

September 15, 2021 · 5:27 AM EDT

Last Updated a year ago

United States

# U.S. top general secretly called China over fears Trump could spark war - report

Reuters

3 minute read



My View



Following



Saved





WASHINGTON, Sept 14 (Reuters) - The top U.S. general secretly called his Chinese counterpart twice over concerns then-President Donald Trump could spark a war with China as his potential election loss loomed and in its aftermath, the Washington Post reported on Tuesday.

U.S. General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called General Li Zuocheng of the People's Liberation Army on Oct. 30, 2020 - four days before the election - and again on Jan. 8, two days after Trump supporters led a deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol, the newspaper reported.

---

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

said.

Register now for **FREE** unlimited access to  
Reuters.com

**Register**

The report was based on "Peril," a new book by journalists Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, which they said relied on interviews with 200 sources and is due to be released next week.

Trump, in a statement, cast doubt in the story, calling it "fabricated." He said if the story was true Milley should be tried for treason. "For the record, I never even thought of attacking China," Trump said.

---

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

---

Milley's office declined to comment.





Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Army General Mark Milley holds a news briefing at Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, U.S., August 18, 2021. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas/File Photo

Republican Senator Marco Rubio called on President Joe Biden, a Democrat, to immediately fire Milley.

"I do not need to tell of you the dangers posed by senior military officers leaking classified information on U.S. military operations, but I will underscore that such subversion undermines the President's ability to negotiate and leverage one of this nation's instruments of national power in his interactions with foreign nations," Rubio said in a letter to Biden.

---

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

Asked about the Washington Post report, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre declined to comment and referred questions to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Defense Department.

Trump, a Republican, named Milley to the top military post in 2018 but began criticizing him, as well as other appointees and former staffers, after losing the presidential election to Biden in November 2020.

The Washington Post reported that Milley was motivated to contact Beijing the second time in part due to a Jan. 8 call with U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who had asked the general what safeguards were in place to prevent an "unstable president" from launching a nuclear strike.

---

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

---

"He's crazy. You know he's crazy," Pelosi told Milley, the newspaper reported, citing a transcript of the call.

According to the cited call transcript, the general replied, "I agree with you on everything."

Reporting by Phil Stewart and Susan Heavey; Editing by Bill Berkrot, Howard Goller and Grant McCool

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

## More from Reuters



Al Qaeda leader killed  
in U.S. strike: Biden

N.Korea's Kim says  
nuclear deterrent is  
ready

Biden 'feeling great'  
after testing negative  
for COVID

Biden says he expects  
call with Xi this week

Biden to talk trade and  
Taiwan with Xi: sources



Subscribe to our daily newsletter to get all the news you need to start your day.

[Sign up](#)

## Sponsored Content

Dianomi 



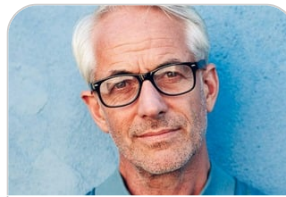
**Do You Have  
Enough To  
Retire? Use  
Our Free  
Retirement  
Calculator.**

Sponsored by  
Personal Capital



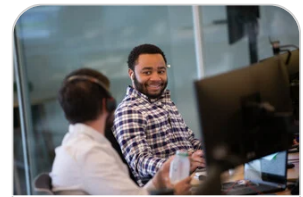
**ETF vs.  
Mutual Fund:  
It Depends on  
Your Strategy**

Sponsored by Charles  
Schwab



**Michigan: The  
List Of The  
Top Financial  
Advisor Firms  
Is Out**

Sponsored by  
smartasset



**When you  
succeed, so  
do we. Find  
your Fidelity.**

Sponsored by Fidelity  
Investments

**United States**

## Biden to speak on 'successful counter-terrorism operation' on Monday evening

United States · August 1, 2022

U.S. President Joe Biden will deliver remarks on Monday evening on what the White House described as a "successful counter-terrorism operation".

