# US Delegation Visits Taiwan Amid Growing Tensions with China



A bipartisan delegation led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul arrived in Taiwan on Sunday, shortly after the island's new president, Lai Ching-te, was inaugurated. The delegation consists of Representatives Young Kim, Joe Wilson, Jimmy Panetta, Andy Barr, and Chrissy Houlahan. Their visit occurs against the backdrop of recent Chinese military drills around Taiwan, initiated by Beijing as a response to Lai's inauguration speech, which China perceived as a push for Taiwan's formal independence.

The Chinese military exercises, conducted on Thursday and Friday, involved dozens of fighter jets and naval ships maneuvering around the island. In an email to McCaul, a Chinese Embassy official labeled Lai's speech as "the worst speech ever by a Taiwan new leader," warning against the U.S. delegation's visit.

The U.S. delegation aims to discuss regional security, trade, and investment with Taiwanese authorities. McCaul emphasized the importance of continuing U.S. support for Taiwan, asserting the need for maintaining peace across the Taiwan Strait. The visit comes after the U.S. Congress approved approximately $2 billion in military aid for Taiwan to bolster its defenses against potential Chinese aggression.

During his inauguration speech, Lai urged China to cease its military and political threats and to respect Taiwan's sovereignty. China's response included joint military exercises in the Taiwan Strait and around Taiwan-controlled islands, leading Taiwan's military to mobilize in response.

The U.S. State Department expressed deep concerns over China's recent military drills, urging Beijing to act with restraint to avoid escalating tensions in the region.