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G7 summit issues threats against China and Russia

The governments of the world's wealthiest nations (the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Canada) ended three days of deliberations at a G7 summit in Cornwall, England on Sunday. The G7 powers played up “multilateralism” and downplayed the deep differences that emerged inside the G7 under US President Joe Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump. Yet they were able to agree only on a summit communiqué that was tantamount to a threat of war against China.

The 25-page summit communiqué backed the Wuhan lab theory provocation, insinuating that China was seeking to conceal its production of the COVID-19 virus in a laboratory and then allowing it to escape. The document called for “investigating, reporting and responding to [pandemic] outbreaks of unknown origin. We also call for a timely, transparent, expert-led, and science-based WHO [World Health Organisation]-convened Phase 2 COVID-19 Origins study including, as recommended by the experts' report, in China.”

Almost 4 million lives have been lost to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with well over a million in the G7 nations, based on conservative figures compiled by the world's governments, with nearly 176 million infected. The demand that China “come clean” would therefore alone provide a casus belli for aggression against China. But things did not stop there.



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, center, with from left, Italy's Prime Minister Mario Draghi, Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Korea's President Moon Jae-in, US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and President of the European Council Charles Michel during the G7 summit in Cornwall, England, Saturday June 12, 2021. (Leon Neal/Pool via AP)

Point 49 of the communique points to trade war between the imperialist powers and Beijing. Asserting the “particular responsibility of the largest countries and economies in upholding the rules-based international system and international law,” it continues with “regard to China ... we will continue to consult on collective approaches to challenging non-market policies and practices which undermine the fair and transparent operation of the global economy.”

It ends with the threat that “we will promote our values, including by calling on China to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in relation to Xinjiang and those rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.”

Xinjiang is home to China’s Uighur population and has been the chief focus of accusations of human rights abuses by Washington and other capitals.

Point 60 declares the ambitions of the imperialist powers to confront China militarily on its own doorstep, stating: “We reiterate the importance of maintaining a free and open Indo Pacific, which is inclusive and based on the rule of law. We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions.”

The militarist subtext of such statements of “concern” over China’s supposedly “unilateral” moves to consolidate its dominance of global seaways was epitomised by US President Joe Biden and Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson posing on a Cornish beach with one of the UK’s new £3 billion aircraft carriers, HMS Prince of Wales, and other warships in view behind them. The UK’s other carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, is the lead ship in a carrier strike group, including a US destroyer and Marines, that is heading towards the South China Sea where it will carry out military exercises.

Additionally, the G7 pledged to combat China’s One Belt One Road initiative (OBOR), through which it is undertaking numerous global infrastructure projects to facilitate trade, with the launch of a US-led Build Back Better World (B3W) development project. Russia was also the target of hostilities. Point 51 states: “We reaffirm our call on Russia to stop its destabilising behaviour and malign activities, including its interference in other countries’ democratic systems.” It calls on Russia to withdraw “military troops and materiel at the eastern border of Ukraine and on the Crimean peninsula. We remain firmly of the view that Russia is a party to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, not a mediator.”

Biden arrived at the summit declaring that America is back. What this translates to for the world’s population is an escalating danger of war. As Biden told US troops stationed at RAF Mildenhall, America’s “one truly sacred obligation” was to “prepare and equip” its armed forces. Last month, the Biden administration released its budget proposal for the coming year centred on a record military budget of \$753 billion, including \$24.7 billion for nuclear weapons modernization.

Germany, France and Britain have all ratcheted up military spending, with the Johnson government increasing its nuclear warhead stockpile by a massive 40 percent.

The obscenity of the multitrillion-dollar war drive was thrown into stark relief by the summit's determined refusal to do anything to seriously combat the escalating threat of the pandemic. While busily spreading the lie of a Chinese lab origin, the G7 governments are intent on continuing to allow COVID-19's ever more deadly variants to spread unchecked while they funnel the world's resources into the bank accounts of the oligarchs and transnational corporations.

The cost of vaccinating the world's population has been put at just \$66 billion, but this will not be raised by the world's richest nations. The G7 would only agree to donate a tiny fraction of the vaccines needed—one billion doses will be made available, but with the majority not distributed until the end of 2022 and with little infrastructure in place to do so. This equates to less than 10 percent of the 11 billion doses urgently needed globally to fight the pandemic. Even this headline pledge is a lie. The US offer to donate 500 million doses of the Pfizer and BioNTech SE vaccine is in lieu of \$2 billion it pledged to the global vaccination program COVAX, with the US total funding amounting to just \$5.5 billion—less than one percent of its military budget.

Nothing must cut across the accumulation of profits by the major corporations. In the face of growing public repugnance at the superrich glutting themselves during the pandemic and multitrillion-dollar corporate bailouts, the G7 made a meaningless pledge to establish at some unspecified date “an ambitious global minimum tax” on corporations. But the communique reassured all concerned that this would still be as low as “15 per cent on a country-by-country basis.”

The summit was heralded as a return to business as normal after the fractious relations between the major powers during Donald Trump's presidency, but it was dominated to an extraordinary degree by rising interimperialist tensions, including between the UK and European Union over post-Brexit trading arrangements.

Despite Biden's efforts to bludgeon his rivals into line, by the summit's end, commentators were stressing that Trump's departure has not fixed US-European relations, or the deep internal political crisis in the United States—which saw Trump launch an attempted coup on January 6 to try to seize the US Capitol and block the certification of Biden's election victory.

Several noted that Biden will be 82 if he contests the next 2024 election, rapidly reaching the end of his political career. Former EU ambassador to Washington David O'Sullivan asked, "Is this an interregnum between Trump 1.0 and Trump 2.0? Nobody knows. ... I think most people are of the view that we should seize the opportunity with this administration to strengthen the [G7] relationship and hope that this can survive beyond the midterms and 2024."

The fundamental question posed by the G7 summit is how the growing war danger, the threat of the pandemic and the mounting social catastrophe facing humanity are to be combated?

Over the last decades, the very same forces driving the imperialist powers into conflict and towards war are creating the conditions for working class opposition to develop.

Analysing the "Globalization of capitalism and the renewed upsurge of the working class" in a June 7 WWSW perspective, David North noted: "In history there is such a thing as retribution. For all the crimes committed by capitalism against the working class over the past 40 years, the ruling class, in the very process of attacking the working class and vastly enriching itself, has overseen a vast expansion and integration of the capitalist system of production. The most significant and revolutionary outcome of this process—driven by staggering advances in science and technology—is the massive growth in the global working class."

This gigantic social force must now be mobilised through the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International, based on a revolutionary socialist perspective against social reaction, militarism and war.

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