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PUTIN'S WAR FURTHER STRAINS US- CHINA TIES

BONNIE S. GLASER, GERMAN MARSHALL FUND OF THE US

US-China relations sank to new lows in the opening months of 2022. The year began with a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics by the US and nine other countries that objected to PRC policies against the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, with another five countries citing the pandemic as the reason for not sending government representatives. A meeting between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the eve of the Olympics produced a lengthy joint statement that highlighted the depth and breadth of the China-Russia strategic partnership and raised alarm in Washington as well as in European capitals. US-China ties soured further when the Biden administration shared intelligence with Beijing revealing that Moscow planned to invade Ukraine, but instead of seeking to prevent the war, China gave the information to Russia and refused to act. Once war broke out, US officials warned China repeatedly against providing material support to the Russian economy or military. The Chinese refused to criticize Russia, however, and instead blamed the war on the United States. US and Chinese defense chiefs held their first—and long overdue—phone call. At every opportunity, Chinese officials warned the US to stop supporting Taiwan independence. The US sent several senior delegations to Taiwan, approved the sale of \$100 million in equipment and services to support the Patriot Air Defense System, and sailed three warships through the Taiwan Strait.

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Beijing's Olympics: American Athletes Compete, US Officials Stay Home

One week prior to the opening ceremonies of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a phone call with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Irritated with the US decision to diplomatically boycott the games, which emboldened some US allies to do the same, Wang [demanded](#) that the US end its “interference” in the Olympics. The US [readout](#) of the call didn't even mention the Olympics, noting instead that the two officials discussed how to manage strategic risk, climate change, global health issues, and the Russia-Ukraine situation.

A public opinion [poll](#) conducted by the Pew Research Center Jan. 10-17 found that 46% of Americans supported the US diplomatic boycott of the Games, while 22% opposed and 31% were unsure. Public views of China remained decidedly negative with 54% viewing China as a competitor, 35% seeing it as an enemy, and only 9% considering China a partner of the United States.

Beijing's slogan for the Olympics was “Together for a shared future.” The motto was chosen to [demonstrate](#) the practice of Xi Jinping's vision of building a “community with a shared future for mankind.” In reality, however, the 2022 Winter Olympics were prickly. The US, UK, Canada, India, Australia, Lithuania, Kosovo, Belgium, Denmark, and Estonia sent athletes, but no officials, because of China's human rights abuses against its Muslim population in Xinjiang. Five other countries—New Zealand, Austria, Slovenia, Sweden, and the Netherlands—cited the pandemic as the reason they did not send government representatives.

China's decision to choose a 20-year-old Uyghur athlete, Dinigeer Yilamujiang, as one of two athletes to light the Olympic cauldron prompted criticism from the United States. US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield [said](#) on CNN that “We know that a genocide has been committed there” and accused Beijing of trying to “distract” the world from its human rights atrocities.



Figure 1 Participants cheer as organizers announce the motto for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Paralympics at a launch in Beijing. Photo: VCG via Global Times

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Unveils Depth of US-China Mistrust

On the eve of the start of the 2022 Winter Olympics, and just two weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Xi Jinping met with Vladimir Putin. The two leaders signed an unprecedented joint statement that sounded alarm bells in both Washington DC and European capitals. For the first time, China explicitly backed Russian opposition to further enlargement of NATO and supported Putin's earlier demands for “long-term legally binding security guarantees in Europe.” The statement also criticized US strategy in the Indo-Pacific, including the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or “Quad”) and AUKUS. In what appeared to be a push for the establishment of spheres of influence, the joint statement noted that Russia and China oppose “attempts by external forces to undermine security and stability in their common adjacent regions.”

When an anonymous US official later claimed that Putin may have told Xi of his intention to attack Ukraine and that Xi may have asked the Russian leader to wait until the Olympics concluded, China's foreign ministry spokesperson [called](#) the story “sheer fiction.”



