

Bolton's New Book: No Expectation and No Imagination
Mainstream Media and Organic Views
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One of the headline news recently was John Bolton's new book, *The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir*, published on June 23, 2020 by Simon & Schuster. (This publisher also has two other books about Trump's family, one, *The Art of Her (Melania) Deal* by Mary Jordan and another, *Too Much and Never Enough*, by Dr. Mary L Trump, Trump's niece.) The Wall Street Journal published a 4000 words synopsis of Bolton's new book raising White House's objection for its publication. After carefully reading the WSJ article, I came to a conclusion different from my thoughts before reading the introduction. Originally, I thought Bolton might be writing a book to help Trump's campaign (to make up) or he was writing about his "being wronged" and presenting his political thoughts after his experience as the Director of the National Security Council in the White House (WH). But I was wrong, Bolton seemed to be focused on making money through the book, publishing in the election year and focusing on Trump's obsession for getting re-elected. Nothing wrong with making money from writing a book after a WH experience, Obama and Clinton both made it alright. However, what is disappointing about Bolton's book is that it shows that Bolton has little to say about national security or his political insights or new views. WH responded by saying he is lying, but my conclusion is that Bolton has very little to say. He has no imagination. He can't even lie very well.

Bolton started with American's China strategy with two hypotheses. First assumption is that if China were developed and became prosperous, she would observe international rules (hence in 2001 China was admitted into WTO), The second assumption is that if China became rich, she would become more democratic not competing and engaging in Cold War. Bolton said the facts were just the opposite. I think Bolton held this obsolete legacy without the ability of learning on the job which caused his demise. I think the differences between the U.S. and China result from that the U.S. puts capitalism first and socialism second and China is just the other way around. China is doing everything for her 1.4 billion people and the U.S. is doing everything to preserve her capital to continuously gain enough profits. For example, the U.S. is used to applying her power to protect her capital and generate adequate return. She regards China's One Belt and One Road program as an invasion plan rather than from China's view that

she is trying to generate enough job opportunities for her large population and oversupply of labor and production. China needs to create new jobs and markets to support her people. She hopes it will be a win-win program for the world. Although Trump did not have much foreign policy experience, but he is a fast learner through many debates held in the WH (Bolton admitted that there were no conclusions from debates on trade dispute, likely on many other issues). Trump probably see through Bolton's lack of fresh ideas and let him go, but he and Pompeo do not seem to have any new idea other than repeating the stale rhetoric against China.

Bolton charges that Trump is spending too much time on trade issues, no progress, no strategy and often flipflop. From Bolton's own description, I suspect that Trump is learning on the job and uses his businessman instincts and smarts to guide him. Bolton blames Trump for dropping the Tariff from 25% to 10% in December 2018 as a give-in, but I can imagine Trump's thinking, Christmas is coming, 25% tariff is hurting American people more. Thus Trump yielded on Tariff to get the Chinese back to negotiation on substantive buying and meaningful structure reform. Judging from the Phase One Trade Agreement US-China reached, the U.S. did not lose much but did get China to commit to buy \$200B more goods and services from us over 2017 level in two years. Even with COVID-19 Pandemic, according to Lighthizer, China has already bought \$100B goods (\$30B soybeans, 2/3 of US production and largest US beef importer). Bolton simply can not understand Trump's "incoherence" which is growing out of his cunning business mentality and fast learning on reality to find short cuts. Bolton's old textbook approach, especially not working very well, can not be effective for his job in the WH.

Bolton also charges Trump placing winning re-election far more important than any other issue. How can he not know that is the characteristic of American Democracy (and of course for authoritarian government as well), no president would not put the re-election as top priority. Bolton is either naive or stubborn in challenging the president's re-election goal which is the President's score card and legacy defined by the voters. Bolton states that Trump is using the G20 as opportunities to meet with Xi for trade negotiation and helping his re-election. He focused on the praising words exchanged between the two leaders and took too seriously for their worth. China always pride herself claiming she will never interfere in another country's internal affairs. Do you think both Xi and Trump will take the phrase "Please do me a favor" seriously in diplomacy? China believes in signed black words on white paper, but never any fancy cute conversations. Bolton

ought to have learned that on the job. Bolton also says that Trump mixes his personal interest with national interest. Personally, I feel, the American political system makes the President as the nation and the nation as the President. When Trump suggested to hold the 2020 G7 at his Florida resort, you may think it is a conflict of interest, President Trump thinks it is a legitimate business opportunity fair and convenient to him.

Bolton has no positive words for Trump. He mentioned 'Huawei' which Trump initially was not engaged, but Bolton had no idea of his own on this technology war which is pushed by the Pentagon saying it causes a military exposure. Be it that may, it is likely Pentagon's own mistake in letting our technology slip and dependent on foreign products. Again, Bolton has no idea of his own, now that Trump is testing water and realizing that, just like trade war, technology war is no less complex and we are mutually intertwined. Bolton also mentioned the Taiwan Unification, Hon Kong unrest, Xinjiang Ughur and COVID-19 pandemic and claimed that Trump should have taken advantage of these issues as leverage against China, but Trump pondered why he should meddle in Taiwan and Hong Kong (both as China's internal issue) and expressed he was not interested in making Tianmen memorial statement. (Trump said that it was 15 years ago but actually it was an event more than 30 years ago). Trump is honest about that the U.S. has human rights issue as well. What is in it for us to raise human rights issue against China? Following the events, we see that the Congress has just passed a law about Xinjiang Uighur Human Rights which Xi has told Trump that China is not building concentration camps in Xinjiang but job training centers to help local economy to fight poverty and terrorism from external influences. We may not believe everything CCP says, but lifting people out of poverty is a fact and no terrorist event in Xijiang for the past three years is true as well. Otherwise,

Based on the Walls Street Journal introduction and the foreign affairs occurred during the Trump Administration, I may predict Bolton's memoir can never raise to the level of Kissinger's White House Years Memoir. Therefore, I hold no expectation from Bolton's unimaginative book!