



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on May 27, 2020

Jinping Takes Up the US Challenge

Is the U.S. up for a second Cold War — this time with China?

What makes the question newly relevant is that Xi Jinping's China suddenly appears eager for a showdown with the United States for long-term supremacy in the Asia-Pacific and the world.

With the U.S. consumed by the coronavirus pandemic that has killed 100,000 Americans and crashed our economy to depths not seen since the Great Depression, China's dictator seems to be making his move.



At the Communist Party conclave this May, China announced that it was seizing control of Hong Kong's security. From now on, subversion, sedition, secession and foreign meddling within the city will be crushed.

Whatever sanctions the U.S. and its allies impose, there will be no free and independent Hong Kong.

"For an Ascendant China, Reining in Hong Kong Is Just the Start," is the headline over The New York Times story on China's new assertiveness.

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"China's move to strip away another layer of Hong Kong's autonomy was not a rash impulse. It was a deliberate act, months in the making," writes reporter Steven Lee Myers. "It took into account the risks of international umbrage and reached the reasonable assumption that there would not be a significant geopolitical price to pay...."

"With the world distracted by the pandemic's devastating toll, China has taken a series of aggressive steps in recent weeks to flex its economic, diplomatic and military muscle across the region.

"China's Coast Guard rammed and sank a fishing boat in disputed waters off Vietnam, and its ships swarmed an offshore oil rig operated by Malaysia. Beijing denounced the second inauguration of Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen, and pointedly dropped the word peaceful from its annual call for unification with the island democracy.

"Chinese troops squared off again last week with India's along their contentious border in the Himalayas."

To warnings that China is risking Cold War II, Beijing seems to be responding: If a Cold War with the United States is the price of securing our strategic interests and position in Asia and the world, bring it on.

Beijing has put the ball in America's court. What do we do now?

Consider the list of nations with which China has territorial quarrels that have lately produced military clashes.

Beijing claims Indian lands China has occupied since their 1962 war.



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China claims virtually all the islets and reefs in the South China Sea and now uses naval vessels to deal with the rival claimants of Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Beijing asserts that Taiwan and all of its offshore islands in the East China Sea belong to China. While the Senkaku Islands have long been controlled by Japan, China claims these islands as well.

As for protests of the suppression of Tibetans and incarceration in concentration camps of Muslim Uighurs and Kazakhs, Beijing brushes them off.

Should the U.S. seek sanctions on China if it crushes the resistance in Hong Kong, how many U.S. allies would support those sanctions, when, for Australia, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan, China, not America, is their largest market and trading partner?

How did we allow ourselves to get into this position where a lately backward China is suddenly a greater rival for global hegemony than was the Soviet Union of Josef Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev?

Said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ruefully this month:

“China’s been ruled by a brutal, authoritarian regime, a communist regime since 1949. For several decades, we thought the regime would become more like us through trade, scientific exchanges, diplomatic outreach ... (but) that didn’t happen.

“We greatly underestimated the degree to which Beijing is ideologically and politically hostile to free nations. The whole world is waking up to that fact.”

Yet, the rising totalitarian power of China, even with its imperial ambitions undisguised, does not threaten the vital interests of the United States.

So, again, the question: If China is prepared for a Cold War II with the United States to establish its predominance, what are we prepared to do should China absorb Hong Kong and convert it into a second Shanghai?

What are we prepared to do if China puts new pressure on Taiwan and seizes offshore islands in the East China Sea, as she did in the South China Sea? Sanctions against Vladimir Putin’s Russia to compel it to return Crimea and vacate eastern Ukraine have conspicuously failed.

Are we prepared to fight for any of the islands, none of which we claim and many of which we agree ultimately belong to Beijing?

The Chinese have stolen our intellectual property, coerced technology transfers from our businesses and sent spies posing as students into our universities to thief our secrets.

Meanwhile, we allowed ourselves to become dependent on China for medicines and drugs vital to the health and the survival of millions of Americans.

Who did this to us? We did it to ourselves.

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