

China summons US envoy; strongly protests arms sales to Taiwan

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Beijing: China today said it had summoned US Ambassador to strongly protest America's massive USD 1.83 billion weapons sales, including two warships, to Taiwan and warned that it will take "new measures" including sanctions against the US firms involved in such business.

Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang yesterday summoned Kaye Lee, charge d'affaires of the US embassy in China, and conveyed the protest to the US over its arms sale to Taiwan.

Zheng made the statement shortly after the US administration announced a USD 1.83-billion arms sale package for Taiwan to beef up its defences.

The agreement includes two frigates, anti-tank missiles, TOW 2B anti-tank missiles, AAV-7 Amphibious Assault Vehicles and a range of other military equipment.

"Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. China strongly opposes the US arms sale to Taiwan," Zheng said.

The arms sale severely goes against international law and the basic norms of international relations, severely goes against the principles in the three China-US joint communiques and severely harms China's sovereignty and security interests, he said.

"To safeguard our national interests, China has decided to take necessary measures, including imposing sanctions against the companies involved in the arms sale," Zheng said.

"No one can shake the firm will of the Chinese government and people to defend their national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to oppose foreign interference," Zheng told the US envoy.

China urges the US to abide by the clear commitment it has made in the three joint communiques, revoke the arms sale plan, and stop military contact with Taiwan, so as to avoid bringing further damage to China-US relations and bilateral cooperation in major areas, Zheng said.

China routinely protests about arms sales to Taiwan (rpt) Taiwan. This is the first time it announced plans to impose sanctions on American firms.

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