

Biden-Xi summit: US ramps up aggression against China

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Behind the façade of “stabilising” relations, today’s summit between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping signalled an escalation of war-like measures against China, seeking to cripple its economy and encircle it militarily.

As it stepped-up its backing for the Israel genocide in Gaza, the Biden administration sent an unmistakable message of its readiness to inflict similar military barbarism against the people of China, which the White House and Pentagon have publicly designated as the main threat to US global hegemony.

Biden and Xi met on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) annual gathering in San Francisco. At a media conference after the four-hour talks, Biden said he and Xi had agreed that military-to-military contacts would resume between the two countries to avoid “accidents” and “misunderstandings.”

But Biden doubled down on comments he made in June, branding Xi a “dictator.” These remarks, in themselves, points to the mounting risk of war.

According to a readout from the Chinese foreign ministry, Xi confirmed China’s willingness to restart military talks but warned Biden to “stop arming Taiwan.” He also said US trade and investment sanctions were seriously damaging China’s economic development.

In the leadup to the first face-to-face meeting between the two leaders in a year, the Biden administration ratcheted its threats, demands, ultimatums, provocations and trade and technology measures against China.

These mark a mounting US drive to cut off Chinese access to hi-tech industrial development and, as soon as possible, end its near-global monopoly over the processing of many critical minerals that are essential for war production.

For public relations purposes, the summit was conducted under a false flag of avoiding a cataclysmic conflict. In their opening public remarks, both Biden and Xi warned of the danger of a disastrous war.

Xi issued what amounted to a plea: “For two large countries like China and the United States, turning their back

on each other is not an option. It is unrealistic for one side to remodel the other, and conflict and confrontation has unbearable consequences for both sides.”

Biden stated: “We have to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict... That’s what the United States wants and what we intend to do ... I also believe it’s what the world wants for both of us.”

Not the least consideration in Biden’s calculations is overwhelming US public opposition to what would almost certainly be a nuclear war with China. A US opinion poll conducted in September reported that only 13 percent of respondents wanted an aggressive approach to China and just 5 percent wanted a confrontational one.

Huge marches across the US against the US-backed Israeli war crimes in Gaza indicate that these anti-war sentiments have since deepened in response to the horror being inflicted on the Palestinians.

This makes it politically essential for the US ruling class to goad and then blame Beijing for any conflict, as it did with Russia over Ukraine, and as US imperialism has done in every war since it invaded the Philippines in 1898, including by shutting off oil supplies to Japan in the prelude to World War II.

Far from not “veering into conflict,” the US ruling class has intensified its aggression against China in the past year since Biden and Xi last met at a G7 summit in Bali, Indonesia. In essence, war is already underway.

This year, the US escalated its efforts to strangle the Chinese economy, on top of maintaining the punishing tariffs on Chinese exports, worth \$370 billion a year, inflicted by the Trump administration. The Biden White House imposed new limits on investing in China and tightened export restrictions on up-to-date semiconductor chips and other artificial intelligence (AI) and high technology that is essential for basic economic and social life, as well as for military production. As a result, in the first three months of 2023, China’s chip imports declined by 23 percent compared with the same period in the previous year. Provocatively, the latest restrictions, which also

threaten other countries that supply chips to China, come into force tomorrow, a day after the summit.

· Just a few days before the Biden-Xi meeting, the US unveiled new military partnerships with both South Korea and Indonesia. This drew them closer into the strategic surrounding of China, adding to similar recent US pacts with the Philippines, Japan, India and Australia, including via the Quad and AUKUS alliances.

· The US is arming Taiwan to the teeth, further overturning the five-decade “One China” policy that recognised the Chinese government as the sole authority in China, including Taiwan. Biden recently signed off on a \$80 million grant to the island’s regime for the purchase of American military equipment, despite strong Chinese objections. Taiwan already has on order more than \$14 billion worth of US military equipment, but this latest grant is different. It is not a loan, setting an aggressive precedent. For the first time, a US government is using its own funds to send weapons to a place it officially does not recognise. In July, Biden used discretionary powers to approve the sale of military services and equipment worth \$500 million to Taiwan, and such grants could total up to \$10 billion over the next five years. Taiwan also is preparing to send two battalions of ground troops to the US for training, the first time this has happened since the 1970s.

· Under conditions in which the US is pouring weaponry into Ukraine to fight Russia and into Israel to prepare for a wider war for control over the resource-rich and strategic Middle East, the Biden administration has warned Beijing not to supply weapons to Russia and to ensure that Iran takes no action to oppose the slaughter in Gaza.

· Biden has made fresh allegations of Chinese “interference” in US elections, and of Beijing deliberately monopolising the global processing of strategic minerals, such as graphite and lithium, that are critical for electrification and war. Both these accusations could provide pretexts to trigger military action against China.

· In order to paint China as “coercive” and “intimidating,” a recent Pentagon report claimed a growing number of unsafe intercepts of US, allied and partner vessels and aircraft in the Indo-Pacific region. Most of these incidents were undoubtedly in strategically sensitive airspace and waters close to the Chinese mainland where the US has been escalating its military presence and provocative military “freedom of navigation” operations for the past decade.

At their last meeting in Bali, Biden and Xi agreed to set a “floor” for the deteriorating Sino-American relationship. Instead, the US only stepped up the confrontation. Less than three months after the Bali summit, the provocative US downing of Chinese aerial balloons in February was followed, within weeks, by the announcement of the

additional sanctions on Chinese technology.

Xi and the capitalist regime in China is fully aware of this war drive. The US is pursuing “comprehensive containment, encirclement and suppression against us,” Xi declared in a March speech.

Nonetheless, Beijing is desperately presenting an absurdly glowing picture of the Biden-Xi meeting. *China Daily*, the main official media platform, insisted there were “rosy signs” that the China-US relationship was being “stabilized after hitting a record low.” It promoted Xi’s “three principles” for China-US relations—“peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and win-win cooperation.”

In reality, US imperialism has not the slightest intention of permitting China, the world’s second largest economy, to “coexist” with the US, which has launched constant wars, from Korea and Vietnam to Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Ukraine, to seek to retain the international domination it obtained via World War II.

Under sharpening US economic and military pressure, China’s economy is being battered by a property crisis, falling exports, high unemployment and a US-led Western investment pull-out. In the July–September quarter, China recorded negative foreign direct investment—minus \$11.8 billion—for the first time since 1998.

Xi’s trip to the US features a dinner with US and global corporate leaders, who will reportedly pay up to \$40,000 for a table of eight. Xi is pledging to ensure profitable conditions, pleading with them to stop pulling out of China, despite the US push for that to continue to happen.

Behind the false face of supposedly stabilising relations with China, the Biden-Xi meeting underscores the determination of US imperialism to maintain its global supremacy at any cost. It is plunging humanity toward a conflict between nuclear-armed powers, while trying to blame Beijing for the potential catastrophe.



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