



China Plays the West

China seeks economic and military dominance of the world. This should be an axiom for President Biden's State Department. Yet the Biden administration's zeal to persuade China to commit to climate change has resulted in a confused message to China and to the world.

John Kerry, Biden's special climate envoy, returned in early November from a climate summit in Glasgow, Scotland touting the Glasgow Climate Pact signed by 200 nations including China. The signatory nations pledged to undertake unspecified "enhanced climate actions" to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. In return, developed countries are to spend \$100 billion to combat climate change. China considers itself a developing nation, so its signature on the agreement is nearly meaningless. Even as the Chinese envoy signed the pact, China continues its breakneck pace of constructing coal-fired electric power plants.

Once again China played the United States. There is a long history of this. The U.S. has better options.

History of Playing the West

In the late 1930s, Mao Zedong launched a campaign to create an image of himself as a benign revolutionary. To fulfill this task, Mao's agents approached American journalist Edgar Snow, who had arrived in China in 1931. Snow had developed a close friendship with journalist Agnes Smedley, a suspected Comintern spy and lover of Soviet spymaster Richard Sorge. Smedley vouched for Snow's leftist sympathies.

In preparing for Snow's arrival in northern China, Mao told his staff to project "warmth" while not revealing their communist ideology.¹ Mao insisted that Snow submit his interview questions beforehand. Over the course of three months, Snow interviewed Mao and his well-rehearsed comrades. In the interviews, Mao portrayed himself as a humble peasant who sought agrarian reform and betterment for his people. He claimed heroic military exploits in his struggle to liberate China from the corrupt dictatorship of the Chiang Kai-shek government.

Before Snow's manuscript of a biography of Mao was sent to press, Mao's comrades amended and rewrote sections of the

biography, all with Snow's approval. When published in 1937, *Red Star Over China* became the major Western source for information on Mao's China and remained so for decades. Snow's reputation was such that President Nixon invited Snow to travel with him to China in February 1972.

Mao's image as an agrarian reformer was reinforced by dozens of other Western reporters including Agnes Smedley, Anna Louise Strong, James Bertram and T.A. Bisson. American policymakers took the bait, intentionally or unintentionally. Lauchlin Currie, a top White House aide later revealed to be a Soviet spy, stated, "It appears at ten thousand miles away the Chinese Communists are what in our country we would call socialists. We like their attitude toward the peasants, toward women and Japan." He told President Franklin D. Roosevelt that the "the Communists have been the only party which has been able to attract mass support."

Typical of the duped policymakers was General Patrick Hurley, Roosevelt's special envoy to China in 1944, who returned home to tell the National Press Club in Washington that "the only difference between Chinese Communists and Oklahoma Republicans is that the Oklahoma Republicans are not armed."²

Harry S. Truman, who became president following Roosevelt's death in April 1945, continued his predecessor's pro-Mao policy. The Truman administration insisted that the Chiang Nationalist government form a coalition with Mao. Chiang and Mao met for 45 days working out an agreement to end the civil war. After the agreement was reached, Mao declared, "We must stop [the] civil war and all parties must unite under the leadership of Chairman Chiang to build a modern China." Once home, Mao bragged to comrades that the agreement was a "mere scrap of paper."³

Arguably it was the Nixon administration that demonstrated the most gullibility toward Mao. Intent on playing Communist China off against the Soviet Union, believing themselves to be geopolitical chess masters, Nixon and Henry Kissinger sent word to Mao early in the administration that they wanted to repair relations with China. In 1971, Kissinger secretly visited China, where he offered to drop U.S. support for Tai-

wan and recognize China in 1975. In addition, the United States agreed to support China's entrance into the United Nations. Kissinger even offered to provide details of current negotiations with the Soviet Union about the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty talks, and to share American intelligence concerning Soviet nuclear and military strength.

Nixon flew to Beijing in February 1972 to meet with Mao, who was extremely ill. The meeting lasted only an hour. Mao refused to discuss any substantive details, but this did not stop Nixon from praising him as one of the world's finest poets and philosophers, as evidenced by Mao's *Little Red Book*. Mao did not return any compliment to Nixon.

With the opening of China, Nixon was convinced he had outfoxed the aging Mao. For Mao, the meeting was a propaganda triumph, and China secured secret high-level American intelligence. Kissinger, meanwhile, proceeded to encourage France and Britain to sell China nuclear reactor technology. Upon returning to the States, Nixon observed that "under Mao the lives of the Chinese masses have greatly improved."⁴

Taiwan 50 Years Later

Today the Biden administration seems no less naïve about China than were Nixon and Kissinger. Following the Glasgow climate summit in November, Defense Department spokesman John Kirby was asked whether his department viewed China or climate as the bigger threat. Kirby's reply was lame at best. "I think," he said with a straight face, "we get paid to examine all the threats to our national security," only to add, "You've heard [Secretary of State Antony Blinken] talk about the climate as a real, an existential national security threat, and it is—not just to the United States, but countries all over the world. And we consider China as the number one challenge for the Department. Both are equally important."⁵

