

A personal view of U. S. foreign policy

Written by By Michael Daly Guest Columnist
Friday, 12 May 2023 03:42



Where we stand today

PART FOUR OF FOUR

We now are faced with a frustrated Russia at war with Ukraine. I make no comment here as the facts are really in flux except to say that it's quite clear that former Soviet States want no part of going back to Russian control, while Russia, after centuries of invasion, desperately wants buffer nations under its control.

But what worries me is our current belligerent attitude with China. China, over the course of 75 years, has raised the economic welfare of its citizens, raising a billion people out of poverty.

At the same time, our relations with China have left China feeling left at the door. They have waited for 50 years for the reunification of Taiwan. They feel betrayed by the West. Their fear is that the West's expansion of liberal democratic values could threaten their own grip on power at home.

China has been a leading civilization for several thousand years, with only the last century and a half as the exception, which is universally considered by the Chinese as their *Century of Humiliation*. It started with the Opium Wars in the 1940s.

Biden Administration’s Proposed 2024 Discretionary Spending

Agency

Budget, \$ billions

Defense Department

\$ 842.00

48.6%

Health & Human Services

\$ 145.30

8.4%

Veterans Affairs

\$ 137.90

8.7%

Military & Veterans

57.3%

Education

\$ 90.00

5.7%

Housing & Urban Development

\$ 73.30

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4.6%

State and International Affairs

\$ 70.50

4.4%

Homeland Security

\$ 60.40

3.8%

Energy

\$ 52.00

3.3%

Justice

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\$ 39.70

2.5%

Agriculture

\$ 30.10

1.9%

Other Agencies

\$ 29.40

1.9%

Transportation

\$ 27.80

1.8%

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NASA

\$ 27.20

1.7%

Interior

\$ 18.80

1.2%

Treasury

\$ 16.30

1.0%

Labor

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\$ 15.10

1.0%

Commerce

\$ 12.30

0.8%

EPA

\$ 12.10

0.8%

National Science Foundation

\$ 11.30

0.7%

Social Security Administration

\$ 10.50

0.7%

Corps of Engineers

\$ 7.40

0.5%

General Services Administration

\$ 1.00

0.1%

Small Business Administration

\$ 1.00

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0.1%

Total Discretionary Budget, Billions

\$ 1,731.40

Budget information from the Wall Street Journal.

Then a war with Japan resulted in the loss of Taiwan. Followed by a Russian invasion of Manchuria. Also humiliating was the Treaty of Versailles ending WWI by which Chinese lands occupied by Germany were awarded to Japan and not returned to China. Then Japan in the 1930s invaded Manchuria and the Chinese suffered indignity again.

China has regained lands and prestige in most of the above but remains committed to reunification with Taiwan. The 1943 Cairo Declaration stated that all territories stolen from the

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Chinese shall be restored to the republic of China; this includes Taiwan. The 1945 Potsdam Declaration referred to this wording when discussing Japanese terms of surrender.

The vast majority of mainland Chinese consider Taiwan part of China. The U.N. has several times reaffirmed that Taiwan is a part of China. Kevin Rudd's book, *The Avoidable War*, lists the Ten Concentric Circles of Interest for China. #2 the on list, right after Xi's Jumping's administration staying in power, is the 'return' of Taiwan, which remains the holy grail of party politics because it would complete the sole task left unfinished following Mao's revolution and the establishment of the PRC in 1949.

Fifty years ago, President Nixon confirmed the obvious and agreed to a one-China policy. The current U. S. position of "strategic ambiguity" is a way of again ignoring our own responsibility under international law. No nation is to interfere in the internal affairs of another nation. And now we have made it worse, by having our most sensitive military computer chips manufactured in Taiwan, making it very difficult to actually keep our word and follow the law.

And the temperature is rising, primarily due to U. S. actions. Kevin Rudd's book, above, lays out a reasonable plan to keep from having a military confrontation with China. And we seem determined to do the opposite.

Our argument this time isn't communism per se, but rather the horrible treatment of the Uigurs and the lack of freedom for the Taiwanese when China resumes control. Our Washington statements need to stop being so self-righteous. Take two hours and visit the African American Museum several blocks from the Senate offices and then tell me how we are providing moral leadership. China has 1.4 billion people. They are quite capable of taking care of themselves.

Again, from Senator Fulbright:

An excessive preoccupation with foreign relations over a long period of time is more than a manifestation of arrogance; it is a drain on the power that gave rise to it because it diverts a nation from the sources of its strength, which are in its domestic life. A nation immersed in foreign affairs is expending its capital, human as well as material; sooner or later that capital must be renewed by some diversion of creative energies from foreign to domestic pursuits.

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What I see here is a history of military intervention based on the assumption that we are right and the assumption of our good intentions. There are many problems with this.

One of the tenets of the liberal international order is the rule of law. How can we expect the rest of the world to follow the law when we consistently ignore it?

Indeed, many people in other countries wonder at the gullibility of the American public. Good intentions are not a very sound basis for judging the fulfillment of contractual obligations. Just about everybody, including Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, believes in his own “good intentions.”

One of our World Affairs Council of Albuquerque members relates that the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft discussion on military spending made the point that there are more people in the bands of military branches than there are in the entire State Department. That’s not an anomaly, we prefer war to statecraft. At heart, I think the problem is clearly a congressional-military-industrial complex. One that President Eisenhower warned us about and fed with dollars.

Again, in my opinion, until we can control the flow of dollars in Washington this will persist. And God help us when we engage with China, technologically advanced, smart, and cunning. 1.4 billion vs. 330 million. If we choose instead to compromise and work out our differences the world will be better off – especially us.

By Michael Daly
Guest Columnist