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Tokyo considers boycott of Beijing Olympics

As Japan fully embraces the war drive being led by the United States against China, Tokyo is increasing pressure on Beijing on a number of fronts. These moves are highly provocative and can only push Northeast Asia further towards the brink of armed conflict. Tokyo's manoeuvres are designed to lend credence to the bevy of lies coming out of Washington to demonize the Chinese.

Last Saturday, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported that the administration of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is likely to join the US-led diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February, by not sending a Cabinet-level official to the event, according to government sources. NHK, Japan's national broadcaster, also confirmed the report.



National Speed Skating Oval in China. (Arne Müsseler/Wikimedia Commons)

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However, Tokyo may try to offset any diplomatic fallout by sending Japanese athletic officials, such as Yasuhiro Yamashita, the president of the Japanese Olympic Committee, or Seiko Hashimoto, the president of the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. A final decision is expected by the end of the year.

Prior to the report, Prime Minister Kishida stated on December 9 in regards to a potential boycott, “I will decide the Japanese government’s response at an appropriate time in the light of national interests after comprehensively considering diplomatic and other factors.”

Washington announced hypocritically on December 6 that it would send no official delegation to the Beijing Olympics in order to ramp up pressure on China over “human rights.” Since then, a handful of other nations have joined the boycott, including Australia, Canada, and Britain.

One of the loudest voices in Tokyo seeking to push the Kishida government more openly into conflict with Beijing, including over the Olympics, is that of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He told a meeting of his Hosoda faction within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) on December 9, that Kishida’s government was “required to show a political attitude and send out a message about the human rights situation” in Xinjiang. “Isn’t it the time to express Japan’s will?” Abe added. Kishida is from the opposing Kochikai faction.

Abe in recent weeks has also inflamed the situation over Taiwan, which under the “One China” policy is considered a part of Chinese territory. On December 1, Abe made a statement tantamount to a threat of war, saying, “A Taiwan emergency is a Japanese emergency, and therefore an emergency for the Japan-US alliance. People in Beijing, President Xi Jinping in particular, should never have a misunderstanding in recognizing this.”

Under Japan’s so-called pacifist constitution, the country is supposedly barred from having military forces or waging war overseas. These constitutional limitations have been successively undermined, including under Abe, but Japan’s military forces still nominally require a justification of “self-defense” or “collective self-defense” of an ally like the US to justify their involvement in a war.

The comments drew anger from Beijing, with China's assistant Foreign Minister Hua Chunying summoning Japanese ambassador Hideo Tarumi for a meeting. Hua reportedly stated that Beijing would "reconsider how it approaches bilateral relations and how it treats Japan" if Tokyo takes further action on Taiwan.

As Abe does not serve in the government in an official capacity, Tokyo has brushed aside his remarks as those made in a private capacity. However, despite resigning from office for health reasons in 2020, Abe still maintains a great deal of influence within the LDP.

Abe elaborated on what such a "Taiwan emergency" could look like on December 13, stating, "In the event of an attack on a US vessel, it could be a situation posing a threat to Japan's survival, which would allow the exercise of collective self-defense." In other words, a US-staged provocation in the Taiwan Strait could be seized upon as the rationale for Tokyo to go to war with China alongside Washington.

While claiming opposition to Beijing is based on false accusations of genocide against the ethnic Uyghur population in Xinjiang, other "human rights" abuses, and supposed threats against Taiwan, the countries participating in the Olympics boycott include those responsible for the destruction of entire societies throughout the Middle East and Afghanistan over the past thirty years. These countries—the US, UK and Australia in particular—are also those most actively engaged in military preparations aimed at China.

Japan's participation would be highly provocative. It reflects the push to deepen Tokyo's own involvement in the US-led war drive in an effort to cast off its constitutional restrictions and secure its imperialist interests on the Asian continent.

Prime Minister Kishida has also made provocative statements over Taiwan, including giving support to the island's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO). Under the "One China" policy, with which Tokyo is formally in agreement, Taiwan is not an independent country, but a part of China. Beijing justifiably fears that if Taiwan declares independence, Washington and Tokyo will turn the island into a military base aimed at the mainland.

"We have consistently insisted at the WHO that there should not be a geographical void in dealing with international health issues and have consistently supported Taiwan's

attendance as an observer,” the prime minister told the National Diet on December 9. “It is important to widely share information and knowledge of the countries and regions.”

Washington in particular has pushed for Taiwan’s inclusion in the WHO as a means of furthering the lie that China sought to cover up the COVID-19 pandemic or was directly responsible for creating the virus. In this regard, references to “sharing information” are meant to denigrate the efforts of Chinese scientists and doctors to deal with the pandemic while claiming Beijing is hiding information, as well as to promote Taipei as a democratic alternative to Beijing.

Amid this push to demonize Beijing, Tokyo has also pledged to deepen its alliances with the other G7 nations, which issued a threatening communiqué on December 12 directed at China and Russia, following a two-day foreign minister summit in Liverpool, Britain.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Japan’s Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi met with his counterpart, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The two stated that it was “indispensable to bolster the deterrence and response capabilities of the alliance amid the increasingly harsh security environment.” They pledged to work closely with Australia and India, the four of which comprise the “Quad,” a quasi-military alliance of so-called democracies aimed against China.

The foreign ministers from Australia and India were also invited to the G-7 summit, as were those from South Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in a manoeuvre to increase pressure on Beijing. In talks with his Australian counterpart Marise Payne, Hayashi once more emphasized Tokyo’s commitment to the Quad. Tokyo is moving ever closer to a dangerous conflict with China that would engulf the region.

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