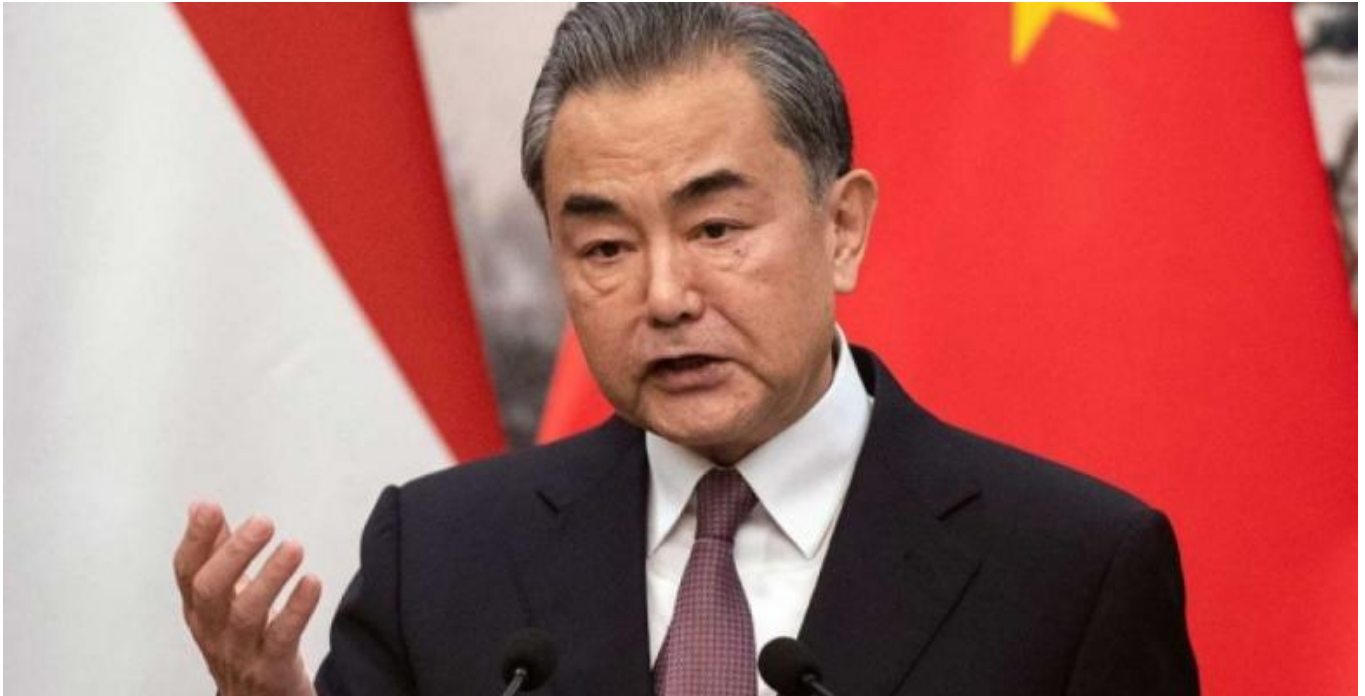


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'Don't play with fire': Beijing warns US over Taiwan

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China strongly warned Washington against shipping weapons to Taiwan, and urged the US to consider the “gravity” of the issue after the Pentagon authorized selling tanks to Taipei.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi blasted Washington for allowing arm sales to Taiwan during his trip to Hungary on Friday.

*“We urge the US to fully recognize the gravity of the Taiwan question... [and] not to play with fire on the question of Taiwan,”* he told reporters via an interpreter, cited by Reuters.

Beijing considers Taiwan its territory and opposes its recognition as an independent country. The US, which does not formally recognize Taiwan in accordance with the ‘one-China principle’, had made diplomatic overtures towards the island nation under President Donald Trump. In 2016, he became the first US leader in more than 30 years to speak over the phone with his Taiwanese counterpart, Tsai Ing-wen. The move prompted a protest by Beijing.

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Earlier this week, the Pentagon announced that it had authorized the sale of M1A2T Abrams tanks and FIM-92 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to Taiwan. China heavily criticized this decision, saying it undermines the ‘one-China principle’, and demanded to *“immediately cancel”* the potential sale.

The row over Taiwan adds to the tensions between the US and China, sparked by the ongoing

trade war.

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