

## **We Must Unite Against our Common Enemies**

**Copyright Pat Griffin, February 22, 2021**

We as Americans must put our differences aside and unite in a common cause before we lose our country. We must accept that our country has supported policies and even passed laws that favored some citizens at the expense of others and this discrimination was based race, religion, and other factors which should have been irrelevant in a meritocracy. Further, we must forego efforts explaining these behaviors away or attempting to devise some sort of payment to right these wrongs. In my opinion, no payment will ever suffice. Instead, a simple apology on behalf of our forefathers to the forefathers of others along with an honest attempt to learn from our past and mold a better nation is a more productive course. Endless arguments only further divide us and accomplish little. I am aware the latter is indeed the purpose of some movements today which masquerade as forces for equality. Those movements are not addressed here.

Instead of fighting our past, we must unite and focus on two enemies in the present and future. The first enemy is our own division and this enemy serves the second enemy which is Communist China. This second enemy is the focus here. Two excellent sources on China and these issues are Michael Pillsbury's "The Hundred-Year Marathon" and K.T. McFarland's "Revolution: Trump, Washington and We the People."

At least twice we have become complacent only to be awakened by our enemy. We then overestimated that enemy and achieved success. The first instance followed the launch of Sputnik in 1957. We had been complacent basking in the glow of post-world war II economic growth while the USSR had been developing the means to launch vehicles into space. The launch of Sputnik awakened us and the United States began a Herculean effort that culminated with landing a man on the moon in 1969. Along the way, we feared and some believed the USSR was so far ahead we would never catch them. It turned out those fears were unfounded.

The second overestimation was in 1983. The USSR had been building their military while we had not. President Ronald Reagan believed we were dangerously behind the USSR in military capability and set about to rebuild and expand our military. Part of this expansion was the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) as a defensive system to protect the United States from intercontinental missiles. Primarily, this effort was designed to protect us from the USSR. Either as a bargaining point or an actual belief, the USSR always maintained this system was offensive; even though, we offered to share the technology. As it turned out after the fall of the USSR and their dire economic situation became apparent, it was highly unlikely they could have mounted the sort of attack SDI was designed to thwart.

We are now in a third such instance and the enemy is Communist China. President Donald Trump saw this threat and proposed and was able to implement the United States Space Force in 2019. The idea is similar to SDI in that both are defensive. The difference is the Space Force is designed to thwart cyber attacks. Such attacks were only vaguely understood in 1983. Today, however, such attacks are an everyday reality and in many cases originate in China. Moreover, since our civilian and military communication and control systems are heavily dependent on cyber technology, cyber attacks that disable large segments of these systems will be devastating. Imagine a cyber attack that disables communication for an entire fleet of ships or our air traffic control system. Further, imagine this attack originates from space. There is evidence China is developing such systems.

China values patience and not awakening the enemy until the time is right. Hence, they will want to appear a struggling country intent only on peaceful coexistence. Fortunately, the Trump administration saw the threat clearly and, against concerted opposition, implemented the Space Force. Unless we continue development of such defenses, it may soon be too late.

How have we gotten into this predicament? There are at least four reasons.

1. We have contributed to China's phenomenal growth in technology either providing economic and technology expertise or allowing it to be stolen.

2. We have believed the Chinese story that they are merely a struggling country attempting to take their place in the modern world with no desire for hegemony. In fact, there is good evidence that the opposite is true and has been since 1949.

3. By some estimates China is at least 10 years ahead of the United States in the development of space-oriented capabilities.

4. Our pattern of complacency, overestimation of the enemy and then victory has not gone unnoticed by China. Hence, they will avoid awakening us to their intentions until they calculate victory is assured. China knows the value of patience, not striking until you are ready, and destroying an enemy with his own sword.

Reasons one through three are in the past. Hopefully, we can learn from them and use that knowledge to affect reason four. Specifically, China's plan seems to be to overtake the United States as the world leader by 2049 which is the 100-year anniversary of the Mao Zedong revolution (see Pillsbury for a detailed discussion). China has patiently worked toward this goal by acquiring our technology, acquiring our natural resources and fostering unrest in our country. And, the last few administrations have been complicit.

Following President Nixon's meeting with Mao Zedong in China in 1972, every president through President Obama has followed essentially the same policy toward China of providing supplies, expertise, and intelligence in the hope that China would become a democratic trading partner. Actually, President Clinton initially took a different approach citing their human rights abuses. However, the Chinese quickly focused on their friends in the Clinton administration and on Clinton donors with a vested interest in the Chinese markets and President Clinton's policy quickly changed. President Trump is the only president following Nixon to not only see the Chinese threat clearly but to put programs in place to deal with it. The most visible was of course our economic policy involving tariffs and efforts to deal with currency manipulation and intellectual property transfer. Instead of believing China to be a benevolent partner and allowing ourselves to be taken advantage of, Trump treated the Chinese as a business competitor and demanded a fair deal.

However, China has watched the United States and understands the value of patience. Since they had their way with former administrations, they assumed they merely had to wait this one out and it would be business as usual. And if they could provide a little disruption, all the better. Unfortunately, it appears they may have been correct.

What is to be done? First, we must understand that Capitalism is based on greed and it is the Government's job to control this greed to, among other things, ensure a free market. Agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Federal Trade Commission fulfil this role domestically. We must follow the path of the Trump administration and apply this same governance to trade with China. By allowing China to compete unfairly with domestic products, aided by influential actors in our country as well as the World Bank, we enable the greed engine inherent in Capitalism to further China's ambitions. This lack of oversight along with our turning a blind eye to human-rights abuses has contributed to China's becoming the second largest economy in the world with plans to become the largest. By continuing the policies of the Trump administration this trend can be forestalled if not reversed.

Second, we must be faithful to our founding and to our principles as a nation. After the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989, China embarked on an Orwellian rewrite of history. According to the new history, the United States from President John Tyler through President Obama had sought to subjugate China. Educators could teach only from this new narrative. Unfortunately, we see similar movements today in the form of media censorship and attempts to explain the founding and exceptionalism of America as a sinister undertaking. Further, these movements ignore the effects of our

struggles to overcome inequality and reinterpret those struggles as another example of systemic racism. We must see these efforts as following the same path as China and other totalitarian states and realize rewriting history as opposed to facing and preserving it destroys an element that binds people to a nation.

We as citizens must elect leaders who understand these serious threats posed to our freedom and way of life. We must elect leaders with the will and the courage to confront these threats in the face of concerted opposition from an influential media and from those in our government who would put their own and other interests before those of our country. Fortunately, there are such leaders and we must be diligent in supporting them.