



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on April 28, 2020

Up for a New Cold War — With China?

Is America, in lockdown, with 26 million  unemployed and entering a new depression, up for a confrontation and Cold War with China?

For that appears to be where the GOP wishes to lead us.

According to Politico, a 57-page memo from Mitch McConnell's senatorial committee instructs GOP candidates to blame the coronavirus pandemic on China, commit to stand up to China, end U.S. dependence on Chinese manufacturing and tell voters "my opponent is soft on China."

"China is not an ally, and they're not just a rival — they are an adversary and the Chinese Communist Party is our enemy," reads one of the talking points.

Sunday, Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas echoed the memo, charging that China's leaders wanted the coronavirus to spread because they "did not want to see their relative power and standing in the world decline."

Cotton went on: "It's a scandal to me that we have trained so many of the Chinese communists. If Chinese students want to come here and learn Shakespeare and the Federalist Papers — that's what they need to learn from America; they don't need to learn quantum computing and artificial intelligence from America."

The Wall Street Journal ran back-to-back editorials last week urging a more confrontational stance toward Beijing and endorsing GOP plans for new defense spending on U.S. air and naval forces in the Western Pacific.

Cotton and the Journal are not wrong in their characterization of China's behavior. It is belligerent toward its neighbors and hostile toward the United States.

China has indeed sent student-spies to study at U.S. universities.

Under cover of the coronavirus crisis, Beijing is moving to strip the 7 million people of Hong Kong of the rights they were guaranteed when the British departed. The Uighurs of Xinjiang are being persecuted and coercively cleansed of their cultural and religious beliefs.

The Peoples Liberation Army seeks to intimidate Taiwan by sending military aircraft near the island. China's warships have harassed Vietnamese, Malaysian, Philippine and Indonesian commercial vessels to assert its claim to the entire South China Sea.

Chinese propagandists have accused the U.S. of creating the coronavirus crisis that broke out in Wuhan last winter.

JFK may have been inexact when he observed: "When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."

But that is an accurate description of how China has conducted itself since it unleashed the Wuhan virus upon the world.

But why did Americans, after a 40-year struggle with another "Evil Empire," ever believe differently about the Communist Party of China?



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Under the code of that party, the morality of an act is determined by whether it advances or retards the goals of the regime: expansion, conquest and domination.

As President Ronald Reagan undiplomatically observed in an early press conference, Communists reserve to themselves “the right to lie, cheat and steal,” which is pretty much how the Chinese Communists have been behaving toward us since we reengaged with them in 1972.

What course does the Journal recommend that we pursue?

“Freedom of navigation exercises” by U.S. naval and air forces are “not enough to secure the Western Pacific from Chinese domination.”

Instead, the Journal says the U.S. “may need to start recognizing claims of countries like Vietnam to make China pay a price for further expansion. The U.S. should also try to maintain its defense pact with the Philippines’ mercurial President Rodrigo Duterte.”

The Journal seems to be suggesting that we formally recognize and back Vietnam’s claims to disputed islands in the South China Sea. None of these islands belongs to us.

Why should the U.S. Navy risk a clash at sea by making us a party to these latest quarrels halfway around the world?

Vietnam is a country of 95 million people. Like China, it is also Communist. The Philippines have more than 7,000 islands and 100 million people. Indonesia has 17,000 to 18,000 islands and is the fourth-most populous nation on earth with 267 million citizens.

Cannot the nations that share the South China Sea with China acquire coastal navies to defend their own waters? Why is the Journal volunteering the U.S. as Coast Guard of the South China Sea?

The Journal argues that with Chinese nationalism rising under Xi Jinping, “It’s more important than ever for the U.S. to signal that it considers the independence of Pacific states a vital interest and isn’t retreating.”

The independence and borders of these states is undeniably vital to them. But how is that vital to us, 8,000 miles away, on the other side of the Pacific? This is power politics, pure and simple.

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