

# Daily Memo: The US Angers China, Kyrgyzstan's New President

by Geopolitical Futures - January 11, 2021

**Chinese warnings over Taiwan.** The U.S. State Department announced this weekend that **it had lifted restrictions on meetings with Taiwanese officials**. This comes as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Kelly Craft is expected to be dispatched to Taipei this week. **China's ultra-hawkish Global Times warned** that a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (**who isn't expected to visit Taiwan**) could lead to war.

**Kyrgyzstan's powerful new president.** Sadyr Japarov looks set to become Kyrgyzstan's next president, after **winning 80 percent of the vote in elections held on Sunday**. The vote was triggered after protests in October toppled the government – and helped release Japarov from prison, where he was serving time for taking one of his rivals hostage. In a referendum also held on Sunday, voters backed constitutional changes that would introduce a presidential system of government and give Japarov new powers.

**Kim's promotion.** North Korea's big party congress wrapped up in the same way big North Korean plenums usually do: with some curious changes to the leadership hierarchy and some saber-rattling at the United States. **Kim Jong Un gave himself a big promotion**, taking over as general secretary of the Workers' Party, which is apparently higher on the organizational chart than his previous post of chairman. **His closely watched sister, Kim Yo Jong**, was demoted from the politburo just a few days after **being promoted to the slightly larger party presidium**.

**Sending signals.** As expected, Pyongyang also signaled that it's expecting the incoming Biden administration to put up or shut up at the negotiating table. Kim Jong Un declared that **Pyongyang must subdue the U.S. by pursuing more advanced nuclear technology**. The plans Kim presented to the congress reportedly emphasized development of solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines and intel-gathering capabilities.

**Iran's competition.** Iran is facing growing competition in Iraq. **A member of the Iraq-Iran Chamber of Commerce said** Turkey and, to a lesser extent, China were strong competitors in Iraqi markets. He attributed Turkey's rising position there to its ability to invest and issue credit, and warned that Turkey and China would play a larger role in Iraqi reconstruction projects than Iran. Meanwhile, **the United Arab Emirates' defense minister met with his Iraqi counterpart**

to discuss ways to improve military and defense cooperation as well as the development of national defense industries. The meeting comes days after Gulf Cooperation Council countries reconciled with Qatar and amid the warming of relations between Arab states and Israel.

**Turkey's olive branch.** [Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke on Saturday with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen](#) and said that improving relations with the EU would be a priority for the Turkish government this year. Meanwhile, [Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Monday](#) that Turkey would invite Greece to resume talks over their maritime claims dispute.

**Blocking migration.** [Guatemala and Honduras have deployed troops](#) to prevent migrants from heading for the United States amid a rise in U.S.-bound migration. Migration flows are up because of economic struggles induced in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mexico has also reinforced its border to prevent caravans from attempting to cross into its territory.

**Peace talks.** Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan arrived in Moscow on Monday for talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who discussed the issue with French President Emmanuel Macron just a day earlier.

**Lukashenko's overtures.** During an interview with Russian broadcaster Russia-1, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said he believed Russia and Belarus should work toward closer integration. He also said the price of Russian natural gas for Belarus "could be more fair" but added that he didn't intend to raise the issue with Putin. Meanwhile, Lukashenko said he was willing to resume relations with Ukraine, despite Kyiv's refusal to recognize the results of Belarus' August presidential elections.

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