

Former US Officials Calling for Regime Change in China and “Greater Friction” Thus Risking World Peace

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It might be wrong to assume China has “peaked”. Nicholas R. Lardy, a Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, writing for Foreign Affairs, argues it is still rising and should not be underestimated as a superpower. Parts of the American establishment, however, still cannot conceive of pacific coexistence/competition with Beijing. Matt Pottinger (former Deputy National Security Adviser) and Mike Gallagher (former chair of the “House Select Committee on the CCP”) amazingly call for regime change in China, and argue that Washington should ensure the whole of Asia is under US military primacy.

Pottinger and Gallagher in fact [wrote](#) that “the United States shouldn’t manage the competition with China; it should win it”. They call for “greater friction” in Chinese-US relations, by adopting “rhetoric and policies that feel uncomfortably confrontational.”

The authors add that “Washington should not fear the end state desired by a growing number of Chinese”, namely a China “free from communist dictatorship.”

Other goals Washington should pursue, according to the same piece, are “severing China’s access to Western technology” (by placing export bans on areas such as “quantum computing and biotechnology”), and also multiplying “U.S. military installations across the region and pre-position critical supplies such as fuel, ammunition, and equipment throughout the Pacific.”

Desirability aside (even from an American perspective), it is debatable whether such goals are even achievable. I’ve [written](#) before on how impossible it is to really “decouple” from China, considering the fact that any such attempts pertaining to sanctions and export bans,

for example, can only aggravate the new supply chain crisis, ultimately hurting the United States itself and its allies, as is, in a different way, already the case with the ongoing [“chip war”](#) – not to mention the fact that supply chains are remarkably hard to trace. The authors understanding is that “Xi is preparing his country for a war over Taiwan” and thus Washington should not fail to deter such war, for it could “kill tens of thousands of U.S. service members, inflict trillions of dollars in economic damage, and bring about the end of the global order as we know it.”

The irony here lies of course in the fact that in mid-2022 Washington [decided to change its stance on Taiwan](#). Previously, it had always pragmatically recognized Beijing’s “One China Policy”. It has been building, as I wrote before, a major precision-strike missile network along the so-called first island chain, which is a chain of islands near China’s coast – this being part of a \$27.4 billion operation. In addition, it has been trying to advance the QUAD as a [“new NATO”](#) to contain Beijing – [its engagement with Nepal](#) being [an example](#) of that. [New Zealand](#) has also been under pressure to align with AUKUS (an [ongoing discussion](#)). Everywhere, American anti-Chinese initiatives abound: there is even a [“new QUAD”](#), the so-called “Afghanistan – Uzbekistan – Pakistan Quad Regional Support for Afghanistan-Peace Process and Post Settlement”. Nancy Pelosi’s July 2022 visit to Taiwan can hardly be described as anything else than a provocation. It is no exaggeration to say the American-Chinese escalation of tensions [brings the world closer to a new global war](#), and much of that escalation has been Washington’s own doing.

It is no wonder then that Peter T. C. Chang, a research associate at the Institute of China Studies (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), has described the current American stance on Beijing as a “sick obsession with China” which could lead to “profound uncertainties” globally and “ruin” the US “and the world.” With both the Gaza and Ukraine crises persisting, with no foreseeable resolution (especially with regards to the former), the Sinophobic obsession, as Chang describes it, holds the US and much of the world back from addressing critical issues, such as AI, climate change, and so on. Such Sinophobia is much fueled by a propaganda war, involving unsubstantiated rumors about spy balloons, Tik Tok’s communist plots and things like that. The aforementioned Pottinger and Gallagher’s [piece](#), for instance (on “winning” the competition with China) also makes a lot of points regarding TikTok (supposedly run by the Chinese Communist Party as part of a “smokeless battlefield” approach) and so on that are not really worth mentioning and can hardly be described as anything else as propaganda.

The bellicose spirit that permeates much of the American Establishment in turn is based on certain misconceptions about China, which is seen as having reached its peak. However, as Lardy points out, in his aforementioned [article](#), despite its “headwinds” (such as “a housing market slump” and the US-imposed restrictions), there is no reason to believe Beijing could not overcome all of those, as it overcame “even greater challenges when it started on the path of economic reform in the late 1970s.” As he concludes:

“China will likely continue to contribute about a third of the world’s economic growth while increasing its economic footprint, particularly in Asia. If U.S. policymakers underappreciate this, they are likely to overestimate their own ability to sustain the deepening of economic and security ties with Asian partners.”

Pottinger and Gallagher in turn acknowledge that the incumbent Biden administration has had its fair share of “failures of deterrence” (“in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and the Middle East”),

but its China policy, nonetheless, they argue, “has stood out as a relative bright spot.” Biden’s foreign policy, one may recall, has been characterized for its “dual containment” approach – referring to simultaneously “[encircling](#)” Moscow and “containing” Beijing.

The Atlantic superpower is currently [overextended](#), and [overburdened](#). In addition, it is [undergoing a military crisis](#), and its [naval hegemony is under threat](#). It is therefore a superpower in decline, basically. Its enabling of Israel’s wild undertakings in the Levant has brought about the [current crisis in the Red Sea](#). (now risking escalating into a full-blown Israeli-Iranian war). Even so, well-positioned actors within the American Establishment think it would be both feasible and desirable to pursue direct warfare with the Chinese superpower – even aiming at regime change. Those are quite dangerous ideas, to say the least.

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