

Biden's CIA Nominee Identifies China as Top 'Adversary'

William Burns said China poses the 'biggest geopolitical test' for the US during Senate confirmation hearings

By [Dave DeCamp](#)

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William Burns, Biden's pick for CIA chief, [had tough words for China](#) during his Senate confirmation hearing and identified countering Beijing as a top priority.

“Adversarial, predatory Chinese leadership poses our biggest geopolitical test,” [Burns told the Senate Intelligence Committee on Wednesday](#). He described China as “a formidable, authoritarian adversary.”

“Out-competing China will be key to our national security in the days ahead,” Burns said. [For the CIA, he said this means](#) “intensified focus and urgency, continually strengthening its already impressive cadre of China specialists, expanding its language skills, aligning personnel and resource allocation for the long haul and employing a whole of agency approach.”

Although he focused on China, Burns also mentioned Russia, urging the US not to underestimate what he described as a “declining power.”

Burns' tirade against Beijing seemed to please the Senate, and he is expected to be easily confirmed. Throughout the confirmation process, Biden nominees have been grilled on Beijing, [and all had harsh words for China](#).

Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said the US should take an “aggressive stance” against Beijing. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said President Trump “was right in taking a tougher approach to China.” Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin identified China as the [“most significant threat” to the US military](#).

Besides the rhetoric, the Biden administration [has reshuffled the National Security Council to focus on Asia](#), reducing the staff that works on Middle East issues. [The Pentagon is currently conducting a review](#) of the US military's posture in Asia and its overall China policy. The review is being led by Ely Ratner, a China hawk who co-authored an op-ed last year titled [“Trump Has Been Weak on China, and Americans Have Paid the Price.”](#)

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Dave DeCamp is the assistant news editor of Antiwar.com, follow him on Twitter @decampdave.

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