China issued a warning to Taiwanese Chen Shui-bian today, after the Taiwanese government revealed plans to amend its constitution and rename the island. China, which considers the island a breakaway province, had previously threatened to attack should Taiwan declare independence from the mainland. The US would be forced to defend Taiwan, should the Chinese launch an invasion of the island.

Quote: *"Chen's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is studying constitutional changes to name the island the "Republic of Taiwan", instead of "Republic of China", and redefine its national territory. Party members may introduce legislation next month. "We will never tolerate their seeking de jure independence by amending the constitution," said Li Weiyi, spokesman for China's policy-making Taiwan Affairs Office. "We will closely watch and be on high alert to new developments," he added, calling Chen's plan a "splittist" and "base" act that would threaten peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits and in the Asia-Pacific region.*

Tensions have risen in Taiwan recently, after it was revealed China is increasing its military budget significantly, and has currently deployed over 800 missiles that target Taiwan. China also adopted an anti-secession law in 2005, which would permit the use of force against any province that declares independence. Last year China also held joint military exercises with Russia for the first time, which were carried out to help both nations deal with "the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism".

Source Reuters , Taiwan Headlines