

China's Normalization Overtures Rejected as US Opts for Another Taiwan Escalation

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For decades, many geopolitical experts have been claiming the United States is in constant need of geopolitical adversaries. The view was challenged by those claiming that all the US wants is the spread of "peace, prosperity, democracy, freedom, human rights," etc. And yet, the belligerent thalassocracy is consistent in its rejection of mutually beneficial relations with other global powers.

USSR/Russia essentially dismantled its own superpower status in an attempt to establish normal ties with the political West and focus almost exclusively on economic cooperation and integration. The political West responded with an unrelenting eastward expansion and effective destabilization and encirclement of Russia's core regions in the west of the country. Despite Moscow's patience, the results of this are now seen in Ukraine, where the Eurasian giant is forced to fight the same ultra-radicals it had to fight eight decades ago.

A somewhat similar scenario seems to be playing out in the increasingly contested Asia-Pacific geopolitical theater, where the US and (most of) its regional vassals are taking aim at China. Despite Beijing's attempts at rapprochement with Washington DC and its numerous satellites, this seems to be futile. The belligerent thalassocracy keeps insisting on not just meddling in China's internal affairs, but is also engaging in repeated violations of Beijing's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is especially true concerning the South China Sea, as well as the Asian giant's breakaway island province of Taiwan, which is being pushed ever closer to an armed conflict with (mainland) China. Beijing is certainly capable of winning if the ongoing dispute ever turns hot, but it's still trying to avoid such a scenario.

In line with its attempts at detente with the US, the last major (geo)political move China made at the end of 2022 was the appointment of a new foreign minister. On December 30, its ambassador to the US, Qin Gang, was appointed as the Foreign Minister of China, taking the diplomatic helm from Wang Yi. [Major Western media outlets noted](#) that the move could indicate Beijing's "softening" stance toward America. Indeed, this could be considered one of the biggest recent developments out of Beijing and it could have impacted the future of

US-China relations, as Qin Gang tried his best to keep ties between the two superpowers as friendly as possible during his relatively short, seventeen months-long tenure in Washington DC.

In the first days of January, the new Chinese FM grabbed the headlines of Western media by posting tweets that he's "deeply impressed" by the American people, while pledging to push US-China ties towards a more positive relationship. "I want to pay sincere thanks to the people of the United States for the strong support and assistance given to me and the Chinese Embassy during this period," [Qin tweeted on January 2, adding](#): "I have been deeply impressed by so many hard-working, friendly and talented American people that I met," further saying he had "made many friends across the US." He promised to "support the growth of China-US relations" in his capacity as the new Chinese FM.

And yet, China's overtures have been shunned by the US. On January 4, barely two days after Gang's words, the [Office of the US Trade Representative \(USTR\) announced it will be sending a delegation to Taipei](#) this week for additional trade talks with the government of the breakaway island province. Washington DC and Taipei held formal trade talks last year and agreed to have more such meetings after [the first round was held in New York in November](#). Although there are no official relations between the US and Taiwan, as even Washington DC officially considers the island as part of China, the American delegation is led by Terry McCartin, the assistant US trade representative for China affairs.

This means the move is carried out by President Biden's Executive Office, giving the effort a formal diplomatic status, usually reserved for state-level contacts, which is highly unlikely to be appreciated in Beijing. In addition, the USTR stated that the meetings would be attended by officials from several other US government agencies. [According to The South China Morning Post](#), Yang Jen-ni, Taipei's deputy trade representative, will lead the Taiwanese delegations, which will also include officials from other departments. This clearly implies that the meeting will include more than just trade talks, further antagonizing China and its attempts at rapprochement.

Beijing views high-level contacts between Washington DC and Taipei as a direct violation of the One-China policy, to which, as previously mentioned, the US still officially adheres. This also includes trade talks, which have been almost exclusively aimed against China in recent years. Beijing views the trade talks as another US attempt to hurt China's standing in the Asia-Pacific region. The USTR has dubbed the trade talks the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade and said that "they are intended to develop concrete ways to deepen the economic and trade relationship."

A major point of the talks is Taiwan's position as the world's largest producer of advanced semiconductors. The US is aiming to push Taiwan-based companies to move facilities to America, while sanctioning China's microchip industry, [marking a hostile shift in US trade policy toward the Asian giant](#). Additionally, speaking of hostility, on January 5, only a day after the controversial trade talks were announced, Washington DC further insulted Beijing by ordering the [US Navy 7th Fleet's Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Chung-Hoon to pass through the Taiwan Strait](#) as part of "its commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific." This was the latest sign that the US is clearly rejecting China's peace initiatives.

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