

Beijing Sends Biden a Warning

Because of Donald Trump, Vice President Joe Biden thundered during the campaign, the U.S. “is more isolated in the world than we’ve ever been ... America First has made America alone.” Biden promised to repair relations with America’s allies. And he appears to have gone some distance to do so in the congratulatory phone call he received from Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan.

According to Suga, during the brief call, Biden said Article V of the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty of 1960 covers the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, islands Japan controls but China claims as its own. “President-elect Biden gave me a commitment that Article 5 of the US-Japan security treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands,” said a delighted Suga. And what does Article V commit us to?

“Each Party recognizes that an armed attack against either Party in the territories under the administration of Japan would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger...”

Message: The U.S. will treat a Chinese attempt to take the Senkakus, tiny rocky outcroppings in the East China Sea, as an attack on the USA, and America will fight China to secure Japan’s right to keep the islands. Biden has removed any ambiguity that may have existed and given Tokyo a U.S. war guarantee that covers the Senkakus. The response of China’s foreign ministry was to angrily lay claim to the islands they call the Diaoyus as “inherently Chinese” and to dismiss the U.S.-Japan security treaty as a “product of the Cold War.”

This diplomatic clash comes as Henry Kissinger was warning the Bloomberg Economic Forum: “America and China are now drifting increasingly toward confrontation, and they’re conducting their diplomacy in a confrontational way. ... The danger is that

some crisis will occur that will go beyond rhetoric into actual military conflict.” Kissinger continued: “Unless there is some basis for some cooperative action, the world will slide into a catastrophe comparable to World War I.” World War I was the worst calamity in Western civilization – until the next war to which it led inexorably: World War II.

Last week, we also learned that during Chinese military exercises in August, the People’s Liberation Army fired two missiles thousands of kilometers from the mainland that struck a targeted merchant ship sailing in the South China Sea. The missiles were the DF-21D and DF-26B. Both missiles are known as “aircraft carrier killers.”

The U.S. routinely moves its carriers through these waters to underscore our contention that neither the South China Sea nor the Paracel and Spratly Islands within belong to China as Beijing claims.

Consistent with China’s toughening policies toward its neighbors, four members of the opposition in the Hong Kong legislature were ousted last week, which led to wholesale resignations that have left Hong Kong’s governing council under the total control of pro-Beijing hardliners.

The era of “one country, two systems” for Hong Kong, dating to the transfer of sovereignty by Great Britain, appears to be over. The dissidents and demonstrators who filled the streets just months ago appear to have been routed, and the city’s future looks less like the Hong Kong of yesterday than the Beijing of tomorrow. These actions are consistent with the hard lines Beijing has taken on its “reeducation camps” for Uighurs in Xinjiang and its border dispute with India in the Himalayas.

While Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has lately sought to round up like-minded nations to stand up to China – Japan, Australia, India – there appears to be a reluctance, rooted in

uncertainty as to whether Communist China or democratic America represents the future of Asia.

Trump's "America First" policy asked the most basic of questions: Are all these half-century old alliances, these commitments to go to war for Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, as in Joe Biden's estimation, assets to be nurtured and even expanded to cover more territories like the Senkakus? Or are they liabilities that could drag us into wars the American people do not want to fight?

While we reject China's claim to all the reefs, rocks, and islets in the South China Sea and her claim to the Senkakus in the East China Sea, should we be obligated to go to war over these tiny parcels of land, especially when their legitimate owners are unwilling to fight for them?

Biden repudiates an "America First" foreign policy that puts U.S. security, sovereignty, liberty, and vital interests above the interests of any other nation. But what is it, then, that Biden puts first? Globalism. A New World Order. A Crusade for Global Democracy. Been there, done that.

Sixty years ago, when Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy faced off, the foreign policy debate was over whether the U.S. should fight Mao's China to defend the tiny offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Kennedy thought not. Kennedy won.

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