

The AXIS Act, a Step toward World War III

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The Axis powers, including Germany and Japan, were the foes of the United States and other Allied powers in World War II. Decades later, President George W. Bush chose to term some other nations — Iraq, Iran, and North Korea — as a new “axis of evil.” That was followed by a US invasion and overthrow in Iraq. Decades later, US troops remain in Iraq, and US sanctions and hostility directed at the other two nations continue.

This week, the United States House of Representatives is set to bring the Axis designation back to the big time — seeking to lump China in with Russia as the new Axis powers the US should be devoted to opposing. The movement toward a new world war — the first one with nuclear powers on both sides — grows stronger.

The House is scheduled to consider the AXIS Act ([HR 7314](#)) this week. “AXIS” in the title is the kind of ridiculous acronym that has become common in US legislation. It stands for “Assessing Xi’s Interference and Subversion.” “Xi” is Xi Jinping, the leader of China’s government.

The AXIS Act is being considered under suspension of the rules. Legislation deemed noncontroversial by House leadership can be considered under suspension of the rules in which there is usually a relatively brief House floor debate. Suspension legislation is also often passed by voice vote on a nearly empty house floor. Pressing forward toward World War III is not controversial? For many oblivious House members that probably is the case.

The AXIS Act starts off with a series of findings attempting to paint China as an aider of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The accusations included are underwhelming: China and Russia made a strategic partnership announcement a few weeks before the invasion; China abstained from voting on resolutions condemning the invasion in the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly; China has not publicly condemned the invasion.

That’s it. The resolution implicitly admits its backers cannot really tie China to supporting

the invasion of Ukraine. Still the resolution proceeds, in what it states is the “sense of Congress,” to bluster that “the People’s Republic of China’s disinformation efforts relating to the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine make it culpable in whitewashing Russia’s war crimes, which include the indiscriminate killing of countless Ukrainian men, women, and children.”

It is the second and final listed “sense of Congress” that is the heart of the resolution and that holds the threat of increased animosity toward China and the potential eruption of World War III. It states that it is the sense of Congress that, “if China is found to be materially supporting Russia in its war against Ukraine, there should be swift and stringent consequences for China.”

Swift and stringent consequences have already been imposed against Russia. They amount to nearly everything short of US troops fighting against the Russian military, though, with US history as a guide, it should be suspected that US troops are engaged covertly in some military actions against Russians. The US has established expansive sanctions on Russia, extensively blocked investment in and commerce with Russia, and excluded Russia from financial systems including SWIFT that facilitate participation in international trade. The US has also been funding, supplying, and training Ukraine military forces that are fighting against Russians.

In an apparent effort to justify the US treating China similarly, the AXIS Act requires the real experts at depicting other nations as enemies — the Department of State — to “submit to the appropriate congressional committees” within 30 days and then every 90 days thereafter “a report on whether and how the People’s Republic of China, including the Government of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Communist Party, any Chinese state-owned enterprise, and any other Chinese entity, has provided support to the Russian Federation with respect to its unprovoked invasion of and full-scale war against Ukraine.”

These reports will provide House members keen on ramping up hostilities against China with the steady stream of pro-war propaganda they desire. And have no doubt that the executive branch will be happy to provide such. The Biden administration’s interests are in the same direction as the House members raging at China. President Joe Biden has already been out using the Ukraine War as a reason for threatening China. Indeed, the AXIS Act notes one example of this:

“In his call with Xi Jinping on March 18, 25 2022, President Joe Biden communicated that there would be ‘implications and consequences if China provides material support to Russia as it conducts brutal attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilians’.”

The AXIS Act is a significant step in the effort by Congress members and the Biden administration, using the Ukraine War as an excuse, to direct against China hostilities already directed against Russia, and maybe more. Most of the backers of this effort probably expect that such actions will not lead to World War III. Hopefully, they are correct in that assessment. Even if they are correct that the most dire consequences will be avoided, the toll of expanding hostilities against China will still be harsh for people across the world. For what gain? None is clear. What is clear is that there is much potential danger ahead and that US politicians are propelling Americans and the world toward it.

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