President Biden on Monday expressed confidence that a “new Cold War” can be avoided with China and that Beijing is not planning an “imminent” invasion of U.S. ally Taiwan. The two leaders, while exchanging greetings and shaking hands for the cameras, appeared relaxed and friendly despite a nadir in relations between the world’s two largest economies. The U.S. president added that he believed that competition with China would not turn into a military conflict and that there was no “imminent attempt” by China to invade Taiwan. Meanwhile, the Chinese Foreign Ministry put out a statement saying that Xi was emphatic in his warnings to Biden that the U.S. must refrain from supporting independence for Taiwan.

China has made increasingly aggressive territorial claims in the South China Sea and stepped up threats to Taiwan, which Beijing regards as a renegade province. Tensions over Taiwan were exacerbated following high-profile visits to Taipei by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) and other U.S. lawmakers, as well as Biden’s public offers to defend the island “militarily” from Chinese attack.

The meeting at an Indonesia resort came as the two countries also spar over what Washington considers to be China’s oppression of dissidents and minorities at home and aggressive push to extend power and influence abroad. Beijing is angry over Biden’s maintenance of Trump-era trade restrictions and punitive sanctions that harm its economy.

Flanked by their delegations, Biden and Xi then took their positions across from each other at two long tables. The Chinese each wore a white face mask adorned with a tiny red Chinese flag; the Americans wore black, white and other masks. Biden and Xi did not wear masks.

The president left the summits emboldened by feedback he received from several foreign leaders who complimented him on his party’s performance in the midterm elections. Biden said there was “little substitute” for face-to-face discussions and “the world expects, I believe, China and the United States to play key roles in addressing global challenges from climate changes to food insecurity, and for us to be able to work together.” He said he would dispatch Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to China soon to continue the dialogue.

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The president held a face-to-face meeting with Xi at an Indonesia resort, and said there was “little substitute” for face-to-face discussions. He said “the world expects, I believe, China and the United States to play key roles in addressing global challenges from climate changes to food insecurity, and for us to be able to work together,” and that he would dispatch Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to China soon to continue the dialogue. He was buoyed by support he received from several foreign leaders at the summits, and said he and Xi were committed to keeping the lines of communication open.