This is an administration that has vaguely promised it would take "unspecified" actions if China invades Taiwan.⁶ Following a closed-door meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Group 20 meeting in late October, Blinken said he made it "crystal clear" that Washington opposes any unilateral changes by Beijing to the status quo around Taiwan.⁷ Blinken's toothless warning came after months of Chinese intrusions into Taiwanese air space. On the day Blinken and Wang met, Taipei reported eight such intrusions into the Taiwan air defense identification zone.⁸

Blinken certainly understands that China seeks world domination. In May this year, he told CBS *60 Minutes* reporter Norah O'Donnell that "over time, China believes it can be and should be and will be the dominant country in the world." This interview came at a time when China's president unveiled three new warships to patrol the South China Sea. *China now has the largest navy in the world*. When pressed, however, on confronting China, Blinken blinked.

Asked about the genocide of Uyghurs in Xinjiang by the Chinese government, Blinken weakly replied, "Look, we don't have—the luxury of not dealing with China. There are real complexities to the relationship, whether it's the adversarial piece, whether it's the competitive piece, whether it's the cooperative piece."¹⁰

Blinken is airy or dismissive about other issues with China as well. As to theft of intellectual property by the Chinese, he merely said "we have real concerns about the actions that China has taken, and that includes in the economic area, and that includes—the theft of intellectual property." When confronted with projections that China's gross domestic product will surpass the United States as early as 2028, Blinken tepidly answered, "Well, it's a large country, it's got a lot of people."

Yet Blinken believes America is up to the task of confronting China: "What I've found looking at our own history, is that when we've confronted a significant challenge, significant competition—significant adversity, we've managed to come together and actually do the long-term investment." He concluded, "And that is really the moment we're in now.... Are we actually going to rise to it? I—President Biden believes we are."

Blinken's interview is revealing in that he recognized China is a threat, but he parses America's response to the Chinese challenge into three separate areas—economic, military and cooperative. China, however, sees each area as part of a whole strategy for world domination.

A Better Approach for Biden

Foreign policy can be divided into separate niches of economic cooperation, military competition and adversarial diplomacy. But consider the following analogy. In the 1930s, Nazi Germany under Hitler made clear it was seeking world domination. Germany began a massive military build-up. At home, Hitler assumed one-party rule, arrested and murdered political opponents, and initiated anti-Jewish policies that ultimately led to genocide against Jews. Germany invaded Austria, and then after threatening an invasion of Czechoslovakia, a peace accord at Munich was reached to hand over part of that country to Germany. What came next was the Nazi invasion of Poland, followed by the occupation of all of continental Western Europe. England came under violent air attack and verged on collapse.

Should the United States government have told Hitler that it abhorred the German treatment of Jews and opposed the continued build-up of Nazi military forces, but was seeking areas of mutual cooperation? For example, should U.S. policy have encouraged businesses such as our chemical industrialists to continue to invest in Germany and cooperate in scientific investigation? Should the U.S. government have promoted forest conservation by giving money to Nazi Germany to preserve its Bavarian forests? Such policies toward a rapidly arming aggressor would have been foolish.

This is not to suggest going to war with China. What the U.S. needs is a clear strategy that integrates trade, investment, military and diplomatic strategies. Linkage of issues and verification of treaties are essential components of the diplomatic strategy. These concepts were employed by the Reagan administration in confronting the Soviet Union. Idle promises from China to cut fossil fuels while it continues to build coal power plants make no sense. Any agreement with China on climate control should include verification that it is following through on its promises.

Linkage does not mean that every treaty or agreement between the U.S. and China needs to include every contentious issue. What it means is that in meetings and negotiations with the Chinese, *human rights issues should be raised*. Chinese officials bring up Taiwan as a renegade province in their meetings. American officials need to bring up the Chinese government's vile treatment of Uyghurs and Falun Gong, repression of Christians and Buddhists, clear violations of civil rights in Hong Kong, and our willingness to defend Taiwan.

Trump's More Promising Policies

The Trump administration was pursuing this strategy, not hesitating to take a tough stand including sanctions on senior Chinese officials for the mass detention of Uyghurs. On the global front, the Trump administration was countering China's "Belt and Road" policy in which China provided loans to developing countries and then took those countries hostage. Trump initiated the Blue Dot Network to counter Beijing investments in developing countries. The idea of the Blue Dot Network was not to match China's funding but rather, as the State Department said, to certify projects as "market-driven, transparent and sustainable" in order to reassure investors. This initiative fell short in investment funds, but with more funding it could bear fruit.¹¹

Similarly, the Trump administration pursued a policy to make America less reliant on China for rare earth minerals. China has aimed to monopolize global rare earth minerals by gaining mining rights in poor nations rich in such resources. In October 2020, Trump signed an executive order calling for greater domestic production and mining of rare earth minerals, on which American manufacturers depend.

