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afgazad@gmail.com

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Andre Damon

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As Russia war rages on, US secretary of state declares China the “most serious long-term challenge”

Despite the eruption of military conflict between the United States and Russia over Ukraine, the central aim of US foreign policy is to cripple, isolate and contain China, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a major policy speech Thursday.

Blinken’s remarks, which have been delayed for months following the eruption of the war in Ukraine, represent a public presentation of the Biden administration’s internal strategy document on China, which declares that Beijing is the central target of the US military.

“Even as President Putin’s war continues, we will remain focused on the most serious long-term challenge to the international order—and that’s posed by the People’s Republic of China,” Blinken said.

He continued, “China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it.”

“We will defend our interests against any threat,” Blinken said.

Although he did not use the term, Blinken’s statement embraces the framework of economic “decoupling” developed under Trump. Blinken explicitly repudiated the efforts by the Nixon administration to engage with Beijing. The “China of today is very different

from the China of 50 years ago, when President Nixon broke decades of strained relations to become the first US president to visit the country,” he declared.

Blinken continued, “Now, China is a global power with extraordinary reach, influence, and ambition. It’s the second largest economy... it seeks to dominate the technologies and industries of the future. It’s rapidly modernized its military and intends to become a top tier fighting force with global reach. And it has announced its ambition to create a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world’s leading power.”

Blinken’s statement constitutes yet another embrace of the central foreign policy aim of the Trump administration: preparations for conflict with China. Notably, Blinken invoked the racist conspiracy theory developed by the Trump administration, that COVID-19 was a man-made virus, condemning China’s alleged efforts to block an “independent inquiry into COVID’s origin.”

Modeling his tone and delivery on the rhetoric of former President Obama, Blinken repeatedly made completely contradictory assertions with a straight face. Blinken delivered blood-curdling threats, followed immediately by a declaration that the United States is not threatening anyone.

We are not looking for conflict or a new Cold War,” Blinken said, after making clear that Washington views the economic development of China as a threat to its “interests,” and is prepared to “defend our interests against any threat.”

The unstated premise of Blinken’s remarks was the so-called “Wolfowitz doctrine,” the policy conception, first expressed in the 1992 US defense planning guidance, which pledged, “to preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests, and also thereby to strengthen the barriers against the reemergence of a global threat to the interests of the U.S. and our allies.”

The ultimate guarantor of US primacy, in Blinken’s view, is the US military. Blinken declared, “Our country is endowed with many strengths. “We have ... abundant resources, the world’s reserve currency, the most powerful military on Earth.”

Blinken doubled down on the “whole of society” approach to military competition pioneered under the Trump administration, declaring, “The Biden administration is

making far-reaching investments in our core sources of national strength—starting with a modern industrial strategy to sustain and expand our economic and technological influence, make our economy and supply chains more resilient, sharpen our competitive edge.”

Blinken’s saber rattling comments are accompanied by equally belligerent actions. The US is funneling weapons to Taiwan, seeking to turn the island into a front-line war zone against China, similarly to the way Ukraine is being used in the war against Russia.

Blinken’s warmongering against China comes as the United States is intensifying its own involvement in the Ukraine war.

The United States is actively discussing supplying Ukraine with the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), a missile system that would enable Ukrainian forces to strike hundreds of kilometers into Russian territory, Reuters reported Thursday.

Critically, US officials have put no restrictions on the use of this weapons system. “We have concerns about escalation and yet still do not want to put geographic limits or tie their hands too much with the stuff we’re giving them,” a US official told Reuters.

Earlier this week, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced that the US would provide Ukraine with Harpoon anti-ship missiles via an intermediary, Denmark. The Harpoon is the standard anti-ship armament of the US Navy, capable of sinking large warships.

The *Washington Post*, for its part, is demanding further escalation, condemning all of those seeking a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The *Post* approvingly quotes Boris Bondarev, a former Russian official now campaigning for an escalation of the US war, who declares, “You just can’t make peace... If you do, it will be seen as a Russian victory... Only a total and clear defeat that is obvious to everyone will teach them.”

Commenting on these remarks, the *Post* declared, “It would be a disaster—both moral and strategic—if Mr. Putin were invited to talks before his major war objectives had been

thwarted... the best way for Ukraine's friends to help is to accelerate shipments of vital weaponry—and stop negotiating with themselves.”

These comments make clear that the United States is absolutely hostile to any peaceful settlement of the war. The aims of the conflict are to retake the Donbas and Crimea—Russia views the latter as its own territory.

The United States is set on a course of military escalation threatening to rapidly escalate into a direct shooting war involving US forces, whether in Ukraine, over the Taiwan Strait, or both. The path being plotted by the Biden administration threatens the lives not only of the tens of thousands already killed in the Ukraine war, but hundreds of thousands, or even millions more.

There is no limit to the number of Ukrainians, Taiwanese, Australians or even Americans that US imperialism is willing to sacrifice in pursuit of its “interests.”

These developments must be taken as a serious warning. Capitalism is leading mankind into disaster. The crisis triggered by the war, however, is bringing workers into struggle all over the world against the rising cost of living and the efforts by the ruling classes to make the working class pay the costs. This global movement provides the social base for the struggle to avert a new world war and stop the catastrophe looming over mankind.

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