Figure 2 Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin pose for a photo prior to their talks in Beijing, China, Friday, Feb. 4, 2022. Putin arrived in Beijing for the opening of the Winter Olympic Games and talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, as the two leaders look to project themselves as a counterweight to the US and its allies. Photo: Alexei Druzhinin/Sputnik/Kremlin Pool Photo via AP

The Russian assault on Ukraine on Feb. 24 began with attacks from three sides using missiles and long-range artillery, almost exactly as the United States had predicted. In an unusual leak of highly classified intelligence, Biden administration [revealed](#) to *The New York Times* that half a dozen meetings had been held with Chinese officials over a three-month period in which the US had shared intelligence of Russia's troop buildup and urged Beijing to tell Russia not to invade. According to US officials, the Chinese shared the information with the Russians and said they would not interfere with Russia's plans, believing that Washington was trying to drive a wedge between Beijing and Moscow.

On March 5 Secretary of State Blinken held a phone call with Chinese counterpart Foreign Minister Wang Yi. In a three sentence [readout](#) of the call, the State Department said that Blinken indicated that "the world is watching to see which nations stand up for the basic principles of freedom, self-determination, and sovereignty." China's much longer [readout](#) included Wang's description of the Ukraine issue as "complicated" and "closely related to the security interests of various parties." Wang maintained that the crisis should be resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, including safeguarding all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. He expressed the hope that the war would end as soon as possible and called for dialogue and negotiations between Russia and Ukraine as well as between NATO, the EU, and Russia, insisting that attention be paid to

"the negative impact of NATO's continuous expansion on Russia's security."

In the weeks following Russia's invasion, the US along with its allies and partners in Europe and Asia imposed unprecedented harsh and sweeping sanctions on Russia, including freezing the assets of Russia's central bank, removing some Russian banks from the international financial messaging system SWIFT, and export restrictions aimed at hampering Russia's ability to compete in the 21st century economy. China made clear it would not join in the effort. China's Commerce Ministry [declared](#) on several occasions that China would continue to maintain normal trade and economic cooperation with both Russia and Ukraine "based on equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect."

US officials responded to Beijing's "business as usual" approach to Moscow with clear warnings of the consequences if China violated US sanctions. On March 8, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo [advised](#) that the Biden administration would sever Chinese companies' access to American equipment and software they require to manufacture their products. She singled out China's largest wafer fab and contract chipmaker Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC), threatening to "essentially shut" down its operations if the company continues to supply chips and other advanced technology to Russia.

Washington's concerns went beyond whether China would comply with US sanctions on Russia, however. Even if Beijing complied with US sanctions to avoid getting hit with secondary sanctions, including being cut off from the international financial system, China might find ways to aid the Russian economy and the military effort. The latter possibility was especially worrisome and urgent. The Biden administration [reportedly](#) told allies that it had evidence that after the war broke out, Russia had requested military equipment and other support from China, and that Beijing had signaled willingness to help. To avert this outcome, a set of high-level meetings was arranged at the initiative of President Biden to convey to China's top leadership the gravity of the situation and the potential consequences of Chinese efforts to help Russia mitigate the impact of sanctions.

The first high-level meeting took place in Rome, Italy on March 14, where US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met China's top diplomat

and Politburo member Yang Jiechi for seven hours of intense discussions, The day prior to the meeting, Sullivan publicly [telegraphed](#) his message to Yang, telling *CNN* that Beijing would “absolutely” face consequences if it assisted Moscow to evade sanctions over the war in Ukraine. “We will not allow that to go forward and allow there to be a lifeline to Russia from these economic sanctions from any country, anywhere in the world,” Sullivan said. That warning was balanced with an attempt to provide the Chinese with an opportunity to distance themselves from Putin’s war. Prior to the invasion, China may have known that Russian was planning some action against Ukraine, Sullivan stated, but Beijing may not have understood the full extent of Moscow’s military plan.



Figure 3 National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan meets today with Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi in Rome, Italy on March 14. Photo: US Mission Italy

Based on the Chinese foreign ministry’s [readout](#) of the talks, Yang did little more than reiterate China’s position on Ukraine. He maintained that Beijing supports respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, backs peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, calls for all parties to exercise maximum restraint, and believes the legitimate concerns of all parties should be addressed.

Four days later, the US reinforced its messages at the highest level in a virtual meeting between President Biden and Xi Jinping. The White House [readout](#) of the call stated that Biden “described the implications and consequences if China provides material support to Russia as it conducts brutal attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilians.” It also noted that he and Xi agreed on the “importance of maintaining open lines of communication, to manage the competition” between the two countries.

