

China's COVID Coup

by Conrad Black



It is time for Americans to contemplate the possibility that the United States may be surpassed as the world's most influential country. The Chinese have just won the greatest strategic victory in the last 30 years since the disintegration of the Soviet Union. However it originated, the novel coronavirus was repressed within China by recourse to draconian measures but was deliberately permitted to infect the rest of the world, enabling China to exploit the blunderbuss Western lockdowns and make a giant leap towards economic preeminence in the world.

This push toward Chinese economic preeminence was something widely predicted prior to the Trump era but clearly was not happening in the first three years of the Trump presidency, as unemployment nearly vanished in the United States, illegal immigration was almost completely stopped, and American economic growth soared, generated by an increasing workforce and sharp gains among the lowest 20 percent of income earners. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic almost 16 months ago,

however, the United States and the West generally have suffered a severe economic slowdown, vast increases in the money supply, and an epochal spike in unemployment.

Assuming the SARS-CoV-2 virus escaped accidentally, China must be credited for a remarkable coup of strategic improvisation in translating a public health crisis into a large economical and geopolitical advance at the expense of the West. The American indulgence in an entire summer of white-hating, statue-toppling, rioting, and denigration of American history, freedom, and values astonished the world. Moreover, it helped China propagate its message that democracy leads to chaos and waste and that the United States is an unreliable and unstable country. This argument is assisted by what appears to be the practice of the Biden regime of declaring American moral shortcomings to the world as Secretary of State Antony Blinken did in his unfortunate encounter with the Chinese foreign minister at Anchorage three months ago.

The Biden regime is sustained by a helter-skelter coalition of elements that are not much interested in America's retention of its status as the world's most important country and are explicitly critical of many of the policies that have conferred that status on us. Most conspicuous are the far-Left "squad," the Sanders socialists, and the militant elements of Black Lives Matter. Though it has lost a significant share of its formerly almost air-tight support from the African-American community, much of what is left of that continues to be outspokenly aggrieved against white America and is threatening a return to violence if drastic concessions, such as vastly expensive reparations and other acts amounting to confessions of guilt by the white majority are not made.

No country in the history of the world has made such a prodigious effort to make up for the injustices of the past as America has done with respect to blacks. Martin Luther King, Jr. adopted from Gandhi the principle of nonviolent protest against the oppressions of conscientious people. Gandhi knew

the British would not intentionally massacre large numbers of Indians seeking independence, a threshold that Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia would have crossed without hesitation. Gandhi rightly recognized that the British would not suppress by force a nonviolent movement reasonably demanding independence. King knew that if American blacks simply rose in revolt, as they were only 11 percent of the country, they would be suppressed; but that if they peacefully demanded recognition of their constitutional rights as citizens, the American majority would eventually concede those rights.

Now that the equality of opportunity King sought has substantially been achieved, the demands of the more militant African-American organizations have escalated: their spokesmen threaten violence without vast new concessions. Exorbitant demands are made because of the alleged abuse of "white privilege." The possibility that the great prominence of white people in America and in world history could be substantially meritocratic does not arise in the minds of those who decry it, and white people themselves are just starting to suggest that the national orgy of self-abasement is becoming unjust and even dangerous.

National self-loathing rules the American academy and most of the school system and is at the root of the troubling fact that, as Western society has consecrated greater and greater resources to education in the past 50 years, it has produced a steadily stupider crop of graduates. This unfortunate phenomenon has produced more destructive and less professionally rigorous media and declining standards of public entertainment.

The American Left has become almost entirely a loudspeaker for national self-hate, and its recipe for reform is little more than the abasement of the white majority. Even as the Chinese challenge becomes stronger economically, more overtly dismissive of America and the West, more brazen in suppressing guaranteed freedoms in Hong Kong and oppressing Uighurs and

other minorities and all religions within the People's Republic, and threatens Taiwan militarily, the American Left is still chiefly focused on what far-Left spokesman and former Clinton Labor Secretary Robert Reich calls "our drift towards proto-fascism."

The Left has worked itself up into such a paroxysm of hatred of Donald Trump, who is naturally at the head of all those who recognize and wish to counter the Chinese challenge, that it is going to be a time-consuming process to develop a bipartisan consensus to defend America's status and strategic interests throughout the world.

America's European allies will be completely worthless in meeting the Chinese challenge, until they finally grasp the implications of the world not being primarily influenced by Judeo-Christian values that recognize individual rights and dignity, the Democratic process, the free-market economy (not just state capitalism), and the preeminence in the world of the Western languages and, broadly, the civilization of the West. By the time the gravity of the crisis of the West is grasped thoroughly, if the past is any guide, Europe will be divided between the appeasers and the Atlanticists.

The powers closer to China are naturally more conversant with the vagaries and dangers of China's definition of its self-interest. The Japanese, Indians, South Koreans, Vietnamese, Australians, and others will respond much more vigorously than the Europeans to signs of American leadership against the overbearing aspects of the Chinese challenge.

So far, the Biden Administration's desire to discuss climate change with China must rank as one of the most absurdly esoteric foreign policy considerations in living memory, as well as a godsend to the People's Republic. They think the concept is bunk and could not be more delighted at the economic penalties the West is imposing upon itself in trying to move to what is mistakenly described as sustainable

energy.

Fundamentally, the United States is a much stronger country than China and, if it comes to its senses quickly enough, it will more than meet this challenge. China has a dangerously aging population, no institutions of any integrity or value whatsoever, and a system that is still 40 percent a command economy. Every day, the Chinese betray the arrogance of their official nature. If the West wakes up soon enough, the Chinese challenge will be much easier to meet than was Nazi Germany or even the Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, the closest we have to recognizably intelligent thinking on the subject within the administration has as its end, finally, to drive Russia into the arms of China. Russia's only real threat to the United States is if it enables China to use its surplus population to develop Siberia and make up for China's own lack of natural resources. Innocuous massaging of Russia's bruised post-Cold War ego, as long as it does not become too indulgent of Russia's own expansionist ambitions, could be useful. We want Russia as a Western and not an Eastern country and the erosion of the Democrats' Russo-hysteria is the first good sign we have seen from the Biden State Department.

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