

US Ambassador to China: “We’re the Leader” of the Indo-Pacific

By [Caitlin Johnstone](#)

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A recent [US Chamber of Commerce InSTEP program](#) hosted three empire managers to talk about Washington’s top three enemies, with the US ambassador to China **Nicholas Burns** discussing the PRC, the odious **Victoria Nuland** discussing Russia, and the US ambassador to Israel **Tom Nides** talking about Iran.

[Toward the end](#) of the hour-long discussion, Burns made the very interesting comment that Beijing must accept that the United States is “the leader” in the region and isn’t going anywhere.

“From my perspective sitting here in China looking out at the Indo-Pacific, our American position is stronger than it was five or ten years ago,” Burns said, citing the strength of US alliances, its private sector and its research institutions and big tech companies.

“And I do think that the Chinese now understand that the United States is staying in this region — we’re the leader in this region in many ways,” Burns added emphatically.

The “[Indo-Pacific](#)” is a term which has gained a lot of traction in geopolitical discourse in recent years, typically describing the vast multi-continental region between Australia to the south, Asia to the north, Africa to the west, and the middle of the Pacific Ocean to the east. It contains half the Earth’s population, and it very much includes China.

After making the rather audacious claim of being “the leader” of a region which China is a part of but the United States is not, Burns went on to claim the US does not want any kind of confrontation with the Chinese government.

“We want a future of peace with China,” Burns said. “As President Biden makes clear every time he talks about this, we don’t want conflict, but we’re gonna hold our own out here. And I feel optimistic, just concluding my first year as ambassador, about the American position in this country and in this region.”

Again, Burns is saying this from China, so by “in this country” he means in China.

Burns [supported the Iraq war](#) and [is on record](#) saying that “China is the greatest threat to the security of our country and of the democratic world,” and he was appointed to his current position for a reason. Though especially hawkish and American supremacist, his comments are entirely in alignment with official US foreign policy; here’s an excerpt from a White House strategy published last year titled “[Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States](#)”:

The United States is an Indo-Pacific power. The region, stretching from our Pacific coastline to the Indian Ocean, is home to more than half of the world’s people, nearly two-thirds of the world’s economy, and seven of the world’s largest militaries. More members of the U.S. military are based in the region than in any other outside the United States. It supports more than three million American jobs and is the source of nearly \$900 billion in foreign direct investment in the United States. In the years ahead, as the region drives as much as two-thirds of global economic growth, its influence will only grow—as will its importance to the United States.

...

In a quickly changing strategic landscape, we recognize that American interests can only be advanced if we firmly anchor the United States in the Indo-Pacific and strengthen the region itself, alongside our closest allies and partners.

This intensifying American focus is due in part to the fact that the Indo-Pacific faces mounting challenges, particularly from the PRC. The PRC is combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological might as it pursues a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and seeks to become the world’s most influential power. The PRC’s coercion and aggression spans the globe, but it is most acute in the Indo-Pacific. From the economic coercion of Australia to the conflict along the Line of Actual Control with India to the growing pressure on Taiwan and bullying of neighbors in the East and South China Seas, our allies and partners in the region bear much of the cost of the PRC’s harmful behavior. In the process, the PRC is also undermining human rights and international law, including freedom of navigation, as well as other principles that have brought stability and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific.

Our collective efforts over the next decade will determine whether the PRC succeeds in transforming the rules and norms that have benefitted the Indo-Pacific and the world. For our part, the United States is investing in the foundations of our strength at home, aligning our approach with those of our allies and partners abroad, and competing with the PRC to defend the interests and vision for the future that we share with others. We will strengthen the international system, keep it grounded in shared values, and update it to meet 21st-century challenges. Our objective is not to change the PRC but to shape the strategic environment in which it operates, building a balance of influence in the world that is maximally favorable to the United States, our allies and partners, and the interests and values we share.

Imagine If China Did To The US What The US Is Doing To China

"Your brain would have to be made of soup not to look at that graphic and understand who the real aggressor is here." <https://t.co/LRpOjqA6Hp>

— Caitlin Johnstone (@caitoz) [February 19, 2023](#)

As we [discussed recently](#), history's unfolding has shown us that the US empire's plan to "shape the strategic environment" in which China operates has meant continuing to encircle China with war machinery in ways the US would never permit itself to be encircled. So when men like Joe Biden and Nicholas Burns claim the US does not seek a confrontation with China, what they really mean is that they hope China just sits back without responding to the confrontation the US is already inflicting upon it.

The way US empire managers talk about "leading" ostensibly sovereign states with ostensibly independent governments shows you they really do think they own the world. We see this in news stories like US officials [admonishing Brazil](#) for permitting Iran to harbor military ships thousands of miles away from the US coastline, while continually shrieking about China asserting a small sphere of influence over the South China Sea which the US continually transgresses by sailing and flying its own war machinery right through it.

We also see US empire managers claiming ownership of the entire planet in instances like when they [drew a "red line"](#) on China providing Russia with military assistance even as the US and its allies pour weapons into Ukraine, or the time Biden [said](#) that "everything south of the Mexican border is America's front yard," or the time then-Press Secretary Jen Psaki [remarked](#) on the mounting tensions around Ukraine that it is in America's interest to support "our eastern flank countries", suggesting that the eastern flank of the United States is eastern Europe and not its own geographic eastern coastline.

They claim ownership over the entire planet while pretending that they do not seek confrontation with the nations they try to subjugate, and interpret any refusal to be subjugated as an unprovoked act of aggression. This is taking our world in a very dangerous direction, and we need to [do something to stop it](#).

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Articles by: **Caitlin**
Johnstone

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