

Chinese regime announces “support” for Russia in war with NATO in Ukraine

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In a sign that a new escalation of the global war between the major powers is being prepared, newly-installed Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun pledged last month to support Russia in its war with the US-led NATO military alliance in Ukraine.

In a January 31 video conference with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu, he said this was a necessary response to US-NATO aggression against Russia and China. Washington, he said, “is always targeting Russia and China, seeking to retain its hegemony around the globe ... History and reality prove that hegemony is doomed to failure.”

Dong stepped away from the posture of studied ambiguity Beijing has kept on the Ukraine war since it began in 2022. He told Shoigu: “We have supported you on the Ukrainian issue, despite the fact that the United States and Europe continue to put pressure on the Chinese side. Even defense cooperation between China and the European Union is threatened, but we will not change or abandon our established policy course over this.”

Dong linked Beijing’s backing for Moscow in Ukraine to Moscow’s support for Beijing on Taiwan, saying: “We can feel strong support from the Russian side on the Taiwan issue, as well as on other topics of our key interests.” Washington is encouraging Taiwan, a Chinese-speaking island, to declare formal independence from the People’s Republic of China on the mainland, and is arming Taiwan as an offshore military base against China.

Dong concluded: “The militaries should play a greater role in deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic cooperation and maintaining global security and stability ... China-Russia strategic cooperation is a pillar of maintaining peace around the world.”

Shoigu replied that he looks forward to the “closest and most fruitful cooperation” with Beijing, and that talks with Dong “further strengthen the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership in the field of defense.” He added, however, that this relationship did not constitute a military alliance like NATO: “Unlike some Western countries, our two countries do not form a military bloc.”

Especially as Dong’s remarks involve war between the world’s main nuclear-armed powers, his explicit use of the word “support” for Russia in Ukraine was noted and examined internationally.

Inside the ruling elites of the NATO imperialist powers, there was surprise at Dong’s statement, which exposes China to further US economic sanctions and, potentially, military retaliation. Indeed, some denied that Dong had made such remarks at all.

The French conservative daily *Le Figaro* wrote that an overt Chinese statement of support for Russia in Ukraine would be “far from being just an anecdote” and was likely false. *Le Figaro* cited an unidentified “China expert” who asserted that Dong had been misquoted: “I would be stunned if the Chinese had used the terms they were quoted as using, in a public video at any rate ... If Dong Jun had said that, Western officials would have immediately reacted.”

Over the last week, however, news outlets in America and Europe posted extracts of the Dong-Shoigu video call and confirmed that, in fact, Dong had been correctly quoted.

Writing on Dong’s statement, the US magazine *Newsweek* concluded: “China would stand with Russia on the Ukraine issue despite pressure from the US and Europe.” However, it also cited Chinese Foreign Minister spokesman Wang Wengbin, who said: “China’s position on the Ukraine crisis is consistent and clear. We hope all parties will strive to cool down the tensions and create favorable conditions for the political settlement of the crisis. This position has not changed.”

Workers and youth should not be taken in by the statements of capitalist governments around the world, which are primarily designed to lull them to sleep.

Firstly, there are indications that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) bureaucracy, while hoping to avert total war, is contemplating a shift in its foreign policy. Dong became defense minister last year, after the CCP sacked previous defense and foreign ministers, Li Shangfu and Qin Gang. While the CCP gave no explanation for their dismissal, it was rumored that Moscow told Beijing that Qin had US ties

and had given Washington secret details on Chinese nuclear missiles, and that Li, the former head of Chinese rocket forces, was caught up in corruption allegations.

Dong became defense minister amid the Taiwanese elections, won by Lai Ching-te of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). With tensions rising on the nearby Korean Peninsula—where US-backed South Korea is arming Ukraine and Poland, as North Korea ships artillery shells to Russia—the danger of new wars in the Asia-Pacific is mounting. This underlies Beijing’s decision, for now at least, to seek closer military ties to Moscow.

Secondly, and more importantly, further escalations of the global war—driven not primarily by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but by the aggressive policies of the major NATO imperialist powers amid a global crisis of the capitalist system—are being prepared.

China, which has emerged after decades of globalization as a major industrial power, is ever more in the sights of the NATO powers. Especially after the failure of their Ukrainian puppet regime’s “counter-offensive” last year, they are outraged by Beijing’s critical role in helping Russia evade sanctions they hoped would crush Russia’s economy. Not only has Beijing purchased Russian oil and gas, which the European Union boycotted, it also gave Russia manufactured products of military value.

In December, the US Treasury slapped further sanctions on 150 companies and individuals—including in China, Turkey, the UAE, and Switzerland—for aiding Russia. This came after the Atlantic Council, a highly-connected US imperialist think tank, issued reports on how China helped Russia avoid US-NATO sanctions. Its latest such report, published last November, admitted that China was not arming Russia but added:

“Open-source trade data suggests that a surge in imports of Chinese-manufactured goods with important military uses played a key role in Russia’s ability to shore up its defenses on Ukrainian territory ... Even as weapons and ammunition pour into Ukraine from NATO countries, they are being counterbalanced by Chinese imports—not of weapons, but of materials vital for Russia’s ability to sustain its continued stubborn efforts to hold onto Ukrainian territory.”

It pointed to the surge in Russian purchases of key strategic goods from China. Since 2022, these imports rose nearly tenfold for heavy excavation vehicles (to dig fortifications), 345 percent for ball bearings (armored

vehicles), and doubled for integrated circuits. The Atlantic Council also alleged that Russian troops use Chinese, Iranian and Russian-made drones in Ukraine.

Such reports doubtless drove the NATO powers’ recent decision to spend over \$100 billion on military escalation against Russia, the Middle East and China.

This imperialist onslaught cannot be halted based on a national strategy. Indeed, the war is driven by rivalries between capitalist nation-states over a globally-integrated economy. In the 33 years since the Stalinist bureaucracy’s 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the NATO powers have massacred millions in escalating neo-colonial wars from the 1991 Gulf War in Iraq to Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Mali and beyond. As the imperialist powers turn their guns on nuclear-armed Russia and China, the danger of a catastrophic nuclear conflagration is growing by the day.

The decisive question is mobilizing the working class internationally in a socialist anti-war movement. While the imperialist powers are targeting Russia and China, states that descend from the October 1917 Russian and 1949 Chinese revolutions, such a movement can only be based on opposition to the Chinese Stalinist and Russian ex-Stalinist regimes. Since their restoration of capitalism in China and dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1989-1991, they cannot and will not make any appeal to workers.

Their reactionary orientation is epitomized in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s denunciation of the Bolsheviks who led the October revolution, as Russia invaded Ukraine. Beijing’s now overt support for Putin’s war shows that its policies also lead towards catastrophic escalation. The only viable basis of revolutionary opposition to war is a Trotskyist struggle to unify Russian, Ukrainian and Chinese workers with their class brothers and sisters in the NATO countries and internationally in a struggle for socialism.



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