

US provocatively calls for “robust” Taiwanese participation in UN

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26 October 2021

In a calculated provocation certain to further increase tensions with China, the Biden administration has called on the United Nations to allow the participation of Taiwan in the UN. Beijing insists that Taiwan is a renegade province that is part of China and therefore should not be given an independent voice in the UN and other international bodies.

Following President Nixon’s visit to Beijing in 1972, the US established formal diplomatic relations with China in 1979 on the basis of a “One China” policy that de facto recognised Beijing as the legitimate government of all China, including Taiwan. Washington ended its diplomatic and military ties with Taipei and subsequently limited all official contact with Taiwan.

After the 1949 revolution, in which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) overthrew the Kuomintang (KMT) regime of Chiang Kai-shek, the US had maintained the fiction that the KMT dictatorship on Taiwan, calling itself the Republic of China, was the legitimate government of all China. That abruptly changed in 1972 as Nixon forged a tacit alliance with Beijing against the Soviet Union.

Now, however, the Biden administration, following on from Trump, is step by step undermining the “One China” policy by ramping up top-level contact with Taiwanese officials and establishing a military presence on the island. US Special Forces troops have been on Taiwan for the past year training their Taiwanese counterparts.

In this context, the US is pushing for a Taiwanese presence in the UN. A US State Department statement late on Saturday reported that American and Taiwanese officials had met online for a “discussion focused on supporting Taiwan’s ability to participate meaningfully at the UN.”

The statement underscored US backing for Taiwan’s participation in “the World Health Organization and UN framework convention on climate change and discussed ways to highlight Taiwan’s ability to contribute to efforts on a wide range of issues.”

Yesterday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken again raised the issue, calling on all UN member states “to join us in supporting Taiwan’s robust, meaningful participation throughout the UN system and in the international community,” absurdly claiming that such a move was consistent with Washington’s “One China” policy.

The timing of this move was a deliberate slap in the face to Beijing as it coincided with the 50th anniversary of the seating of Beijing in the UN. In a vote in the UN General Assembly on October 25, 1971, the CCP regime, as the People’s Republic of China (PRC), was recognised as “the only legal representatives of China in the UN.” It thereby took China’s seat in the General Assembly and its place as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The US, although it was already engaged in secret diplomacy with Beijing, sought to retain a separate UN seat for Taiwan but was outvoted in the General Assembly. Both the CCP and the KMT opposed the proposal of a UN seat for each. The KMT representatives walked out before the final vote on the UN Resolution 2758 to seat Beijing and “to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.”

In a speech to mark the 50th anniversary of the PRC’s seating in the UN, President Xi Jinping, boasted of China’s record in supporting the UN’s authority and multilateralism. Without naming the United States, he pointedly declared that China opposed “all forms of

hegemony and power politics, as well as all forms of unilateralism and protectionism.”

While Xi did not comment on the US push for Taiwanese participation in the UN, former Chinese ambassador to the US, Cui Tiankai, declared that Beijing would never allow Taiwan to do so. “This totally went against the tide of history,” he said on Monday. “UN Resolution 2758, passed five decades ago, made it clear that there’s only one China in the world, and it was also recognized by the Americans, so why are they now trying to reverse this?”

Washington’s provocative move to push for Taiwanese participation in the UN is part of an aggressive confrontation that began a decade ago with the Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia,” which sought to undermine China diplomatically, economically and militarily in the Indo-Pacific. Its object was to arrest the historic decline of the US and prevent any threat to its global dominance by China.

The increasingly rancorous attacks on China and the US military build-up and strengthening of military alliances throughout Asia were accelerated under Trump, who instigated what can only be described as an economic war on China. The Trump administration not only imposed huge trade tariffs on China but punitive measures on key Chinese hi-tech corporations such as Huawei aimed ultimately at destroying them as competitors.

After winning the presidency, Trump openly called into question the “One China” policy, declaring it to depend on economic concessions by China. His administration strengthened ties with Taiwan and in its final days removed restrictions on US engagement with Taiwanese officials, civilian and military, at all levels—policies that the Biden administration has continued.

Biden has also called into question the US policy of “strategic ambiguity” in its relations with China and Taiwan. Under the US Taiwan Act, Washington sells “defensive” weapons to Taiwan and opposes any move by China to forcibly reunify the island with the mainland. However, it has refused to provide Taiwan with a guarantee of military support in the event of a war with China. This strategic ambiguity was designed not only to rein in China, but to deter Taiwan from declaring formal independence. China has warned it would use force if Taiwan took such a step.

Biden, however, has declared twice this year that the US is committed to supporting Taiwan in a war with China. While the White House sought to downplay the significance of his comments and declared that US policy had not changed, Biden’s remarks are not gaffes. They reflect US moves to overturn longstanding policies that have maintained an unstable peace in the Taiwan Strait. This is confirmed by the latest US push for “robust” Taiwanese participation in the UN, in direct opposition to the UN vote taken 50 years ago.

The US media repeatedly accuses China of aggression toward Taiwan and of preparing to forcibly reunite the island with China. But it is the Biden administration that is overturning the status quo, recklessly inflaming tensions over Taiwan—arguably the most explosive flashpoint in Asia—and threatening a disastrous war between the world’s two largest economies.



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