A much lengthier Chinese [readout](#) of the call summarized Xi’s remarks on the war in Ukraine, but included nothing that had not been said in previous statements. Beijing continued to straddle its competing interests in preserving its relationship with Russia, upholding sovereignty and territorial integrity, and preventing a worsening of its ties with the United States and other advanced industrialized countries that could put in jeopardy Xi Jinping’s Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Following the two high-level meetings, it was clear that Beijing was incensed by the warnings and threats from Washington. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian [told](#) the media at a press conference that “Any attempt to deny China’s efforts and distort China’s intention is irresponsible. We hope relevant sides can help to ease the situation in Ukraine in real earnest, rather than willfully spread disinformation to shift blames, instigate confrontation and reap profit from the situation.”

An [article](#) under the byline “GT Voice” in *Global Times*, a tabloid that often contains nationalistic articles and is not as authoritative as other Chinese media, accused the US of “trying to blackmail China into dancing to its tune,” and insisted that such threats would not work. “Needless to say, if Washington were to be so arrogant and move to hurt Chinese interests, China will respond resolutely and appropriately to protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese entities and individuals,” the article maintained.



Figure 4 A group of women observe a sign put up by the Canadian Embassy in China reading “We Support Ukraine,” where anti-NATO sentiment graffiti had earlier appeared but was quickly covered up in Beijing, China. Photo: Andrea Verdelli/Getty Images

In March and April, PRC state media ramped up efforts to blame the Ukraine war on the United States, in particular on Washington's efforts to expand NATO. A spate of commentaries in *People's Daily*, many of them under the authoritative pseudonym "Zhong Sheng" ("Voice of China") argued that the United States caused the crisis and manipulated NATO to practice its hegemony. The *PLA Daily* also published a six-part series on the "despicable role by the United States and the West in the Ukrainian crisis." Among the accusations made in the series was the charge that the Pentagon was developing biological weapons in Ukraine, echoing disinformation spread by Moscow.

China Warns US Against Supporting Taiwan and Biden Reassures Taipei of US Support

Taiwan remained front and center in the US-China relationship in the first four months of 2021, even as attention focused on Putin's invasion of Ukraine. In an interview with *NPR* in late January, China's Ambassador to the United States Qin Gang [accused](#) the US of encouraging and supporting Taiwan independence, and playing the Taiwan card. Using unusual language, he warned that if current trends continue, the outcome is likely to be a military conflict between the United States and China. Qin also charged that the US was not acting in accordance with President Biden's statements that the US does not support Taiwan independence and adheres to its one-China policy, which he made to China's leader Xi Jinping last November. "So far we haven't seen many actions to honor his words," Qin asserted.

When China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi met with Jake Sullivan, Taiwan was a central part of Yang's talking points. According to the Chinese [readout](#) of the meeting, Yang reiterated that US recent actions on Taiwan "are obviously not consistent its statements." He maintained that China "is gravely concerned and firmly opposes the recent erroneous words and deeds by the US side on Taiwan-related issues." Yang warned the US to "fully recognize the highly sensitive nature of the Taiwan question" and avoid going "further down the road of great danger."

Although President Biden focused almost exclusively on the war in Ukraine in his March 18 phone call with his Chinese counterpart, Xi used the opportunity to touch on other issues, including Taiwan. He reportedly [said](#) it was "very dangerous" that "some people in the US have

sent a wrong signal to 'Taiwan independence' forces" and warned that mishandling of the Taiwan question "will have a disruptive impact on the bilateral ties." In a remarkable statement, Xi suggested that officials in the Biden administration were undermining the "understanding" reached by the two presidents, which likely included Taiwan.

As the war in Ukraine raged, the PRC spread disinformation in Taiwan that the US would abandon Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack, just as the US failed to come to the rescue of Ukraine. In an effort to provide reassurance to Taiwan, and thus reduce domestic pressure on the Tsai Ing-wen administration, President Biden dispatched a delegation composed of five former senior US officials and military officers to Taipei in early March. The move was carefully crafted to not provoke Beijing: no sitting officials were included in the delegation and the messages [conveyed](#) by its leader, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen (ret.) were reaffirmations of longstanding US policy to oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo and to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. China's foreign ministry spokesperson denounced the visit, [saying](#) that it was "futile for the US to send anyone to demonstrate its so-called support for Taiwan."

