

Cease Confrontation with China. Concentrate on Trade and Global Development

It would be better for the United States and for the world if the Biden administration realised that engagement is preferable to estrangement.

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On 6 June three U.S. Senators arrived in Taiwan to “[meet](#) with senior Taiwan leaders to discuss U.S.-Taiwan relations, regional security, and other significant issues of mutual interest.” It was stated they were also there to [announce](#) donation of 750,000 Covid-19 vaccine doses, but their main purpose, their over-riding objective, was simply to be there to annoy the Beijing government which, the BBC [notes](#), regards Taiwan — formerly Formosa, and the refuge of a few hundred thousand fleeing mainlanders in 1949 when civil war resulted in defeat of the Kuomintang political party — as remaining an integral part of China, which it had been since the 17th century.

Two of the senators are members of the Armed Forces Committee, and one of them, **Dan Sullivan**, is even more rabidly anti-Chinese than his colleagues and in March this year [declared](#) in an interview that “I spent one of my first deployments as a U.S. Marine in the Taiwan Strait defending America’s interest, but also defending the interests of an ally. That island is free and democratic because of the sacrifice of American citizens, of American military, of American taxpayer money.” We all know where we stand, as regards the U.S. Congress and China, because confrontation is one of the very few things about which a majority of the Senate can agree, as when on June 8 they [voted](#) 68-32 to “to approve a sweeping package of legislation intended to boost the country’s ability to compete with Chinese technology.” The bill will also promote the Taiwan “independence” status by allowing “diplomats and Taiwanese military to display their flag and wear their uniforms while in the United States on official businesses.” Never at a loss to display the utmost pettiness it also bans U.S. officials from attending the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, while Senator Todd Young [announced](#) that “Today we declare our intention to win this century, and those that follow it as well.”

This performance was staged two days before the Pentagon, as represented by its Secretary, retired general **Lloyd Austin** (until January on the [board](#) of major weapons’

contractor Raytheon), [decided](#) “to sharpen focus on China, which the United States has tagged as its top strategic rival.”

The Pentagon directive is classified, but Austin [declared](#) that “The initiatives I am putting forward today are nested inside the larger U.S. government approach to China and will help inform the development of the national defence strategy we are working on” which is fair warning that all the stops are being pulled out in the growing determination of Washington to confront China over every aspect of its policy and posture.

What wasn’t mentioned by anyone in Congress or by the U.S. mainstream media is that in 2020 the value of Taiwan’s [exports](#) to China and Hong Kong totalled 151.45 billion U.S. dollars, which was the highest annual amount — so far. *Statista.com* [notes](#) that “Mainland China is Taiwan’s largest export partner” and it is also [recorded](#) that “The European Union and China are two of the biggest traders in the world. China is now the EU’s second-biggest trading partner behind the United States and the EU is China’s biggest trading partner.”

Another piece of non-news (as regarded by the U.S. media and Congress), is that the land route linking China and Europe is thriving and trade flow is expanding vastly in both directions as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The *Financial Times* [reported](#) that “More than 2,000 freight trains ran from China to Europe in the first two months of 2021, double the rate a year earlier when the coronavirus first hit. Over the whole of 2020, the total number of train journeys rose 50 per cent”, and on the day that the U.S. Senate voted to penalise China in every way they could think of, a *Xinhua* news release [indicated](#) that “a new China-Europe freight-train route linking the city of Jinhua in east China’s Zhejiang Province with Budapest in Hungary was launched on Monday... The new China-Europe freight-train service offers a new efficient and convenient route for the Yangtze River Delta and even eastern Chinese coastal cities to export goods to Europe... In the January-May period, a total of 286 China-Europe freight trains departed or arrived in the city of Jinhua, carrying 23,700 TFE [twenty-foot equivalent] of goods, with the two figures up 565 percent and 566 percent year on year, respectively.”

China’s export-import trade with Taiwan, Europe, Africa, and Asia is thriving, and it is [apparent](#) from official figures that while the overall “U.S. trade gap narrowed to \$68.9 billion in April of 2021 from a record high \$75 billion gap in March” the “deficit with China decreased \$7.1 billion to \$32.4 billion as exports were up and imports declined.”

This is all part of globalism, and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, for example, has [noted](#) that “the outlook for Chinese exports is positive” — and although Beijing has [suspended](#) economic dialogue because of Canberra’s aggressive support of the U.S.’ anti-China policy, “Chinese imports from Australia rose 49% in April to \$14.87 billion, while exports rose 20% to \$5.25 billion, and exports to the EU rose 24% to \$39.92 billion, while imports climbed 43% to \$26.79 billion.”

So what is Washington’s problem?

Quite simply, it is feared that, in the [words](#) of Senate majority leader, **Chuck Schumer**, a principal director of the anti-China surge, “If we do nothing, our days as the dominant superpower may be ending. We don’t mean to let those days end on our watch. We don’t mean to see America become a middling nation in this century.” But he’s going to have to face reality, because in the not-too-distant future the United States is going to be overtaken by China, economically, and its reign as “dominant superpower” is indeed coming to an end.

This is inevitable — and it isn't going to be a disaster for the American people or for the rest of humanity. Why should it be?

It would be better for the United States and for the world if the Biden administration realised that engagement is preferable to estrangement and that straight, lawful competition is entirely consistent with western capitalism. The foreign ministers of China and the ten countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations, Asean, had a meeting in China on June 7 and their joint [statement](#) included notification that Asean “connectivity” would continue in synchrony with the Belt and Road Initiative and that they would all “work to enhance linkages in the region to enhance conducive business environment and to fuel sustainable and inclusive economic growth.” They are looking forward to increased cooperation and prosperity, benefitting all their citizens. Let us hope that the G-7 and other countries will reflect on the positive results of economic collaboration rather than the nationalistic drum-bashing confrontation advocated by such as Chuck Schumer. Of course people should be proud of their country. But one of the best ways to encourage pride is to maintain peace and encourage prosperity.

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