that a visit to Taiwan by Pelosi — she would be the highest-ranking US elected official to visit Taiwan since 1997 — would go beyond the usual safety precautions for trips to less risky destinations.

Asked about planned military steps to protect Pelosi in the event of a visit, US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Mark Milley yesterday said that discussion of any specific travel is premature, but added: "If there's a decision made that Speaker Pelosi or anyone else is going to travel and they asked for military support, we will do what is necessary to ensure a safe conduct of their visit. And I'll just leave it at that."

US military making plans should Pelosi visit Taipei

Written by Taipei Times

Thursday, 28 July 2022 05:24 -

The trip is being considered at a time when China has escalated what the US and its allies in the Pacific describe as risky one-on-one confrontations with other militaries to assert its sweeping territorial claims. The incidents have included dangerously close flybys that force other pilots to swerve to avoid collisions, or harassment or obstruction of air and ship crews, including with blinding lasers or water cannons.

Dozens of such maneuvers have occurred this year alone, US Assistant Secretary of Defense Ely Ratner said on Tuesday at a South China Sea forum by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The US officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, described the need to create buffer zones around the speaker and her plane. The US already has substantial forces spread across the region, so any increased security could largely be handled by assets already in place.

The military would also have to be prepared for any incident — even an accident either in the air or on the ground. They said the US would need to have rescue capabilities nearby and suggested that could include helicopters on ships already in the area.

Pelosi has not publicly confirmed any new plans for a trip to Taiwan. She was coming in April, but she postponed the trip after testing positive for COVID-19.

US officials have said the administration doubts that China would take direct action against Pelosi herself or try to sabotage the visit.

However, they do not rule out that China could escalate provocative overflights of military aircraft in or near Taiwanese airspace and naval patrols in the Taiwan Strait should the trip take place.

Moreover, they do not preclude Chinese actions elsewhere in the region as a show of strength.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2022/07/28](#)