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US imperialism puts China in its sights

Behind the backs of the American and world population, the Biden administration and the US military are preparing an escalation of military tensions against China with incalculable consequences.



Earlier this month, the Japanese Nikkei news service published excerpts from the Pentagon's Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which calls for stationing offensive missiles, previously banned by the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, along a string of densely populated islands that includes Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines.

To fund this initiative, the Pentagon requested an annual Pacific budget, in the words of Nikkei, of “\$4.7 billion, which is more than double the \$2.2 billion earmarked for the region in fiscal 2021.”

Against the backdrop of these plans, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin visited Japan this week, threatening to “push back” against “aggression” by China. While Blinken and other US officials habitually speak of Chinese aggression, it has been the US under Obama, Trump and now Biden that has aggressively confronted China in the Indo-Pacific to prevent any challenge to American global hegemony.

In a brief and tightly choreographed press conference, the two US officials and their Japanese counterparts, together with the vetted press, ignored the burning question: 75 years after American bombers obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were their policies exposing the people of Japan and China to a similar fate?

While the question was not directly addressed, the answer was clear. “We reconfirmed the strong commitment of the United States regarding defense of Japan, using all types of US forces, including nuclear,” said Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.

Even as more than 1,000 people die from COVID-19 every single day in the United States, and the disease surges around the world, the US is preparing for a conflict that risks incalculable human suffering. Joining this offensive is the United Kingdom, with the highest COVID-19 death rate of the major European countries, which announced Tuesday a massive expansion of its nuclear weapons program, calling China a “major threat.”

It is not COVID-19, but China that the US has planted firmly in its sights. As Blinken made clear, “Several countries present us with serious challenges, including Russia, Iran, North Korea... but the challenge posed by China is different. China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power” to “challenge” the United States.

On March 10, Adm. Philip Davidson, commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, told a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing he believes that China is likely to invade

Taiwan within the next six years. “I think the threat is manifest during this decade, in fact, in the next six years,” Davidson said.

Given that the United States has, in the words of Defense Secretary Austin, “commitments to support Taiwan’s ability to defend itself,” to predict that China will invade Taiwan within the next six years is to predict a major Sino-American war within that same time period.

To this end, Davidson stressed, “We absolutely must be prepared to fight and win should competition turn to conflict.”

What would the world look like if “competition turned to conflict?” A preview of this reality is provided by Adm. James Stavridis, former supreme allied commander of NATO, who published a book titled *2034: A Novel of the Next World War* just one day before Davidson’s comments. The novel depicts a nuclear conflict between the United States and China, involving the total annihilation of major cities on both sides.

Stavridis writes that after an American nuclear attack on Shanghai, one of the largest cities in the world, “These many months later the city remained a charred, radioactive wasteland. The death toll had exceeded thirty million. After each of the nuclear attacks international markets plummeted. Crops failed. Infectious diseases spread. Radiation poisoning promised to contaminate generations. The devastation exceeded... capacity for comprehension.”

The American survivors of a Chinese nuclear attack on San Diego are left to live in “wretched camps,” where “cyclical outbreaks of typhus, measles, and even smallpox often sprouted from the unbilged latrines and rows of plastic tenting.”

What is most striking is the contrast between these graphic depictions of mass death and the imminent danger of what Stavridis calls a “world war,” and the degree to which the public is unaware that these preparations are even underway.

How many people in the US know that the United States is preparing to deploy offensive missiles in highly populated areas off the Chinese coast? And how many people in Japan? The evening news and major newspapers are silent on these war preparations, even as they relentlessly and falsely demonize China.

Leading the charge has been the *Washington Post*, owned by Amazon oligarch Jeff Bezos. In an editorial on March 14, the *Post* accused China of “genocide” against its Muslim population, echoing the declarations of the Trump and Biden administrations. The *Post* demanded that the United States withdraw from the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, declaring that to attend “when the Xi regime is actively seeking to destroy a group of more than 12 million people would be unconscionable.”

At the same time, the *Post* has continued its campaign to falsely assert that COVID-19 could have been created in a Chinese laboratory. It condemns the findings of the World Health Organization, which declared that, in the words of the *Post*, the “laboratory hypothesis was ‘extremely unlikely’ and would not be further studied.”

In response, the *Post* declares that the “WHO needs to start over” and consider “both the zoonotic and laboratory hypotheses.”

These efforts to demonize China are sheer propaganda. A major aim is to divert mounting social tensions outward toward an “external” enemy.” The 20th century’s horrific wars were prepared with such propaganda, designed to obscure the real war aims of capitalist governments.

In the 21st century, the costs of a major war are greater than ever. In the 20 years of this century, despite perpetual wars and proxy conflicts, there has never been a full-scale clash between nuclear-armed states. But exactly such a war is threatened by the massive US military buildup against China.

The workers of the United States and China have nothing to gain from such a horrific conflict. It is they, not the generals and politicians, who would bear the cost.

If a relapse to the bloodshed of the 20th century is to be avoided, it is the working class that must prevent it. The fight against imperialism and the danger of a new world war must be developed as a revolutionary movement of workers throughout the world, in opposition to the homicidal policies of the ruling elites and the entire capitalist system.

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