

As it escalates war against Russia, Biden administration threatens war against China

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23 May 2022

On Saturday, US President Joe Biden signed a bill authorizing \$40 billion in spending, largely for weapons and other assistance to Ukraine.

One month ago, US military assistance to Ukraine under the Biden administration totaled \$4 billion. With the stroke of a pen, Biden has expanded the US commitment to the conflict tenfold.

But with the ink barely dry on the latest weapons shipment, Washington went on to escalate the conflict further. On Monday, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin announced that the US would provide Ukraine with Harpoon anti-ship missiles via an intermediary, Denmark. The Harpoon is the standard anti-ship armament of the US Navy, capable of sinking large warships.

On Friday, Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs adviser Anton Gerashchenko tweeted that “The US is preparing a plan to destroy the [Russian] Black Sea Fleet” as part of a “plan to unblock the ports.” He continued, “Deliveries of powerful anti-ship weapons (Harpoon and Naval Strike Missile with a range of 250–300 km) are being discussed.”

The Pentagon responded by officially denying that the US is actively planning operations to destroy Russia’s navy in the Black Sea. However, Monday’s announcement makes clear that it is engaged in precisely such an operation. The US was already directly involved in the sinking of the flagship of the Russian fleet, Moskva, last month.

As usual, military escalation by the United States is accompanied by a propaganda barrage. In this case, the apologists of US imperialism are declaring that greater involvement in military operations in the Black Sea is dictated by the need to open the ports for global food shipments.

The *Washington Post* published an editorial entitled

“Putin is starving millions of people around the world.” It concludes, “with 20 million metric tons of grain and corn just sitting in storage at Ukrainian ports right now, there’s only so much the rest of the world can do. Mr. Putin’s war is on the verge of becoming Mr. Putin’s global famine.”

The *Post*’s hypocrisy is jaw-dropping. The United States is the world’s leading practitioner of using starvation as a “weapon” of foreign policy. In 1974, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz declared, “food is a weapon. It is now one of the principal tools in our negotiating kit.” In December 1980, John Block, Reagan’s secretary of agriculture, told reporters: “I believe food is the greatest weapon we have.”

The examples of the US using starvation as a weapon include withholding food aid to Chile in 1973 as part of a successful effort to overthrow the government of Salvador Allende and cutting food assistance to Bangladesh in 1974 during a massive famine to punish the country for trading with Cuba.

US sanctions on food and medicine imported by Iraq in the 1990s contributed to the preventable deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, while US sanctions against Iran led to runaway food price inflation, meaning that “following a healthy diet has become more difficult for most Iranians,” according to one study.

As for the present ongoing food crisis, fundamental responsibility lies with the US and NATO powers, which provoked the current conflict and have sought at every point to scuttle efforts at a negotiated solution to the war.

Establishing control over the Black Sea is a vital US war aim. This waterway connects Europe, Russia and the Middle East. It not only holds critical reserves of oil and gas, but serves as a nodal point for hydrocarbon

pipelines connecting Europe and Asia.

Even as the United States was escalating its war with Russia, Biden openly threatened to go to war with China, the world's most populous country and its second-largest economy.

Speaking at a press conference in Japan, Biden was asked, "Are you willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if it comes to that?"

Biden replied, "Yes... That's the commitment we made."

Despite efforts by the media to present Biden's comment as a misstatement or a "gaffe," the reality is that Biden's remark corresponds with the views of leading US foreign policy figures.

Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote on Twitter, "This is the third time @potus has spoken out in favor of strategic clarity on Taiwan and third time WH [White House] staff has tried to walk it back. Better to embrace it as new US stance."

Supporting Biden's declaration that the US should go to war with China over Taiwan, Haass declared, "The 'Ukraine model' [is] inadequate for Taiwan. Taiwan [is] an island that cannot be easily resupplied. Plus local partners & allies in Asia want direct US intervention. Plus Taiwan not nearly as strong as Ukraine. So direct US military involvement would be essential for defense vs China."

The US-provoked war against Russia in Ukraine has already killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions. The war against China Biden is threatening would turn the entire Asia-Pacific region, the world's most populous area, into a war zone, with devastating and incalculable consequences.

Far-reaching plans for military escalation were in place long before Biden even reached the White House. In 2020, Biden published an article entitled "Rescuing U.S. Foreign Policy After Trump" in *Foreign Affairs*.

Biden pledged, "to counter Russian aggression, we must keep the alliance's military capabilities sharp." At the same time, the United States needs to "get tough with China," he wrote. The "most effective way to meet that challenge is to build a united front of U.S. allies and partners to confront China."

These plans were limited to the specialist foreign policy press read by beltway insiders, and Biden's plans to provoke war with Russia and China played

virtually no part in his appeal to voters. Instead, Biden publicly pledged to end "forever wars."

In reality, Biden's withdrawal from Afghanistan was a repositioning of US forces in preparation for an escalation of the US conflict with Russia and China.

In 2020, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned: "A Biden/Harris administration will not inaugurate a new dawn of American hegemony. Rather, the attempt to assert this hegemony will be through unprecedented violence. If it is brought to power—with the support of the assemblage of reactionaries responsible for the worst crimes of the 21st century—it will be committed to a vast expansion of war."

These warnings have been confirmed. For years, the United States military has systematically emphasized its plans to wage "great-power conflict" with these two countries. Now, a war with Russia has already broken out, and Biden's comments make it clear that the administration is systematically preparing for a war with China.

These conflicts threaten to escalate into a world war, waged between nuclear-armed powers, threatening Europe, Asia, North America and, indeed, the whole of human civilization with destruction.

The Biden administration's war plans express the relentless drive by US imperialism to reverse its relative economic decline through military means.

The crisis triggered by the war, however, is bringing workers into struggle all over the world against the rising cost of living and the efforts by the ruling classes to make workers pay for the crisis. This global movement of the working class provides the social base for the struggle to avert a new world war and stop the catastrophe threatening mankind.



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