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At G7 summit, Tokyo escalates tensions with China over Taiwan

Japan and the United States are continuing their campaign to demonize China in preparation for war, a fact that was on full display at last weekend's G7 summit in the United Kingdom. Lining up with the aggressive anti-China push of President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga used the platform to continue to question the "One China" policy regarding Taiwan and back the false claims that Beijing is responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.



Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga attends a plenary session, during the G7 summit in Carbis Bay, England, Sunday June 13, 2021. (Phil Noble/Pool via AP)

According to a White House press release, Biden and Suga met on the sidelines of the summit "to discuss shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific and the world, including

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COVID-19, climate change, North Korea, China, and preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.” Similar statements were also included in the G7 communiqué, which was essentially a threat of war against Beijing.

Tokyo and Washington are not concerned with “peace and stability” in Taiwan or anywhere else in the region. The US is seeking to ensure its post-World War II hegemony with an all-sided offensive against China, the world’s second-largest economy, aimed at neutralizing it and if necessary, through war and dismemberment. The Japanese ruling elite is supporting these efforts to further its own imperialist ambitions.

The US and Japan are also seeking to offset their own crises, including widespread popular anger over their criminally-negligent and profit-driven response to the pandemic.

During the G7 summit, Suga also called for Taiwan to be allowed to participate in the annual World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer. The WHA is the World Health Organizations (WHO) decision-making body. Taiwan is not a country and therefore not a member of the WHO. Suga claimed that allowing the island to participate would prevent the development of any “geographical vacuums” in addressing global health issues.

Suga’s call for Taiwan to be part of the WHO has nothing to do with public health. Its purpose is to undermine the “One China” policy and further the lie that Beijing is responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Encouraged by Washington, Taipei has claimed the WHO ignored its warnings about human-to-human transmission of the virus in a December 31, 2019 email to the agency. The document, however, did not mention the possibility of such infections. The push to include Taiwan in the WHO is therefore based on an attempt to raise the island’s international standing, at the expense of Beijing, based on lies.

This agenda is fully backed by the entire Japanese political establishment, including so-called left parties like the Stalinist Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Reiwa Shinsengumi. The latter was founded by actor-turned-politician Taro Yamamoto, who has sought to position himself as a left-wing political outsider. In reality, Yamamoto enjoys close relations with numerous high-profile politicians, including Ichiro Ozawa, a leading establishment figure within the bourgeois opposition bloc.

On June 11, the House of Councillors, the upper house of Japan's National Diet, unanimously passed a resolution calling on Tokyo to pressure other countries into accepting Taiwan's inclusion in the WHA beginning next year. The JCP holds 13 seats in the upper house while Reiwa holds two.

The resolution followed Prime Minister Suga's first in-person meeting with opposition party leaders in the Diet on June 9, during which both he and Yukio Edano, leader of the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, referred to Taiwan as a "country." These were not mere slips of the tongue, but a coordinated provocation against Beijing.

In his remarks, Suga listed Taiwan as a "country" alongside Australia and New Zealand, praising them for their COVID-19 responses.

The following day, Beijing criticized Tokyo. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Wang Wenbin stated that Suga "broke Japan's long-standing promise not to regard Taiwan as a country." He added, "China demands that Japan make an immediate clarification to undo the harm already caused and guarantee a similar incident will never happen again."

On June 11, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato walked back the statements, saying "Japan's position is to maintain working relations with Taiwan at the nongovernment level... That's our basic policy and there is no change to that." This does not alter the fact that Washington and Tokyo are provocatively and continuously chipping away at the "One China" policy.

Following its defeat in the 1949 Chinese Revolution, the Kuomintang (KMT) fled to Taiwan where, backed by the US, it claimed to be the legitimate government of all of China. Taiwan was allowed to occupy China's seat in the United Nations, including one of the five permanent seats on the Security Council until 1971.

The US and Japan, however, cut formal ties with Taiwan and recognized Beijing as the legitimate government of all of China in the 1970s, thereby acknowledging the "One China" policy. This has served as a bedrock principle governing China's diplomatic relations, including with the US and Japan, ever since.

Tokyo has not explicitly repudiated the policy—an act that could lead to war—but its continued questioning of Taiwan’s status sharply raises the risk of a conflict occurring. The US and Japan see Taiwan as a crucial component in a war against the Chinese mainland.

There are historical parallels between Tokyo’s actions today and its colonization of Taiwan in 1895, a result of Japan’s victory in the First Sino-Japanese War. At that time, Japan recognized that Taiwan was an important launch pad for projecting its power into Southeast Asia. In addition, while Tokyo claimed the war was meant to “free” Korea from China’s control, Japan sought to expand into mainland Asia, which culminated in the annexation of the Korean Peninsula in 1910 and the further expansion of Japanese imperialism into Manchuria.

Tokyo and Washington are now engaged in a similar campaign to ramp up pressure on China by backing Taiwan’s anti-Beijing government, making false and exaggerated claims of genocide in Xinjiang, and voicing hypocritical human rights’ concerns over Hong Kong. Such an agenda has nothing to do with defending democratic rights but is leading the world to a deadly global conflict.

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