As the Mullen-led delegation departed, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Taiwan on his first visit since leaving office at the end of the Trump administration. He called for the United States to diplomatically recognize the Republic of China as a "free and sovereign country." He insisted that the move would simply accept the "unmistakable, already existing reality."

A planned visit to Taiwan by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi was leaked to the press on April 7 but was scrapped when Pelosi was diagnosed with COVID-19. The PRC reacted unusually harshly to the possibility of the visit, even though it would not have set a precedent. The last visit by a US Speaker of the House took place in 1997, 25 years ago, when Newt Gingrich traveled to Taiwan after visiting Japan. Before the media reported that Pelosi's trip had been postponed, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi used the opportunity of a phone call with Emmanuel Bonne, diplomatic counselor to French President Emmanuel Macron, to [register](#)

his objections. “If Pelosi, a political leader of the United States, knowingly visits Taiwan, it would be a malicious provocation against China’s sovereignty and gross interference in China’s internal affairs, and would send an extremely dangerous political signal to the outside world,” Wang said. Chinese MFA spokesman Zhao Lijian demanded that the visit be cancelled and [warned](#) that if it proceeded as planned, China would take “firm and strong measures to firmly safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity,” adding that “All possible consequences that arise from this will completely be borne by the US side.”



Figure 5 US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi departs the White House in Washington DC following a signing event for a postal service reform act on April 6, 2022. Pelosi tested positive for COVID-19 on April 7 and postponed her Asia trip and reported visit to Taiwan. Photo: VCG via Global Times

In mid-April, a bipartisan delegation of lawmakers led by Sen. Lindsey Graham, who serves as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on the Budget, and Sen. Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, visited Taiwan.

On Jan. 22, China flew 39 military aircraft in Taiwan’s air defense identification zone. The sortie took place as the US sailed two carrier strike groups in the South China Sea led by *USS Carl Vinson* and *USS Abraham Lincoln*.

US Navy transits of the Taiwan Strait took place in February and March. The destroyer *USS Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) of the 7th Fleet sailed through the Strait transit on Feb. 28. On March 17, China sailed its aircraft carrier *Shandong* through the Taiwan Strait just 12 hours before the phone call between President Biden and Xi Jinping. A source revealed that the *USS Ralph Johnson* shadowed the carrier. A third Taiwan Strait transit was conducted on April 26 by the *Arleigh Burke*-class guided-missile destroyer *USS Sampson* (DDG 102).

On Feb. 7, the US State Department [approved](#) the potential sale to Taiwan of equipment and services to support the Patriot Air Defense System at an estimated cost of \$100 million. Later that month, China [imposed](#) sanctions on US defense firms Raytheon Technology Corporation and Lockheed Martin Corporation in retaliation for their arms sales to Taiwan.

Defense Chiefs Hold Their First Phone Call

For the first 15 months of the Biden administration, contacts between the US and Chinese militaries took place only at low levels. Disagreement over protocol hampered the scheduling of a phone call between the two sides’ defense chiefs. Last year, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin repeatedly requested to talk by phone with Gen. Xu Qiliang, vice chairman of China’s Central Military Commission, but Beijing rejected those requests, insisting that Austin first speak with Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe. The US refusal to accept that the calls be sequenced according to China’s preference led to a stalemate. Even after Biden’s talks with Xi in November 2021 and again in March 2022, no progress was made toward creating crisis communications or establishing risk reduction measures in part due to the wrangle over protocol.

On April 20, the US relented, and Secretary Austin spoke with Gen. Wei for 45 minutes. The Pentagon provided a two-sentence [readout](#) of the phone conversation, noting that the call was “a follow-up” to the video call between Presidents Biden and Xi a month earlier. It listed three topics that were discussed: US-PRC defense relations, regional security issues, and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. According to US sources, Austin reiterated warnings that China should not provide material support to Russia’s military or economy.

