

As the Chinese Communist Party marks its centenary

Beijing mounts a diplomatic counteroffensive against Washington's aggressive stance

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The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime in Beijing has used the party's official 100th anniversary on July 1 to mount a diplomatic counteroffensive against the increasingly aggressive efforts of the US to demonise, isolate and encircle China in preparation for military conflict.

On July 6, President Xi Jinping addressed a virtual global meeting that, according to China's foreign ministry, involved thousands of leaders and representatives from more than 500 political parties and organisations in more than 160 countries. The stage-managed political extravaganza, held in the wake of the centenary celebrations, involved 10,000 participants and multiple venues in China.

The foreign ministry reported that speeches from 20 leaders congratulated the CCP, agreed that political parties had "to deliver happiness for people" and declared their willingness "to work together with the CCP to build a better world." The speakers included the presidents of Argentina, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Namibia and Serbia, as well as former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev and the prime ministers of Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Morocco.

These motherhood statements of support for the CCP matched the empty, anodyne remarks of Xi, who appealed for global cooperation to rectify every problem from social inequality and the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change, war and famine. None of the participants, all of whom represent and fight for the narrow interests of their own national capitalist classes, including Xi, are committed to actually resolving any of these issues.

In a sign of the profound cynicism that pervaded the

event, no mention was made of socialism, communism or Marxism. Nothing was said of the 100 years of CCP's history—even the falsified Stalinist version—that the meeting was meant to mark.

The central thrust of Xi's address was a barely concealed criticism of the hegemonic role of American imperialism and its allies, summed up in his appeal for "multilateralism"—as opposed to a global order imperiously dominated by the US. Clearly responding to Washington's constant refrain that China must abide by the "international rules-based order," he declared: "International rules should be based on universally-recognised norms rather than rules of the few."

In comments also aimed against the US, Xi said: "Development is the right of all countries, rather than an exclusive privilege of the few." He appealed to the meeting to "jointly oppose the practice of seeking technology blockades"—a reference to Washington's use of unilateral sanctions and technology bans directed at China and other countries.

These remarks will have been welcomed by many of the participants, including from Russia and Iran, which have been also targeted by the US. In its report, China's state-run *Global Times* boasted that the event has been "a powerful counterstrike to the Western world's constant mudslinging at the CCP."

Xi made a broader pitch to global investors, pledging to "take comprehensive steps to deepen reform and opening up"—that is, further removing restrictions on foreign investment in China and integrating it within global capitalism. He reiterated his confidence in "economic globalisation, despite facing considerable headwinds"—an allusion to the Trump administration's trade war measures against China, which have

continued under Biden.

China's diplomatic counteroffensive has not, however, been limited to the political showcase of parties looking to Beijing for economic largesse or mutual support against the pressures and threats of US imperialism.

Xi also held a conference call last week with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a bid to secure greater European cooperation. In particular, it was aimed at reviving the investment agreement between the European Union and China that stalled after the EU bowed to US pressure to sanction Beijing over alleged human rights abuses of its Muslim Uyghur minority. While Macron and Merkel noted the issue had been discussed, no commitments were made.

Significantly, China also staged another commemorative meeting last Friday—not of the CCP's centenary but the 50th anniversary of the secret 1971 visit by former US national security adviser Henry Kissinger to Beijing. Kissinger's clandestine diplomacy paved the way for the 1972 trip by President Richard Nixon who met with Chinese leader Mao Zedong and sealed a de-facto anti-Soviet alliance. The Nixon visit opened the door for the normalisation of US-Chinese diplomatic relations in 1979.

Last Friday's event, in which Kissinger participated, was an attempt to reach out to sections of the American political establishment and corporate elite that regard the escalating US confrontation with China an inimical to their interests.

Kissinger called for “serious dialogue” between the two countries to start again soon. Well aware of the deepening danger of conflict, he declared: “We will keep in mind on both sides that not every problem can have an immediate solution, but we should start from the premise that war between our two countries will be an unspeakable catastrophe. It cannot be won.”

The US drive to war, however, is not based on misunderstandings or an incorrect policy, but rather reflects profound economic and geo-political shifts. Mao's embrace of US imperialism resulted from a deep economic crisis and the danger of conflict with the Soviet Union. It also facilitated China's reintegration into global capitalism on the basis of the pro-market policies of “reform and opening” spearheaded by Deng Xiaoping in 1978.

Capitalist restoration and a huge influx of foreign investment and technology accelerated after the CCP regime's brutal crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989 and China's entry into the World Trade Organisation. While American corporations made super-profits through the exploitation of cheap Chinese labour enforced by the CCP regime, China has emerged as the world's second largest economy.

Over the past decade, first under Obama then Trump and now Biden, the US has mounted an offensive on all fronts—diplomatic, economic and strategic—to counter what it regards as the greatest threat to its global dominance. While Kissinger appeals for collaboration and dialogue, a bipartisan consensus of Democrats and Republicans—reflecting a broader agreement in US ruling circles—is determined to use all means, including military, to subordinate China to US interests.

The thread running through China's diplomatic efforts is an appeal to the US and its allies to reach a new rapprochement based on the further opening up of Chinese economy to foreign investors. The US, however, is not interested in supposed “win-win” collaboration that could undermine its position of global top dog and is increasingly preparing for war.

Xi and the CCP have no progressive answer to the threat of a catastrophic war between nuclear-armed powers. The CCP, which long ago abandoned the struggle for socialist internationalism, is incapable of making any appeal to the international working class—the only social force capable of halting the drive to war.



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