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U.S.-China War: a Danger Hidden from the American People

By Eric Sommer
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Beijing.

There is a growing danger that U.S. government policies may lead to war between the U.S. and China, two nuclear-armed powers. But this danger is being systematically concealed by leading U.S. political figures from the American people who, like the Chinese people, do not want to go to war.

Aware of popular antipathy to war, U.S. politicians who advocate belligerent actions against China are relying on euphemisms to describe the hostile measures they put forward. They disguise the danger by using phrases such as ‘sending signals to China’ or as ‘firmly drawing the line’. Warfare, and nuclear warfare danger, is virtually never mentioned.

For some time Trump, and political figures who support him, have exuded hostility to China. They have sought to poison public perception of China by blaming it for U.S. economic problems, by setting the stage for a trade war and labeling China, a ‘currency manipulator’, a ‘job stealer’, and have suggested a punitive 45% import duty. But far more serious are the unprecedented appointments of former military generals to key ministerial positions in Trump’s cabinet, along with the promises of greatly expanded U.S. military presence and more aggressive actions in the South China sea.

The latest – and one of the most ominous – indications that U.S. policy may lead to war is from Trumps nominee for Secretary of State, the ministerial position in charge of U.S. foreign affairs. In Rex Tillerson’s testimony before the U.S. Congress a few days ago he declared: “We are going to have to send China a clear signal that, first, the island-building stops and second, your access to those islands also is not going to be allowed.”

These are statements which prepare the ground for war. U.S. political figures and mass media have long promoted the false claim that China wishes to block ‘freedom of navigation’ in the South China Sea. Now the proposed official in charge of all U.S. foreign policy proposes that the U.S. navy block freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, by preventing Chinese ships from reaching Chinese islands and islets.

It does not require much imagination that such a scenario is apt to lead to military conflict, a conflict which can spiral out of anyone’s control into a catastrophe of unimaginable dimension. If Chinese history teaches anything, it is that the Chinese people, and government, will not tolerate attacks on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. From the mass resistance to the two British invasions of China in the 19th century, to the decades-long struggle of millions of Chinese led by the Chinese Communist party and the KMT against the Japanese invaders in WWII, to the insistence that Taiwan is part of one China, it should be clear that any attempt to encroach on Chinese territory will be necessarily and fiercely resisted.

The people of America, China, and of the world, clearly do not want yet another war, especially one between nuclear armed powers such as the U.S. and China. It’s high time that U.S. political figures who advocate belligerent actions towards China end their deception and admit to the American people – and the worlds people – that highly belligerent policies towards China threaten the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of American and Chinese people alike.