

China's decision to fire missiles over Taiwan must be contested, a top US military commander has said.

Seventh Fleet commander Vice Admiral Karl Thomas said otherwise such action by China would become the norm, calling it "a gorilla in the room".

Beijing held military drills around the self-governing island earlier this month but did not confirm if any missiles passed directly over it.

Tensions soared after US politician Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August.

Her high-profile visit infuriated Beijing, which claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory.

Tuesday's comments by Vice Admiral Thomas are significant, Based in Yokosuka, Japan, the Seventh Fleet is the largest forward--deployed fleet in the US Navy, with some 50 to 70 vessels and submarines - and is a key part of its military presence in the region.