The implications of this policy are evident in the production of lithium used in batteries. "It's a declaration that the U.S. must be self-reliant and independent from foreign sources and free from geo-political interference," says Jim Hahn, advisory board member for American Manganese.¹² American Manganese, listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, is in the battery recycling business. They extract metals such as lithium and cobalt from used electric car batteries to produce high-powered, long-life batteries.

The Trump administration also began to restore American defense technology and forces. The Biden administration has not withdrawn totally from some of these policies, but defense spending is being cut and our rhetorical tone toward China appears to run hot and cold. Biden sends Kerry to negotiate on climate change, but he is instructed not to raise other issues. Asked at a press conference at the Glasgow climate summit about China's use of slave labor to build solar panels, Kerry replied, "That's not my lane here. My job is to be the climate guy."¹³ But there are serious issues to be raised with China.

Biden's officials should take inspiration from Enes Kanter, a center for the Boston Celtics professional basketball team, who on November 16 took to social media to slam China for its reported industrial-scale murder of prisoners of conscience to harvest their organs. The Women's Tennis Association and several celebrated female tennis champions have called attention to the regime's apparent crackdown on a Chinese female tennis champion, Peng Shuai, who issued a presumably coerced recantation after alleging sexual assault by a former vice-premier of China. The association is threatening to cancel championship matches in China. And Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) has called on the Biden administration to boycott the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing because of security risks and human rights abuses.

In Defense of Hong Kong and Taiwan

The United States should join Britain in insisting that China live up to its treaty signed with the Thatcher government, which turned Hong Kong over to China two decades ago. At the time, Beijing said Hong Kong would keep its capitalist system and enjoy its freedoms. China has taken brazen steps to crack down on dissent on all levels.

In 2020 Beijing passed a controversial national security law and arrested dozens of pro-democracy activists and lawmakers. This national security law bypassed the Hong Kong legislature and criminalized dissent. Full-scale repression continues in Hong Kong today. Legislators and judges are now selected by the Beijing government. So-called "patriotic" curricular programs have been introduced in Hong Kong schools.¹⁴

People who can afford to are fleeing the city. It is clear that China wants to bring the so-called Hong Kong province under heel, while trying to preserve its financial wealth. American and other foreign multinational corporations are remaining cautious. For them the question is whether financial independence can be maintained in an authoritarian regime. This might be an ideal time for American policymakers to begin to push back on the Chinese government and its repressive policies in Hong Kong.

Similarly, the United States needs to send a direct and strong message that it stands behind Taiwan. This is a matter of principle but also of U.S. economic interest. Taiwan is the

world's largest producer of computer chips.¹⁵ This might be the reason China has taken such an aggressive policy toward Taiwan.¹⁶ TSMC, Taiwan's largest chipmaker, is building a huge chip-making plant in Phoenix, Arizona.¹⁷ This plant will reduce U.S. reliance on Taiwan's island manufacturing for nearly 90 percent of its computer chips. Pressure on China to back off Taiwan is in the national interest of the U.S.

Grand Strategy toward China

The United States needs to pursue a long-term grand strategy toward China. This means linking issues in discussions with China. It means seeking verification with treaties with China by not accepting laughable promises such as that coal emissions will be reduced, while China continues to build coal plants. Most important, it means making *long-term investments in military technology*. We cannot rely on short-term planning by the Pentagon and corporations seeking short-term profits.

Physicist and former Defense Intelligence Agency official Michael Sekora believes that the recent testing of hypersonic missiles by China shows that the U.S. has already fallen behind in military technology. He urges that planning be based on technology-driven decision-making.¹⁸ Cybersecurity expert Nicolas Chaillan resigned from the Department of Defense in September in protest over the slow pace of technological transformation in the U.S. military as China has pulled ahead of the U.S. in artificial intelligence and cyber capabilities.¹⁹

We are at a critical turning point as we face our greatest adversary since the fall of the Soviet Union: China. The Biden focus on climate change, uncertain and inconsistent messaging toward China, and a domestic Green New Deal are a destructive path. The whiz kids who came out of the Obama administration and are now running the State and Defense Departments need to step back, scale down their push for political correctness and domestic politics, and realize that if the Biden administration fails, America fails.

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WHY ARE UNIVERSITIES SO LEFT-WING? Joseph Schumpeter explained in 1947 that capitalism spawns a large intellectual class that makes its living by attacking the system of private property and freedom that is so necessary for the intellectual class's existence.

Ask for 11/21

THE U.S. MILITARY GOES FOR WOKE. The current leadership of the armed forces is so obsessed with diversity, equity, inclusion, critical race theory, women in combat, and hunting for white supremacists in the ranks that they have lost focus on mission competence. Exhibit A: the disgracefully botched pullout from Afghanistan.

Ask for 10/21

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