

China threatens US with unprecedented retaliation after ordering closure of its Consulate in Houston

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Body

Beijing has threatened retaliation after the United States on Wednesday ordered the closure of the Consulate of the Asian country in the city of Houston, Texas, giving its staff a 72-hour time frame to leave the country, Bloomberg reports.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin has called the US government's move **"unprecedented escalation"** amid the growing tension that dominates relations between Washington and Beijing, which have been won over in recent months due to intense trade and technology warfare, disputes over pandemic management, and the new Chinese security law imposed in Hong Kong.

"China strongly condemns this outrageous and unjustified movement that it will sabotage Chinese-American relations," Wenbin said. "We urge the United States to immediately reverse its erroneous decision. Otherwise, China **will adopt the legitimate and necessary responses**," the Chinese diplomat added.

According to the representative of the Chinese Chancellery, the order for the closure of the Chinese Consulate in Texas was issued unilaterally by the US side. If the White House does not "reverse this wrong decision," Beijing will "react with strong countermeasures," Wenbin warned.

In addition, the spokesman reported that Chinese diplomatic missions and their staff have recently been subjected **to bomb and death threats**.

U.S. Order

Wenbin's statements amended hours after the Chinese Chancellery reported that the U.S. government had asked Beijing to close its Consulate General in Houston within 72 hours.

The US State Department's spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus has justified the measure by noting that it aims to **"protect intellectual property and private information"** in the United States.

The Trump Administration's order comes a day after the Justice Department accused two Chinese citizens of working for their government by stealing intellectual property from Western companies in 11 countries, including companies developing a vaccine against the new coronavirus.

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"China's social and military economic push is posing a big problem for the U.S.," he said to RT, political scientist Eduardo Luque Guerrero said. "A great international power is being generated that is questioning America's supremacy," he added.

Smoke at the Chinese Consulate

On Tuesday afternoon, the Houston Police Department reported via Twitter about the appearance of smoke at the consulate of the Asian country, located on Montrose Boulevard in the downtown area. Police indicated that the smoke was observed around 20:20 in the courtyard outside the consulate, adding that their officers were denied access to enter the building.

"It looks like it's burning outdoors in a container inside the Chinese consulate courtyard. It doesn't appear to be a fire, but we haven't been allowed access," said Houston Fire Chief Samuel Pena, quoted by KTRK.

For its part, local channel Fox 26 reported, referring to the police, that the consulate staff was burning documents because at 16:00 next Friday they will be evicted from the building. The Chinese authorities have not commented on this information.

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