

Australian PM claims credit for spearheading Biden's anti-China line-up at G7 summit

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Prime Minister Scott Morrison, echoed loudly by Australia's major capitalist media outlets, boasted that last weekend's G7 summit in Britain was a crucial success in aligning all the major powers behind the Biden administration's increasingly aggressive offensive against China.

Obviously anxious to accommodate himself and his Liberal-National Coalition government to the shift from Trump to Biden in the White House, Morrison told reporters it was a vital gain that the G7 communiqué explicitly denounced China, which had not been mentioned in previous G7 statements.

"G7 delivers for Morrison on China," declared the front-page headline in yesterday's *Australian Financial Review*. Under the banner, "Allies rally to Scott Morrison's call on China," Murdoch's *Australian* recalled World War II: "Scott Morrison has won the support of the world's biggest democracies and Australia's wartime allies—the US and Britain—in pushing back against growing Chinese power and influence in the Indo-Pacific region."

In reality, the G7 gathering of the heads of the world's seven wealthiest nations saw a bullying effort by the Biden administration to coerce the European imperialist powers into lining up behind the escalating US drive, begun under Obama, to confront Beijing economically and militarily. The American ruling elite is intent on preventing the Chinese capitalist class from ever challenging the regional and global supremacy obtained by the US after World War II.

Morrison was invited to the G7 event to act as a spearhead for Biden's stepped-up pressure on the European leaders, alongside the Japanese and South Korean prime ministers.

Despite his failure to secure a one-on-one meeting with Biden, which would have been his first ever, Morrison insisted that a replacement 45-minute get together with Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was a

significant achievement.

According to a brief joint statement, the trio discussed "deepening co-operation between the three governments," across the Indo-Pacific region. In other words, they focussed on combating China.

For all the official language of "peace," "stability" and "liberal democratic principles," these discussions were accompanied by escalating military provocations against China.

One immediate result of the Biden-Johnson-Morrison meeting was an announcement that two Australian frigates will join a British naval strike group, led by the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, for exercises in the South China Sea within two or three weeks.

This show of force by Britain, one of the former colonial powers that once dominated China, will include much-publicised port visits, as well as war games in waters near China. This is designed to send a threatening message to the Chinese government. The *Age* and other Nine Media outlets noted that the move was "expected to upset Beijing."

Australian warships have already conducted four transits of the South China Sea this year, intensifying the pace of previous years. This year's missions have been conducted jointly with vessels from the US, Japan and France, each of which also participated in the colonial carve-up of China during the 19th and 20th centuries.

One can only imagine the furore if Chinese naval vessels conducted similar exercises off the coast of California or near Hawaii.

Thus far, Australian ships have not joined US flotillas in entering the 12-nautical-mile zones around Chinese-occupied rocky outposts in the South China Sea, but Washington has been pressing for such operations.

Morrison claimed credit for the G7 adopting the demand, originally pushed by President Donald Trump and himself last year, for officials with powers similar to

those of weapons inspectors to be sent into China. Their task would be to produce “evidence” to supposedly verify the unsubstantiated US intelligence agency allegations that a Wuhan laboratory unleashed the COVID-19 pandemic on the world.

This demand clearly raises the spectre of the “weapons inspectors” operation conducted against Iraq, which provided the pretext for the US-led invasion of 2003, based on fabricated claims that Iraq had secret stockpiles of “weapons of mass destruction.”

Provocatively, Morrison further declared that the G7 gathering had given “very strong support” to Australia’s “stand” in its trade conflicts with Beijing, which he again depicted as Chinese “coercion.”

Morrison said he had raised China’s list of 14 grievances, issued last November against Australia, in his private address to leaders on the final day of the G7 summit. He told journalists: “[T]here is not a country who would sit around that table that would see concession on any of those 14 points as something they also would tolerate.”

The 14 points actually indicate “coercion” by the US and its closest allies, such as Australia, against China. The list includes banning the Chinese telecommunication company Huawei from Australian 5G contracts, blocking 10 Chinese foreign investment deals, and foreign relations laws giving the Australian government power to veto state or local government agreements with China.

On the list too are raids on Chinese journalists, academic visa cancellations, “foreign interference” laws “viewed as targeting China” and “thinly veiled allegations against China on cyber-attacks without any evidence.” The grievances include “siding with the US anti-China campaign” on the pandemic, and accusing China of aggression in the South China Sea.

Over the past six months, Chinese authorities have invoked several long-running trade disputes to effectively freeze Australian imports, ranging from coal to barley, wine, timber, cotton, seafood and meat—but not iron ore, the biggest item, now worth more than \$80 billion a year.

Despite Morrison’s confected triumphalism, Biden’s refusal of a one-on-one meeting with him was noticeable. The *Australian’s* international editor Greg Sheridan, a man with close connections in Washington, described the rebuff as “perplexing.” Sheridan noted that “Morrison had never met Biden and Biden is a quintessential Senate Democrat wheeler and dealer for whom personal relationships are everything.”

No doubt, the Biden White House is concerned about

how closely Morrison identified himself with Trump personally and politically. Morrison refused to condemn Trump’s fomenting of the January 6 storming of the US Congress by fascist elements intent on overturning Biden’s election as president.

Biden’s conduct also reflects ongoing distrust of the Australian prime minister’s political capacities, especially to implement the required war build-up against China in the face of popular opposition to war and US militarism, particularly since the barbaric disasters in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq.

There is a history of US administrations orchestrating or encouraging moves against prime ministers regarded as not dependable enough in committing Australia to join a US war against China. Kevin Rudd was ousted in 2010 by US “protected sources” inside the Labor Party after Rudd suggested that the US could accommodate itself to China’s rise. In 2018, Trump publicly welcomed Morrison’s replacement of Malcolm Turnbull, who had previously taken a similar line to Rudd, reflecting Australian capitalism’s dependence on exports to China.

Significantly, the opposition Labor Party’s shadow foreign minister, Penny Wong, described Morrison’s inability to secure a personal meeting with Biden as “disappointing.” She suggested Morrison’s “stubborn refusal” to commit to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 was the cause, but her jibe was in line with Labor’s positioning of itself as the party most committed to the US military alliance.

At Labor’s national conference earlier this year, Wong and party leader Anthony Albanese presented Labor as the architect of the US alliance in World War II and the best equipped party to lead the country in times of war and social unrest. Without dissent, the assembled Labor and trade union officials endorsed six resolutions regurgitating the US accusations against China.



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