

No Cold War With China

Messaging

- The foreign policy establishment has put us on the path to a new Cold War with China.
- Cold War posturing is used to distract from domestic issues — it benefits authoritarians, war hawks, and the corporate elite, not the people.
- From the pandemic to the climate crisis, the security threats of today demand cooperation with China, *not* competition.
- Addressing our serious concerns with the actions of the Chinese government will require multilateralism, cooperation, and diplomacy — *not* hostility.
- There is no threat from China that can be solved through further military buildup or economic antagonism.
- Fearmongering about China fans the flames of racism and xenophobia.
- Overly-antagonistic policies undermine the struggles of people in China fighting for change.
- We can stop the new Cold War — by building people-powered movements for peace.

The foreign policy establishment has put us on the path to a new Cold War with China.

- Hawks throughout the foreign policy establishment sow fear and conflict against any nation that threatens U.S. military and economic dominance.
- China's recent rise in wealth and influence has led to a bipartisan campaign of fear-mongering, misinformation, and aggression under the banner of so-called "great power competition."
- The Trump administration took this antagonism to new heights: inciting a thoughtless and counterproductive trade war; repeatedly blaming the COVID-19 crisis on China; withdrawing from the World Health Organization and refusing to take part in multilateral global health initiatives; building up the U.S. military presence in the region; and more. The Biden administration must take a different path.

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- Scapegoating a foreign "threat" is a tried-and-true tool of distraction, used to deflect blame from domestic problems — from inequality to police violence to COVID-19.
- A new Cold War is in the interest of arms manufacturers who profit from Sinophobia-driven Pentagon spending, and a foreign policy establishment that thrives on the revolving door between government, industry, and the "defense expert" community.
- Trade wars and other forms of economic nationalism benefit segments of a corporate class that want to use the power of the government to forcibly suppress their competitors. Working people in the U.S. and China alike need new, global, pro-worker regulations, not jingoist competition. [\[1\]](#)
- These broad progressive policies are wildly popular on their own — they do not need to be justified through an anti-China lens. [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#)

From the pandemic to the climate crisis, the security threats of today demand cooperation with China, *not* competition.

- To fight the current and future pandemics, we need to cooperate with China in multilateral efforts to produce emergency equipment, create and distribute a vaccine, and prevent future pandemics.
- The climate crisis can't be solved by any one country — the United States must be willing to work *with* China to ensure a just, rapid, global transition from fossil fuels.
- Addressing many of 21st century's global security challenges — arms control, nuclear proliferation, North Korea's nuclear weapons program, and more — will require China's cooperation and support.
- Inequality and poverty are driven by a global economic system that puts corporate profits over the wellbeing of everyday people. Making the global economy work for all will require working with China.

Addressing our serious concerns with the actions of the Chinese government will require multilateralism, cooperation, and diplomacy – *not* hostility.

- The United States should address areas of grave concern with the Chinese government's human rights record and other actions through good-faith, multilateral diplomacy and cooperation.
- The United States should join and work to strengthen multilateral institutions and mechanisms that enforce international norms, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, in addition to addressing its own human rights violations, providing immigration and resettlement support to those seeking refuge, and empowering global civil society to create lasting change.
- Naming and shaming, as well as *targeted* bilateral measures such as Global Magnitsky sanctions against specific perpetrators of gross violations of human rights, may be useful tools. But these should be used sparingly and applied proportionate to guilt alone, not as a political cudgel against perceived foes while ignoring the offenses of perceived allies.
- Rather than forcibly suppressing the Chinese corporate class in the interest of the U.S. corporate class, the U.S. should work to transform the rules of the global economy to enable equitable and sustainable development that benefits workers everywhere.

There is no threat from China that can be solved through further military buildup or economic antagonism.

- The U.S. war machine is already dangerously powerful. The United States spends nearly three times as much as China on its military [1], has more than 15 times the number of nuclear weapons [2], and maintains over 800 overseas military bases [3], including many directly surrounding China [4].
- The United States military has more than enough capacity to deter any Chinese military aggression, and a further buildup will only result in a perilous and costly arms race.
- Trade wars and other forms of economic aggression only serve the interests of segments of the elite corporate classes. They do nothing to stimulate broad-based growth or address the underlying questions of inequality, poverty, workers' rights, or the wellbeing of everyday people in the U.S. or China. [1]

Fearmongering about China fans the flames of racism and xenophobia.

- Anti-China fearmongering doesn't just raise the risk of geopolitical conflict with China – it stokes racism within the United States.
- Fueled by decades of China-bashing from both sides of the aisle, hate crimes and xenophobic attacks on people of East Asian descent in the United States are on the rise [1].
- This is not new. Anti-Chinese and anti-Asian racism have played a significant role in U.S. history, especially in justifying U.S. imperial conquest and the exploitation of immigrant workers [2].

Over-antagonism undermines the struggles of people in China fighting for change.

- Threats of violence, aggressive rhetoric, and arms races do nothing to help the people of China, or to address the grave challenges in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and elsewhere.
- Strong-arm attempts to confront China's human rights abuses are at best easily ignored, and at worst twisted to undermine those in China fighting for change, so long as the United States remains complicit in countless human rights abuses, inequities, and repressions of its own.
- The United States doesn't have to be perfect, but for its condemnations to be effective abroad, it does have to ensure that its own behavior meets the norms it expects of others.
- Unilateral action only weakens the United States' hand in managing these challenges, fostering cooperation on other issues, and supporting those working for social change.

We can stop the new Cold War – by building people-powered movements for peace.

- In spite of the aggressive rhetoric from Washington stoking public fears about China [1], the people, and Democratic voters especially, [2] still want peace, engagement, and cooperation.
- It's time to end the hostile rhetoric, stop the baseless fear-mongering, and move beyond a zero-sum competition mindset. The challenges of this century demand it.
- The United States must work to heal relations with China and address areas of concern in good faith, while focusing on cooperation for mutual good.
- Ultimately, transnational grassroots movements must work together to build power across borders and fight for rights, democracy, and justice in China, the United States, and around the world.