The return of the USA

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?America is Back!? was the message of Joe Biden?s first major speech on foreign affairs. According to Reuters, he expressed, ?aggressive approaches to China and Russia, urged Myanmar?s military leaders to halt their coup, and declared an end to US support for a Saudi Arabia-led military campaign in Yemen?.

Like Barack Obama and his hawkish Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, like Trump too in his erratic way, he sees the need to defend the USA?s imperialist world hegemony, aware that it is now under challenge from new imperialist powers, most dangerously and dynamically China and Russia.

He boasted: ?I made it clear to President Putin, in a manner very different from my predecessor, that the days of the United States rolling over in the face of Russia?s aggressive actions, interfering with our elections, cyber attacks, poisoning its citizens, are over.?

On China he threatened: ?We?ll confront China?s economic abuses, counter its aggressive, coercive action to push back on China?s attack on human rights, intellectual property and global governance.?

He has also condemned China?s actions against democracy activists in Hong Kong and its horrific concentration camps for up to a million Uighurs in Xinjiang. Of course, China?s actions are indeed those of an imperialist bully as are its declarations that Taiwan and Tibet are its ?internal affairs?.

However, the power that invaded and occupied Iraq, which blockades Venezuela?s oil exports and confiscates its foreign reserves, has no right to lecture anyone. In fact, these issues are in reality just so many weapons against a rival: genuine human rights activists in these countries will find Biden a broken reed, as did the democratic opposition in Syria. Independence of all the imperialist camps is the only effective policy, unless you wished to be used and tossed aside.

Biden will wrap up the new Cold War posture in the ?soft power? rhetoric of human rights. But, whilst emphasising alliances and multilateral agreements, when push comes to shove, he will resort to the de facto Neocon and neoliberal policies pursued by Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Democratic presidents have always been no less willing than Republicans to act as global fire raisers ? remember Kennedy, Johnson and Truman.

Iraq

Biden himself was a strong advocate of the invasion of Iraq, using the shock of 9/11 and the menace of al-Qaeda, despite the fact that Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with the fall of the twin towers. He collaborated with George W Bush in getting it through the Senate. Thus, Joe?s fingerprints are on the most disastrous US adventure since the Vietnam War.

Under Obama, as Vice President, Biden only argued for troop rundown when the body count of US service personnel threatened to become too electorally damaging, even then only to become the main advocate of
what he named ‘counter-terrorism plus’, that is, the heavy bombing and drone strikes strategy carried out ever since in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia.

OK, now Biden has dumped Trump’s pet project of supplying arms to the firebrand Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, but primarily because the war in Yemen has turned into another Iraq, albeit on a smaller scale. Any move away from Trump’s bellicose rhetoric will be more than compensated by his drive to hem in China and Russia.

As Vice President, alongside the redoubtable hawk Hillary Clinton at the State Department, he was responsible for backing the Shia regime in Iraq under Nouri al-Maliki, whose repressive communalist policies proved a Petri dish for the formation of ISIS out of al Qaeda and former Saddam-era Sunni forces. Now, a decade on, Biden inherits both Afghanistan and Iraq.

In Latin America, Biden, was actively involved in pushing Bill Clinton’s ‘Plan Colombia’, which sent money, weapons and advisors to the brutal military. Ostensibly, this was to step up the ‘war on drugs’, in reality it supported the brutal war against the leftist guerrillas. Under Obama, he pioneered an ‘Alliance for Prosperity’ which boosted privatisation, free trade zones, and US investment.

Together, over three decades, Biden, and the presidents he served, played a major role in the human rights atrocities and economic devastation that triggered the wave of refugees. And when they reached or crossed the US border, he played a role in fortifying it, imprisoning ‘illegals’, including children, in cages.

So, will Biden’s second coming be any different for the world? No chance!

Prospects

Biden has promised ‘to fight like hell’ to defend America’s global standing against China’s growing power. His project for a ‘summit of democracies’ suggests creating an ideological basis for a New Cold War between democracy and ‘authoritarianism’ (read Putin’s Russia and Xi’s China).

One can wonder whether the invitees will include US allies like the Egyptian dictator Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi? Will it include Benjamin Netanyahu, busy providing the proof that Israel is indeed a ‘racist endeavour’, practising Grand Apartheid against its Palestinian subjects, expanding its colonising settlements in the West Bank and vaccinating only ‘its own’ population against covid-19.

Netanyahu and Trump so fawned on one another and the Israeli leader was such a serial intervener in US politics, that he will hardly expect anything other than a cold shoulder. Jared Kushner’s ‘deal of the century’ is as dead as the Dead Sea, but it retains its bitter fruit, for the Palestinians, US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s ‘eternal capital’.

Biden has pledged to rebuild relations with the PLO, reopening a US consulate in East Jerusalem and restoring financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA). He can also easily renounce Trump’s tweeted acceptance of the lawfulness of all the illegal settlements on the Palestinian: as he did at the time.

Any more than that, however, is highly unlikely. In the past he has described as ‘outrageous’ proposals to use US military funding to Israel ($40 billion, half of all US aid to foreign governments) as leverage for the official UN ‘two state’ settlement.

Even less will he countenance the ideas of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). Indeed, Biden’s manifesto said that he will, ‘firmly reject the BDS movement, which singles out Israel, home to millions of Jews, and too often veers into anti-Semitism, while letting Palestinians off the hook for their choices?.'
Presumably he means the ?choice? to refuse to accept the Israeli ?facts on the ground?, that is, fragmented and disarmed Bantustans living on UN, US and Saudi handouts.

When it comes to Latin America, too, only cosmetic changes can be expected. As with Netanyahu, the Brazilian Trump, Jair Bolsonaro, can hardly expect a warm welcome in Washington, given he several times insulted Biden and left it well over a month before recognising he had won the presidency.

Not that Brazil got anything much out of Trump, in fact it got tariffs slapped on its exports. Also, Biden?s declared policy on halting the devastation of the Amazon rain forest and his international Covid-19 policy will clash head on with Bolsonaro?s.

New Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has already signalled there will be a change from economic blockade of Venezuela to ?targeted sanctions?, but support for puppet presidential pretender Juan Guaidó will stay.

Interventionism

Biden?s choice of Blinken made clear what the new administration?s policy would be. In the hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Blinken set out his interventionist intentions:

?The reality is the world simply does not organise itself. When we?re not engaged, when we?re not leading, then one of two things is likely to happen. Either some other country tries to take our place? or, maybe just as bad, no one does.?

In short, Biden and his team will, for all their greater diplomatic finesse, see their prime objective as battling China in defence of the USA's weakening world hegemony. To this end, he will put more effort into patching up the NATO Alliance.

He will also seek to repair the US partnership with the European Union, which was subject to blatant interference and disruption under Trump, a passionate supporter of Brexit. Biden strongly disliked Brexit; he has made it pretty clear that Trump?s friend, Boris Johnson, will not be getting any swift ?trade deal of the century?.

But there is no doubt that Biden?s number one concern will be to stack up the ?western? and far eastern alliances and check the advances made by China. He does so at a time when, under Xi Jinping, the country has cast off the caution advocated by Deng Xiaoping.

This confirms that the era we are entering is one of mounting inter-imperialist rivalry which, unless the workers of the world, in China as well as the United States, wake up to it, can only have one ending: regional wars leading to world war.

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