

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم
بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY MELVIN GOODMAN
22.03.2023

China's Foreign Policy: Lessons for the United States



Photograph Source: The White House – Public Domain

China's orchestration of the renewal of diplomatic relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia should be a wakeup call to the Biden administration's national security team, particularly to Antony Blinken's Department of State. China's success exposes flaws in American national security policy, particularly the policy of nonrecognition as well as the reliance on the use of military force to achieve gains in international politics. Our instruments of power are not working.

Mao Zedong often cited a Chinese proverb from the Han Dynasty that "No matter if it is a white cat or a black cat; as long as it can catch mice, it is a good cat." Deng Ziaoping cited

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

this proverb to justify radical changes in domestic policy. Xi Jinping has implicitly put this aphorism to work in national security relations by maintaining the importance of correct political relations with all countries regardless of their ideological orientation. As a result, China has stable relations with most of its friends and adversaries.

Conversely, for the past century, the United State has obtusely relied on a policy of non-recognition of countries that Washington simply didn't favor for ideological reasons. The Soviet Union had to wait for 16 years to gain recognition from the United States, which ultimately required President Roosevelt's understanding of the futility of ignoring the Kremlin at a time when allies were going to be needed against the dangerous new leadership in Germany. The role of the Soviet Union in World War II was central to the allied victory. Three-fourths of the German army were concentrated on the eastern front. Similarly, China had to wait nearly three decades for diplomatic recognition from the United States because of Washington's opposition to the Chinese Communist Party. President Nixon and national security adviser Kissinger opened the door to Beijing with secret diplomacy in the early 1970s, and President Carter completed the recognition process in the late 1970s. U.S. diplomacy was most successful during the decade of the 1970s because the efforts of Nixon and Carter created closer relations between Washington and Beijing and between Washington and Moscow than those between Moscow and Beijing. As a result of our diplomatic success, the United States garnered the Treaty of Berlin, enhancing stability in Europe, as well as two key arms control agreements: SALT I and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

The United States currently lacks diplomatic relations with two of its most important adversaries: Iran and North Korea. Washington has serious bilateral issues with both Tehran and Pyongyang, although there is ample evidence that both Iran and North Korea are willing to pursue a dialogue with the United States. The nuclear issue alone should convince Washington of the need for consultation, dialogue, and diplomatic recognition of adversaries.

While the United States relies on military force and military forces to carry out foreign policy, China has relied successfully on economic relations in the form of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This approach has given Beijing an important presence throughout Southeast Asia, Africa, and South America and the Caribbean. (I recently returned from Costa Rica where I rode on the Pan-American Highway that was built by the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s; it is China, however, that has taken charge of revamping the highway system in Costa Rica today.) Ever since the Obama administration, the United

States has done its best to jam the numerous worldwide spokes of the BRI without any success whatsoever. The mainstream media has played along with U.S. recalcitrance by frequently charging that Sri Lanka is facing a “debt trap” because of high levels of debt in various projects of the BRI. In actual fact, 80% of Sri Lanka’s foreign debt is owed to multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and Wall Street investors. Its debt to China is only 10% of its total foreign debt.

U.S. media rarely cite China’s BRI successes, which are abundantly clear the world over, particularly in China’s backyard—the ten states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2000, Chinese trade with ASEAN was worth \$29 billion, but 20 years later China’s trade with ASEAN was worth \$670, almost doubling U.S. trade with ASEAN. ASEAN has ignored U.S. efforts to block the BRI programs, which currently involve more than 50 different projects. The U.S. withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership has added to Washington’s problems in the region.

In addition to orchestrating the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, China has increased its trade with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), where China has replaced the European Union (EU) as the GCC’s largest trade partner. As of last year, China’s trade with the GCC is greater than the combined trade of the United States and the EU with the GCC. At the U.S.-ASEAN summit last year, President Biden pledged more than \$150 million to assist infrastructure and pandemic preparedness in ASEAN nations. This anemic figure hardly compares to Xi Jinping’s 2021 pledge of \$1.5 billion to assist ASEAN economies over a three-year period.

All of the members of Biden administration’s national security team should take note of China’s success throughout the Southeast Asian region. Beijing has replicated this success in Africa as well as in our own backyard, the Caribbean and South America. Biden needs to recognize that the containment of China, which we have been pursuing for the past ten years, has been a remarkable failure. It is time for the Department of State and the Agency for International Development to pursue new thinking for U.S. diplomacy and to curtail the old thinking that has given institutional pride of place in decision making to the Department of Defense.

It is noteworthy that there has been no major conflict in Southeast Asia in nearly 45 years, ever since China fought a short war with Vietnam in 1979. The key to peaceful stability in the region has been economic security. China’s economic policies are no threat to the United States, and we are unable to “contain” China in any event. Overall, stronger

economies around the world contribute not only to international security generally, but are a good thing for the United States in particular.

Melvin A. Goodman is a senior fellow at the Center for International Policy and a professor of government at Johns Hopkins University. A former CIA analyst, Goodman is the author of Failure of Intelligence: The Decline and Fall of the CIA and National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism. and A Whistleblower at the CIA. His most recent books are “American Carnage: The Wars of Donald Trump” (Opus Publishing, 2019) and “Containing the National Security State” (Opus Publishing, 2021). Goodman is the national security columnist for counterpunch.org.

CounterPunch 21.03.2023