---

United States

**U.S. Senate likely to delay bill on gay marriage until September**

August 1, 2022

---

United States

**Manchin secures top Democrats' commitment for troubled pipeline project - media**

August 1, 2022

---

United States

**Texas far-right militia member Reffitt sentenced to 7.25 years for role in U.S. Capitol riot**

August 1, 2022

---

Health

**Michigan court blocks enforcement of 1931 abortion ban by county prosecutors**



## Sponsored Content

Dianomi 



**The 5  
Biggest  
Money  
Secrets  
Most  
Rich  
People  
Won't  
Tell You**

Sponsored  
by The  
Fenny



**73-year-old  
American  
entrepreneur  
issues  
warning**

Sponsored by  
Stansberry  
Research



**What  
Cards Are  
Best for  
Big  
Purchases?  
Find Out.**

Sponsored by  
NerdWallet



**Thinking  
About  
Getting  
a  
Personal  
Loan?  
See Best  
Rates**

Sponsored by  
Lend

## Sponsored Content

Dianomi 



**How  
Secure is  
Your  
Company's  
Data? Sign  
Up for a  
Free Trial  
Now**

Sponsored by  
DataGuard



**Discover  
Checking  
Accounts  
With  
Low Fees  
and  
Higher  
APYs**

Sponsored by  
NerdWallet



**ETF vs.  
Mutual  
Fund: It  
Depends  
on Your  
Strategy**

Sponsored by  
Charles  
Schwab



**Income  
Expert's  
No. 1  
Strategy  
For  
Riding  
Out  
Today's  
Market**

Sponsored by  
The Oxford  
Letter

Sponsored Content



You thought you knew what Fidelity looks like?

Sponsored by Fidelity Investments

Apply today.



Estate Planning Basics [Free Guide]

Sponsored by Fisher Investments



Michigan: The List Of The Top Financial Advisor Firms Is Out

Sponsored by Financial Research Corp



If You Have More Than \$1,000 in Your Bank Account, Make These 5 Moves

Sponsored by The Penny Counter

Latest

Home

Media

Videos

Pictures

Graphics

Browse

World

Business

Legal

Markets

Breakingviews

Technology

Investigations

Lifestyle

- About Reuters [↗](#)
- Careers [↗](#)
- Reuters News Agency [↗](#)
- Brand Attribution Guidelines [↗](#)
- Reuters Leadership [↗](#)
- Reuters Fact Check [↗](#)
- Reuters Diversity Report [↗](#)

Stay Informed

- Download the App [↗](#)
- Newsletters [↗](#)

Information you can trust

Reuters, the news and media division of Thomson Reuters, is the world’s largest multimedia news provider, reaching billions of people worldwide every day. Reuters provides business, financial, national and international news to professionals via desktop terminals, the world's media organizations, industry events and directly to consumers.

Follow Us



Thomson Reuters Products

**Westlaw** [↗](#)

Build the strongest argument relying on authoritative content, attorney-editor expertise, and industry defining technology.

**Onesource** [↗](#)

The most comprehensive solution to manage all your complex and ever-expanding tax and compliance needs.

**Checkpoint** [↗](#)

The industry leader for online information for tax, accounting and finance professionals.

Refinitiv Products

data, news and content in a highly-customised workflow experience on desktop, web and mobile.

of real-time and historical market data and insights from worldwide sources and experts.

individual and entities globally to help uncover hidden risks in business relationships and human networks.

**Advertise With Us** [↗](#)   **Advertising Guidelines** [↗](#)

All quotes delayed a minimum of 15 minutes. See [here](#) for a complete list of exchanges and delays.

**Cookies** [↗](#)   **Terms of Use** [↗](#)   **Privacy** [↗](#)   **Digital Accessibility** [↗](#)   **Corrections** [↗](#)   **Site Feedback** [↗](#)

© 2022 Reuters. All rights reserved













