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US further escalates tensions over Taiwan as Biden prosecutes anti-China campaign

The Biden administration is this week taking US imperialism's offensive against China to new heights on three inter-related fronts, in Europe, the US Congress and Taiwan, one of the most explosive flashpoints of Washington's increasingly aggressive moves against China.

U.S. Democratic Sen. Christopher Coons of Delaware, left, speaks near Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan of Alaska and Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois during a meeting with Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, second right, in Taipei, Taiwan on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

This week's escalation is taking place against the backdrop of mounting anti-China slanders by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and all the US broadcast networks, as well as President Biden, who has ordered an investigation by the intelligence agencies into the fabricated "Wuhan lab" allegations that China is responsible for the worsening global COVID-19 disaster.

By assigning this task to the CIA and its related agencies, it is clear that the Biden administration expects the intelligence outfits to poison public opinion against China and produce a propaganda case for punitive sanctions and military intervention against Beijing.

This week's most prominent front is Biden's maiden trip abroad as president. He is travelling to Europe for G7, NATO and US-EU summits, the central focus of which is to attempt to strong-arm the European capitalist powers into fully aligning behind Washington's increasingly aggressive sanctions and other economic measures against China.

The *Financial Times* yesterday noted that Biden spelt out this demand in February when he told the Munich Security Conference that the US, Europe and Asia had to "push back against the Chinese government's economic abuses and coercion."

These are code words for systematically blocking rising Chinese capitalism, by every means, including economic sanctions and military action, from ever challenging the global supremacy secured by the US ruling class through victory in World War II.

According to the *Financial Times*, Biden had already lined up the governments of Japan, South Korea and Australia, but now faced his "most delicate task yet—trying to coax a wary Europe to work more closely with Washington on China."

Already, the White House has prevailed upon the European powers to halt ratification by the European parliament of the EU's investment treaty with Beijing, which was signed just before Biden took office, and to impose punitive measures on China, supposedly over the treatment of Uyghurs in China's north-western Xinjiang province.

Biden wants the European summits to go further, including by intervening to overturn or counteract China's Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure projects across Eurasia, blocking

Chinese technology companies and joining the US confrontation with China in the South China Sea, where the UK, France and Germany are already sending warships for military exercises.

This week's second front is in the US Senate, where a massive anti-China bill is about to pass. The 1,445-page United States Innovation and Competition bill, co-written by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Republican Senator Todd Young, provides more than $200 billion to fund economic warfare directed primarily against China, but also against other US rivals in Japan and Western Europe.

Among other things, the bill opposes international bank loans to China for Belt and Road projects, withholds grant money to US colleges and universities that partner with Chinese government-funded "Confucius Institutes" to teach Chinese language and culture, allocates $600 million to ramp up the US military presence in the South China Sea, and prioritise the defence of Taiwan.

Taiwan is the third front. On Sunday morning, a bipartisan contingent of three US senators traveled there, ostensibly to announce the donation of COVID-19 vaccines to the island, which has experienced a large outbreak of the virus in the past month. In reality, the visit is intended to further undermine the "One China" policy and continue war preparations aimed at the Chinese mainland.

The three senators—Tammy Duckworth and Christopher Coons, both Democrats, and Dan Sullivan, a Republican—arrived in Taiwan aboard a US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III, rather than a civilian plane. They stated that Washington was donating 750,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines but did not announce when.

The trip was not a humanitarian mission. The three senators initially travelled to South Korea for meetings on Friday and Saturday with foreign ministry and defence officials to discuss the US-South Korean military alliance. The stop in Taiwan was a carefully orchestrated part of this same trip, designed to deepen Washington's military cooperation with allies in the region, which include plans to station US missiles within striking distance of major Chinese cities.

The three senators met with President Tsai Ing-wen and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, who used the visit to once again attack Beijing and blame it for Taiwan's inability to procure enough vaccines for its population. Taipei has accused Beijing of interfering in a deal between the island and Germany's BioNTech for vaccines, a charge that the Chinese government denies.

The decision to use a military plane for the trip has not gone unnoticed in Beijing. As Washington and Taipei have no formal diplomatic relations, cooperation between the US and Taiwanese militaries and governments is a challenge to the "One China" policy, which states that Taiwan is a Chinese territory.

The attempts to undermine this diplomatic norm began under Donald Trump and are being accelerated by the Biden administration, which even invited a Taiwanese diplomat to Biden's inauguration in January.

Following World War II, Taiwan, a Japanese colony from 1895–1945, was returned to China, which was then ruled by Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT). After being defeated in the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the KMT subsequently fled to Taiwan, where they were protected by the United States and allowed to posture as the legitimate government of all of China, even occupying one of the five permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council.

Beginning in 1971 under President Richard Nixon, the US engaged in negotiations with Beijing as part of a tactical manoeuvre aimed at undermining the Soviet Union. This led to Washington's recognition of Beijing as the legitimate government of all of China and the cutting off formal relations with Taiwan in 1979. The switch to Beijing also allowed Washington to exploit the Chinese mainland as a source of cheap labour power as Beijing accelerated the process of restoring capitalism in the 1980s.

However, with China's development into the world's second largest economy and an economic competitor to the US, Washington is attempting to use its own economic and military might to pressure Beijing and force it to accept US hegemony in the region.

While countries like the US have hoarded vaccines this year, China has offered doses to countries in the region, leading to charges of "vaccine diplomacy" from Washington and Tokyo. Beijing has offered its own vaccine to Taipei, which rejected it.

The actions of US imperialism are clearly risking the outbreak of a major war with China that would ultimately engulf the entire globe. Biden is stepping up US efforts, begun under Obama and intensified under Trump, to undermine Beijing to offset its own relative economic decline.

The Biden White House is also seeking to deflect internal class tensions outward, particularly over the ruling elite's catastrophic handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, with every response driven by the profit concerns of big business, at the expense of nearly 600,000 lives, even by the official statistics.

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