

# The Delray Democrat

## Biden's First Foray – New Focus on National Security<sup>1</sup>

*Rob Resnick*

In his first European visit, President Biden restored the US presence and traditional role with NATO, the G7, and our relationship with Putin's Russia. He also established a strong US/EU plan for China and other challenges. The lingering question for our allies, for which we may not have an answer until after the 2024 and 2028 Elections, is whether this is a permanent return or whether the US may again turn to Trumpism that will again seek to threaten these critical alliances. Nevertheless, it was easy to see the huge relief in every attendee to welcome the traditionalist Biden in place of the isolationist Trump, who sought to destabilize and dismantle our strategic alliances and partnerships. That alone was a significant victory for the trip.

Each segment of the trip- NATO, G7, and Putin Summit - were crucial successes for Biden and the US. Remember under Trump when the result of just about every such meeting was abject failure. Setting aside the expected differences over policies and priorities, Trump had proven himself not just wholly inept and shamefully uninformed, but an actual threat to our own national security. Trump routinely subordinated himself to Putin, inexplicably doing Putin's bidding. He accepted all of Russia's aggression against independent nations, interference in our elections, etc., all while attempting to weaken if not demolish NATO and our international partnerships with European and Asian allies. Remember the horror in Helsinki...

Biden reestablished the US as the leader of the alliance. He began with an emphatic, unquestionable commitment to Article 5, which states that an attack on any one member of NATO is an attack on every member and the entire alliance pledges their support. Every member reaffirmed its commitment. They went further, by declaring that cyber-attacks were part of Article 5. This is critical because cyber warfare and related matters are the modern focus of international conflict and may often be immediately more impactful to the victim nation. NATO coming together to respond to ongoing cyber-attacks is critical. Along those lines, Biden led the alliance to a joint recognition of the roles China and Russia play in world conflict and instability with joint policy addressing those challenges. The NATO alliance is solid and US leadership is once again central.

The G7 reached consensus on addressing ongoing Chinese violations, infrastructure challenges, climate change, and the pandemic, etc. The key is that the effort will be in concert with all G7 nations. The group of nations reached significant consensus on collectively tackling these profound worldwide challenges and doing so to represent the power of democracy over authoritarianism, freedom over repression. Although China had penetrated parts of Europe as the next phase of its long-term program to create conditions where every region of the world is reliant on and beholden to China, under renewed US leadership, the G7 will again defend the world from Chinese hegemony.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Delray Democrat*, July 2021, p. 7.

The Biden-Putin summit was a critical reset of US-Russia relations. After four years of Trump subjugating himself to Putin and operating against US national interests it was crucial for Biden to personally inform Putin that his dominance of Trump and US policy was over (well, perhaps he still owns Trump). This was not a stage to unveil a new treaty or major agreement, but rather an opportunity to establish proper communication, expectations, and understanding priorities. Biden made clear how the US views continued Russian interference in elections, direction of or support for significant cyber-attacks, regional aggression against independent nations, dissidents, etc. There is no doubt Putin left the meetings understanding that Biden and the US will meaningfully respond to continued Russian transgressions. Mission accomplished.

With just a few months in office and after his first international trip, Biden has gone a long way to restoring the US's rightful and traditional place in the world and as leader of our alliances. Any one of these meetings would be incredibly mentally and physically grueling for any President; Biden demonstrated that he is up to the task. He was strong, focused, capable, and effective throughout each phase of the trip. The essential follow-on from these meetings is to reassure our justifiably nervous allies that the US is back and Trumpism is gone. This vital and daunting priority is made all the more difficult when people around the world see the seditionist insurrection of January 6, 2021, continuous Republican efforts to conceal the truth and foment discord with their "Big Lie" and efforts to prevent lawful citizens across the country from voting in order to steal elections and power. It appears the biggest threat to democracy remains the one at home...