Expansionism knows no bounds. After taking Europe to the verge of a major war by pushing for NATO’s expansion further into Eastern Europe to encircle Russia, the US is now increasingly focusing on Taiwan for what the US officials have been, for over a year now, calling an ‘increasing possibility’ of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. There is a flurry of activity going on around Taiwan to prevent it from suffering what Mike Pompeo, the former US Secretary of State and a possible candidate for presidential elections in the US in 2024, said during his recent visit to Taiwan the ‘Ukraine like fate.’ Again, even though Joe Biden, when he became POTUS last year, vowed to reverse Trump’s policies, China is one case where he is very much following in Trump’s footsteps. In fact, various officials of Biden administration have vowed to continue Trump’s policy vis-à-vis Taiwan and China, showing anti-China policy is embedded within the US “deep-state” and that it is not simply dependent upon POTUS.

A high-profile delegation sent by Biden arrived in Taiwan on March 2 to express firm US commitment with Taiwan’s security and future. “The United States will continue to oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan”, told former chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Mike Mullen, who is leading the delegation, to the president of Taiwan.

The visit actually follows US efforts to arm Taiwan vis-à-vis China. On February 8, Joe Biden approved a US$ 100
million contract aimed at strengthening Taiwan’s missile defense systems. In early February, the Biden administration unveiled its Indo-Pacific strategy to contain China. As the document stresses, “We will also work with partners inside and outside of the region to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, including by supporting Taiwan’s self-defense capabilities, to ensure an environment in which Taiwan’s future is determined peacefully in accordance with the wishes and best interests of Taiwan’s people.”

This rhetoric is being facilitated by Taiwan’s top leadership as well. As president of Taiwan said, “China’s military threat to the Taiwan Strait and to the region continues to rise, whether by working to limit Taiwan’s international participation or by using cognitive warfare tactics and disinformation to divide Taiwanese society and erode our democracy.”

As an administration following the Trump administration’s policy, the delegation’s visit manifests what Mike Pompeo, as Secretary of State, said in 2020 that the US will no longer adhere to its traditional level of political contact with Taiwan. That the US is invariably enhancing its political – and military – contact with Taiwan also means that the US is keen to expand its overall ties with Taiwan – something that China resents. This is quite similar to how the US efforts to push NATO into Ukraine provoked the Russia-Ukraine war in the first place. Enhancing political and military contacts with Taiwan against China is qualitatively similar to NATO’s expansion in Europe against Russia.

A simultaneous crisis surrounding two of the US’ most formidable military and economic peers will have many consequences for Washington.

First, it will keep both Russia and China involved military conflicts in their own backyards rather than thousands of miles from their mainland. Secondly, by provoking both of its strategic peers into wars, the US might be able to develop an anti-Russia and anti-China global coalition it has been seeking to build for almost a decade now when the ‘Asia Pivot’ was launched by the Obama administration. Thirdly, such a coalition will inevitably be led by the US. As it stands, taking Ukraine as a playbook for entrenching US hegemony in Europe, many states in Europe, including Germany, have decided to increase their defense budgets to spend more on common defense. This means that the European drive to establish a European security system is now effectively out of focus for the next few years and the US remains central to the European security. Fourthly, the US hopes that by engaging Russia and China in wars and by demonising them, it might be able to restrict their ability to challenge the US-centric, dollar dominate global financial systems with their alternative model of finance that places local currencies, rather the USD, at the centre of most financial transactions. By restricting the Russian-Chinese payment systems, the US can maintain the global relevance of its own system.

A full provocation is, thus, at play here. China’s response to these efforts must be nothing but a good news for the hawks occupying the White House. As China’s Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said in a regular media briefing on March 1, “If the US tries to intimidate and pressure China in this way, then we have this stern warning: the so-called military deterrence will be reduced to scrap iron when facing the steely great wall of the 1.4 billion Chinese people,” Wang said. “The trick of sending vessels to sail through the Taiwan Strait should be better saved to entertain those obsessed with hegemony”, Wang added.

These provocations are very much consistent with how the US very largely portrays the Russian and Chinese leaders as ‘expansionists’ driven by the desire to expand their empires, although it remains that the actual reason for the trouble we see in Europe today or might see in Asia in near future is tied directly and unambiguously to the US efforts to preserve its hegemony. This is one key reason why the US got out of Afghanistan in an absurdly haphazard manner, because staying in Afghanistan any longer would not have served the US purpose of tackling its rivals. By extracting itself out of Afghanistan, the US “deep-state” is now in a better position to sell fresh wars to the US public against the ‘authoritarian’ states of China and Russia as ‘wars for democracy.’

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