

In Berlin Wall speech, Pompeo advances crusade against Russia and China

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Speaking in Berlin last Friday on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo echoed Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire" and George Bush's "Axis of Evil" diatribes, targeting Russia and China as "unfree nations" in permanent conflict with a supposedly "free" world led by Washington.

Amid reminiscing about his deployment in West Germany as a US Army lieutenant in the run-up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Pompeo laid out a contrived ideological justification for the launching of a new Cold War in which the threat of a nuclear conflagration is far higher than it was three decades ago.

The irony and hypocrisy of Pompeo extolling the fall of the Berlin Wall—using the word "freedom" 23 times in barely 16 minutes—was not lost on many. He came to Germany as the representative of a US administration that has made the walling off of the US southern border its political priority, while separating thousands of immigrant children from their parents and locking them in cages.

The thrust of the secretary of state's thuggish address was the vilification of Russia and China.

"Today, Russia—led by a former KGB officer stationed in Dresden—invades its neighbors and slays political opponents," he said. "It suppresses the independence of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Russian authorities, even as we speak, use police raids and torture against Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians who are working in opposition to Russian aggression. In Chechnya, anyone considered 'undesirable' by the authorities simply disappears."

He continued: "In China, the Chinese Communist Party is shaping a new vision of authoritarianism, one that the world has not seen for an awfully long time. ...

The People's Liberation Army encroaches on the sovereignty of its Chinese neighbors, and the Chinese Communist Party denies travel privileges to critics—even German lawmakers—who condemn its abysmal human rights record. The CCP harasses the families of Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang, who simply sought refuge abroad. We—all of us, everyone in this room—has a duty. We must recognize that free nations are in a competition of values with those unfree nations."

How was this "competition" for freedom to be conducted? First, "by ensuring that Germany doesn't become dependent on Russian energy. We don't want Europe's energy supplies to be dependent on Vladimir Putin."

This was a continuation of a relentless campaign by Washington against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, bringing Russian natural gas to Germany through the Baltic Sea. The Trump administration has repeatedly warned that the energy deal will make Germany a "captive of Russia." Instead, it wants Germany to accept liquefied natural gas, delivered by US companies, at a higher price than Russian gas.

Secondly, this struggle for "freedom" is to be prosecuted, according to Pompeo, by confronting "the risks that are presented to the world by the Chinese Communist Party, its acquisition of sensitive technology firms and Chinese companies' intent to build out the world's next networks."

In other words, Washington wants a guarantee from Berlin and the rest of its erstwhile NATO allies that they will not allow the Chinese telecom giant Huawei to participate in the development of Europe's 5G telecommunications networks.

Huawei has become a focal point in the escalation of the US-China trade war as key sections of the US

military and intelligence apparatus view the technological development made by the company and other Chinese high-tech firms as an existential threat to the economic and military dominance of the US.

To put it bluntly, Washington's new struggle for "freedom" consists of a demand that Europe subjugate itself to the strategic and profit interests of US imperialism and line up behind US war preparations against both Russia and China.

Pompeo's speech in Berlin is only the latest in a series of denunciations delivered by the US secretary of state and Vice President Mike Pence against Beijing. This crescendo of aggression has accompanied what was supposedly a truce in the year-and-a-half-old US-China trade war that was supposed to be formalized with a deal signed by Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit this week. The summit was canceled, however, because the hosting government of Chile could not guarantee security under conditions in which millions of workers and youth have taken to the streets in mass protests against social inequality.

The remarks by Pompeo have made it clear that, whatever limited deal might be cobbled together between the US and Beijing on trade, the conflict between the two strategic rivals will continue unabated.

Pompeo's speech provoked a harsh response from Beijing, in large measure because he singled out China's ruling Communist Party—as opposed to the people of China—as an enemy of the United States and its "values."

"China threatens American freedoms," he said. "It's not the Chinese people that are the problem. It's the Communist Party of China."

Such a US denunciation of China's ruling party and attempt to counterpose it to the Chinese population is unprecedented since the rapprochement between Washington and Beijing initiated between Nixon and Mao. It is undoubtedly seen in Beijing as a threat of a US campaign for regime change along the lines of those carried out by US imperialism in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Geng Shuang, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, condemned Pompeo's remarks, declaring that they expressed a "dark anti-communist mindset" and were by "no means an embodiment of confidence and strength, but reveal fear and arrogance."

Pompeo's rhetorical appeal to Europe for a crusade of the "free" nations against the "unfree" led by US imperialism has little chance of achieving the desired effect. His speech in Berlin followed on the heels of an *Economist* interview in which French President Emmanuel Macron described the NATO alliance as "brain dead." Citing the Trump administration's unilateral actions in relation to Turkey and Syria, the French president's remarks indicated that the conflicts between US and European interests had rendered the 70-year-old transatlantic alliance unviable. The logical response is the remilitarization of Europe in preparation for a new global war that will pit each against all.

In his Berlin speech, the US secretary of state recalled that following the fall of the Berlin Wall "there were those who wrote about the 'end of history.'"

"We thought free societies would flourish everywhere," he said, i.e., that following the Stalinist bureaucracy's dissolution of the Soviet Union, US imperialism would consolidate its hegemony over the entire planet. Despite three decades of uninterrupted US wars, this has proven not to be the case.

"Sadly, we were wrong," Pompeo said. "We were wrong about the human condition and the nature of the course that many countries might take today."

Indeed, history is coming back with a vengeance. The "human condition," as Marx established in the Communist Manifesto, is dominated by the class struggle. The eruption of mass protests from Chile to Lebanon is ushering in a new period of worldwide socialist revolution that threatens the survival of world capitalism.

The only answer of Pompeo and those capitalist interests for whom he speaks to this threat from below is world war and fascist barbarism.

There is no way of stopping a new imperialist war, and with it the threat of nuclear annihilation, outside of socialist revolution. The decisive question is that of establishing a new revolutionary leadership in the working class through the building of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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