

China stages big military incursion, Taiwan says

China is staging one of its biggest incursions so far in the seas and skies around Taiwan, according to data from the island's defence ministry.

It said that 71 Chinese air force planes, including fighter jets and drones, had entered Taiwan's so-called air defence identification zone.

Taiwan is self-ruled – but China sees it as a breakaway province with which it will eventually reunite.

Tensions between the two sides have steadily increased in recent months.

In August, Beijing was enraged by a visit to the island by US Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, the most senior US politician to visit Taiwan in 25 years.

China responded to that visit by holding what was then its biggest-ever military exercises in the seas around Taiwan, and also blocked some trade with the island.

Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu condemned China's action then as highly provocative. China has never said it would not use force to bring Taiwan under its control.

On Monday, Taiwan's defence ministry said 43 Chinese aircraft had crossed over the so-called median line, an unofficial buffer separating the two sides inside the air defence zone.

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