



Biden's comment on Taiwan clarified by administration official

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President Biden's recent comments during a televised interview with ABC News raised questions if the U.S.'s position of "strategic ambiguity" has changed when it comes to Taiwan.

The president was interviewed by ABC News and was asked about how other countries—in particular Taiwan—should view the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan. Many asked if the U.S. could be viewed as a reliable ally.

Reuters pointed out that Biden said in response, "We have made—kept every commitment. We made a sacred commitment to Article 5 that if, in fact, anyone were to invade or take action against our NATO allies, we would respond. Same with Japan, same with South Korea, same with Taiwan. It's not even comparable to talk about."

The comment was seen by some as a change in posture by the U.S. on the issue, but a senior official from the Biden administration told Reuters that the policy has "not changed." Analysts told the outlet it appeared Biden had misspoken. The White House did not immediately respond to an after-hours email from Fox News.

Last month, President Xi Jinping marked his Communist Party's 100th anniversary from Tiananmen Square and struck a bellicose tone, reconfirming China's 'historic mission' to control Taiwan while warning other countries not to interfere.

Biden has made it clear that China is the biggest geopolitical challenge for the U.S. In February, he announced the formation of a Defense Department China Task Force to assess the future challenge from China; earlier this month, G7 member states agreed to an initiative aimed at challenging China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Taiwan and China separated amid civil war in 1949 and China says it is determined to bring the island under its control by force if necessary. The U.S. switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, but is legally required to ensure Taiwan can defend itself and the self-governing democratic island enjoys strong bipartisan support in Washington.

Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, wrote in April that White House Spokeswoman Jen Psaki tried to describe what that means.

"Our position on Taiwan remains clear. We will stand with friends and allies to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Indo-Pacific region," she said.

He responded, "Whatever that means."

He continued, "Taiwanese officials have told me that they expect American support even if their behavior, such as a declaration of independence, triggered Chinese action. And Beijing officials consistently express skepticism that Washington would act against its own interest, risking, as one Chinese general put it, Los Angeles for Taipei."