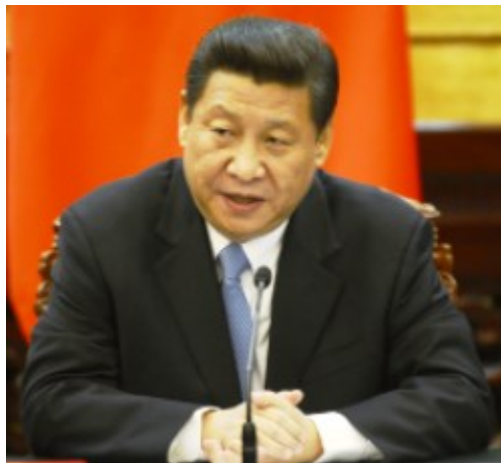


Enter the Dragon, goodbye bald Turkey

by Finian Cunningham via shirl - Strategic Culture *Tuesday, Oct 24 2017, 5:14am*

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Two very different faces of world leadership were on display this week. In Beijing, President Xi Jinping delivered a bold, outward-looking vision of Chinese global leadership. Meanwhile, in Washington President Donald Trump was embroiled in yet more egotistical infighting and tawdry claims of media lies.



Xi Jinping

Addressing the 19th congress of China's Communist Party, 64-year-old Xi was reelected for a second five-year term. He is being talked about as the greatest Chinese leader since Mao Zedong who led the country's founding revolution in 1949. With dignified composure, Xi spoke to the Great Hall of the People about "a new era of modern socialism... open to the world."

The Washington DC-based Council on Foreign Relations headlined: "Xi Asserts China's Global Leadership Role".

The BBC [reported](#) Xi as telling the more than 2,000 delegates: "China has entered a new era in which it should take centre-stage in the world."

Reuters [reported](#): "In what was probably an indirect reference to US President Donald Trump's America First policy, Xi promised that China would be fully engaged with the world, and reiterated pledges to tackle climate change. Trump this year opted to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate pact."

"No country can alone address the many challenges facing mankind; no country can afford to retreat into self-isolation," Xi told delegates during a three-and-half-hour address.

Reuters again: "Xi set bold long-term goals for China's development, envisioning it as a modernized socialist country by 2035, and a modern socialist strong power with leading influence on the world stage by 2050."

Fair enough, cynics may balk at "promise fatigue" and snipe that the Chinese leader's rhetoric was

heavy on aspiration and light on specific enabling details.

However, there is no denying that Xi was this week offering a vision of ambitious possibility for social progress and internationalism.

Contrary to American leadership and Trump in particular, Chinese characteristics of global leadership are not marked by knuckle-dragging domination, militarism and aggression. The emphasis from the Chinese leader is on global cooperation and multilateralism. In short, a peaceful and prosperous world.

Contrast that to Trump's tirade before the UN General Assembly last month when he rhetorically swaggered and threatened nations with "total destruction".

In that regard, Russian President Vladimir Putin shares the same leadership qualities as China's Xi. No wonder the two leaders are visibly comfortable when they meet publicly, as they have done more frequently than any other two current heads of state. Quietly, with dignity, the two men seem driven to create a more progressive, peaceful world of co-development and co-existence – in spite of American proclivities to create a world of chaos, conflict and hegemony.

While Xi Jinping was conducting himself with dignity and dedication, on the other side of the world, physically and metaphorically, Trump was behaving like the antithesis.

Again this week, Trump was bragging about massive tax cuts for the already mega-rich; about imposing stricter travel bans on foreigners; about ripping up international accords (the Iran nuclear deal); and showing appalling disrespect for his own country's military men and women – despite at other times boasting about American military might.

Trump's embarrassing boorishness is getting so bad, senior Republicans are deploring the country's "lack of leadership". Arizona Senator John McCain lamented that "America's leadership and ideals are absent". Last week, another senior Republican Senator, Bob Corker, said Trump was behaving like someone who should be confined to "an adult care center" and whose reckless rants are endangering the planet with World War III.

But it was Trump's reported comments to the young widow of a US soldier killed in Niger earlier this month that sunk his reputation to a new low.

Trump apparently phoned Myesha Johnson, the grieving pregnant mother of two on her way to receive the casket of her dead husband, and said: "Well I guess he knew what he was signing up for..."

The president was referring to 25-year-old Special Forces Sgt. La David Johnson who was killed along with three other US troops in an ambush by Islamist militants in Niger on October 4.

Admittedly, the incident of Trump's phone call to the widow was reported by CNN which has an anti-Trump editorial bias. Nevertheless, it sounds credible.

Trump hit back, [saying](#) it was more "fake news". However, he made matters even more ugly by doubling down to accuse his predecessors Barack Obama and George W Bush of not phoning families of fallen soldiers to offer condolences.

It was another unseemly spat in a litany of spats involving Trump as president. Spokesmen for

Obama and Bush said Trump was “telling lies again”. A firestorm erupted on social media with veterans and other war widows denouncing Trump’s insensitivity and lack of respect.

The row centering as usual on Trump’s egotistical self-aggrandizement has renewed criticism of the former real estate mogul’s own personal history of avoiding military conduct during the Vietnam War. Trump [eluded](#) being drafted during that war because he obtained five deferments due to “education” at an elite Ivy League university and for allegedly having a “bad foot”.

Trump would later joke in interviews that his “personal Vietnam” was avoiding contracting sexually transmitted diseases while living the high life in New York during the 1960s and 70s. He also joked that he couldn’t remember which one of his feet was the cause for obtaining a medical deferment from the military draft.

So, here we have a draft-dodging business tycoon-turned president who makes little of a Gold Star widow’s grief, and who is itching to start World War III with North Korea, while snubbing international obligations, and accusing every other nation of cheating American “generosity”. And, oh, also relishing massive tax cuts for wealthy oligarchs like himself.

It’s evidently not “America First”. It’s “Trump First” – and all his billionaire cronies on Wall Street.

American political leadership like its society and its dwindling state of democracy is no longer the proud soaring eagle it once claimed.

It’s a state led by hucksters and charlatans. In a word, this is no eagle. It’s leadership is like a grotesque gobbling turkey, plumped up with pea-brained pomposity.

And it’s not just about Trump, one individual. It’s a systemic problem of American decadence. Trump is just an outgrowth from the systemic decay.

China’s Xi Jinping and Russia’s Vladimir Putin are at least showing some responsibility and awareness of what real world leadership requires. Even the sniping Western media are beginning to catch on to the reality.

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<https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2017/10/23/enter-dragon-exit-turkey-formerly-american-eagle.html>

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