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Government should be 'prepared to act' on Taiwan, Angus Taylor says

July 15, 2025

– Categories: Defence & Security



Shadow Defence Minister Angus Taylor has called for Australia to strengthen its commitment to Taiwan's security, urging preparedness to act against Chinese aggression as regional tensions escalate. His remarks, made during Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Beijing visit, expose the Labor government's cautious approach and highlight the need for a bolder defence strategy.

Speaking on ABC's 7.30 on 15 July 2025, Taylor stressed the importance of "peace through deterrence," saying, "What I'm saying we should commit to is a joint commitment to the security of Taiwan." His call responds to pressure from the current US administration for Australia to clarify its role in a potential US-China conflict over Taiwan, a key geopolitical flashpoint. Taylor advocated increasing Australia's defence budget from 2.3% to 3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), aligning with US expectations and bolstering the AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) pact. He argued that a clear stance on Taiwan is critical to countering China's growing military presence, including frequent incursions in the Taiwan Strait.

The Labor government, led by Albanese, has prioritised trade with China, reviewing the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) during the Beijing trip. Acting Defence Minister Pat Conroy avoided committing to Taiwan's defence, stating, "We don't engage in hypotheticals." Critics, including Taylor, argue this reflects weakness, especially as China's actions, like its Tasman Sea naval drills, challenge regional stability. Shadow Foreign Minister Michaelia Cash told Sky News, "Labor's focus on trade risks sidelining our citizens' security and values." The detention of Australian writer Yang Hengjun in China further fuels demands for a tougher stance.

Public sentiment, as seen on X, is divided, with users like @SandraEckersley warning of the Coalition's readiness to align with US war efforts. Taiwan's role as a semiconductor hub and part of the "first island chain" makes it vital to Australia's security. Taylor's push for clarity and increased defence spending signals a need for Australia to assert its strategic interests, ensuring deterrence and regional stability.