

Top US general predicts war with China by 2025

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31 January 2023

In a blunt internal memo leaked to the media this week, Air Force General Michael Minihan predicted that the United States would be at war with China over Taiwan by 2025 and ordered his commanders to implement detailed preparations.

“My gut tells me we will fight in 2025,” Minihan declared, claiming that US and Taiwanese presidential elections in 2024 would provide China with the opportunity to act. In reality, it is US imperialism that is goading Beijing into war over Taiwan and actively planning and preparing for war against China, as the rest of Minihan’s memo clearly demonstrates.

The memo continued: “We spent 2022 setting the foundation for victory. We will spend 2023 in crisp operational motion building on that foundation. If you want to know what the operational motion I demand looks like, look at what Total Force Team Charleston did in January.”

Minihan is the four-star general in charge of the Air Mobility Command (AMC) that oversees the US Air Force’s huge fleet of transport and refuelling aircraft, and has some 110,000 personnel. His memo demanded stepped up training and drills.

On January 5, two dozen C-17 Globemaster IIIs took off from Joint Base Charleston in what was billed as the largest-ever launch of these huge transport aircraft from a single base. The drill was part of an exercise involving the Air Force, Army and Marines throughout the US southeast and included nearly 60 aircraft, counting F-16 fighters.

Minihan ordered his commanders to: “Go faster. Drive readiness, integration, and agility for ourselves and the Joint Force to deter, and if required, defeat China. This is the first of eight monthly directives from me.” The goal, he declared, was “a fortified, ready, integrated, and agile Joint Force Maneuver Team ready

to fight and win inside the first island chain.”

The first island chain is off the Chinese mainland in East Asia, running through Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines. It is a key element of US strategic planning for war with China. Control of the first island chain would hem in Chinese aircraft and ships, paving the way for a naval blockade of China, and set the stage for a massive missile and air assault on mainland China, as envisaged in the Pentagon’s AirSea Battle strategy.

Minihan’s memo is not a general guideline, but contained specific orders to be further elaborated and met month by month. In February, all AMC personnel with weapon qualifications “will fire a clip into a 7-meter target with the full understanding that unrepentant lethality matters most. Aim for the head.” In March, all AMC personnel will set their legal and family affairs in order—in other words, be prepared for deployment at a moment’s notice.

Before being installed as head of Air Mobility Command, Minihan served in key positions in the US Indo-Pacific Command, including as deputy commander from September 2019 to August 2021.

The Indo-Pacific Command, which would constitute the front-line of a US war with China, is the largest of the US military’s commands, with some 375,000 personnel. As part of President Obama’s “pivot to Asia” against China, 60 percent of the US military’s air and naval assets were to be deployed to the Indo-Pacific by 2020.

While Minihan’s internal memo starkly set out Washington’s agenda for war, he is not an isolated maverick within the US military, despite his blunt language. In 2021, Admiral Phil Davidson, as he was about to retire as chief of the Indo-Pacific Command, predicted war with China over Taiwan by 2027. The prediction is referred to in US strategic circles as

“Davidson’s window.”

Last October, the US Navy’s top officer, Admiral Mike Gilday, said his forces needed to prepare more urgently for “a 2022 window or potentially a 2023 window. I can’t rule that out. I don’t mean at all to be alarmist by saying that, it’s just that we can’t wish that away.”

In comments to the media, an unnamed US Defence official dismissed the Minihan memo as “not representative of the department’s view on China.” However, while not making specific predictions, Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Patrick Ryder last Friday reiterated that the US national defence strategy identifies China as “the pacing challenge”—in other words, the chief threat to US global dominance.

There is no doubt that even as the Biden administration is escalating the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, it is preparing at breakneck speed for war with China. Not only is it consolidating its own military forces in the Indo-Pacific but it is strengthening its military alliances and strategic partnerships throughout the region.

Washington regards the war in Ukraine as the prelude to war with China over Taiwan. The US is deliberately undermining the One China policy, under which it de facto recognises Beijing as the legitimate government of all China, including Taiwan. In doing so, Washington is deliberately provoking Chinese military action, calculating that a war on Taiwan, which the US is heavily arming, will weaken and destabilise the Chinese regime.

The accelerating war with Russia and preparations for war with China—both nuclear-armed powers—testifies to the incredible recklessness with which US imperialism is pursuing its geo-strategic goals of dominating the vast Eurasian landmass and its human and material resources. The willingness to risk a nuclear catastrophe also underscores the depth of the economic and social crisis confronting global capitalism and the fear in US ruling circles of the re-emergence of the class struggle.

Minihan’s memo is one more indication of the war timetable on which the Pentagon is operating. The general himself exemplifies the ruthlessness and bloodlust that is engrained in the US military’s top command after three decades of criminal wars and military interventions in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.

In a keynote speech to a major aerospace convention last September, Minihan let loose with a shrill warning of war with China. “We are not ready to fight and win inside the first island chain but we will be in a year,” he said. As reported by *Task and Purpose*, “Minihan is far from the first speaker at a service-wide conference to warn about the threat of China and the urgency to face it.”

Minihan repeatedly told the gathering of some 16,000 registrants, including aerospace CEOs and high-ranking generals, that lethality was crucial—kill or be killed. He boasted that “the pile of our nation’s enemy dead, the pile that is the biggest, is in front of the United States Air Force.” Revelling in the ability to kill with impunity, he declared: “Lethality matters most,” he said. “When you can kill your enemy, every part of your life is better. Your food tastes better. Your marriage is stronger.”

Such are the US military leaders. They have no qualms about sacrificing the lives of millions in wars to further the predatory geo-political and economic ambitions of US imperialism.



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