China’s [readout](#) of the call was much lengthier, and focused in part on his messages regarding Taiwan. Gen. Wei stressed that “If the Taiwan question is not handled properly, it will have a subversive effect on the China-US relations.” In the bilateral defense issues bucket, Wei called for the two sides to “enhance military mutual trust, strengthen dialogue and exchanges, manage risks and crises, and carry out practical cooperation.”

The limited amount of time available for the call meant that the conversation was only an exchange of opening talking points with no additional time for responses or discussion. It remains to be seen whether the call will open the door to additional dialogues or defense exchanges aimed at advancing the objectives set out by Biden and Xi.

A Chinese air force video that aired on *CCTV* on April 25 underscored the pressing need for the US and China to take measures to avoid conflict and control risks. The video [featured](#) a PLA pilot of a *JH-7* fighter bomber saying that he had recently intercepted a foreign vessel operating in Chinese territorial waters in the South China Sea, and was “ready to pull the trigger” if the ship had not left. The pilot, a captain of a PLA air force unit, said that he was willing to sacrifice himself defending the nation.

US Government Reports Highlight China Threat

On Feb. 11, the White House released the long-awaited Indo-Pacific Strategy. Although several reasons were cited for the US increasing focus on the Indo-Pacific, the [report](#) noted that a driver is mounting challenges that the region faces from China. “The PRC’s coercion and aggression spans the globe, but it is most acute in the Indo-Pacific,” the report noted, citing Chinese economic coercion against Australia, growing pressure on Taiwan, bullying of neighbors in the East and South China Seas, and use of force against India along their disputed border, along with China’s violations of human rights and international law.

In the clearest statement so far of the Biden administration’s objectives toward China, the strategy stated that “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.” Among the main themes of the report is that the US will cooperate with like-minded countries and will seek to manage intensifying competition with China so it doesn’t escalate to conflict.

On March 8, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines released the 2022 Annual Threat Assessment of the US intelligence community. The [report](#) stated that China “increasingly is a

near-peer competitor, challenging the United States in multiple arenas—especially economically, militarily, and technologically—and is pushing to change global norms and potentially threatening its neighbors.” It predicted that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would “continue efforts to achieve President’s Xi Jinping’s vision of making China the preeminent power in East Asia and a major power on the world stage,” work to press Taiwan on unification, undercut US influence, drive wedges between Washington and its partners, and foster some norms that favor its authoritarian system.” At the same time, the report judged that China’s leaders probably would “seek opportunities to reduce tensions with Washington when it suits their interests.”

On March 28, the Department of Defense [transmitted](#) the classified 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) to Congress. Among the defense priorities, China was identified as the main challenge in the Indo-Pacific, while Russia was named the main challenge in Europe. Moreover, China was labeled “our most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department.” Later this year, the DoD will release an unclassified version of the NDS along with the unclassified National Security Strategy.

Trade Debate

In April, two top Biden officials hinted that the administration was weighing lifting tariffs on some Chinese imports to combat inflation. Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh commented that most of the tariffs on Chinese imports “serve no strategic purpose,” especially those on consumer goods. A day later, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said that easing tariffs on some goods is “worth considering.”

The spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington chimed in with words of encouragement: “The early termination of these sanctions will help stop the loss to China-US relations and help enterprises from both countries to seek opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation,” Liu Pengyu [told](#) reporters.

Testifying before the Senate Finance Committee on March 31, US Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai said that “the realignment of the US-China trade relationship” is “the next major component of our trade

agenda.” Tai pledged to vigorously defend American values and economic interests from the negative impacts of the PRC’s unfair economic policies and practices, but no details emerged about Biden’s trade policy toward China from the hearing or at other time during the four-month period.

A New Low but Possibly not the Nadir

The US-China relationship sunk to a new low in the first four months of 2022. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine provided yet another reason for fresh exchanges of recriminations. Under the threat of secondary sanctions from the US if it violates international sanctions on Russia, Chinese banks and enterprises had no recourse but to abide by the restrictions. To avoid appearing weak to its domestic population, and to fan the flames of nationalism, Chinese state media released a torrent of articles blaming the United States for the war.

In early May, Secretary of State Antony Blinken is scheduled to deliver a speech on the Biden administration’s China strategy. Although the speech is unlikely to contain any surprises, as the first comprehensive speech on China outlining US objectives and approach, it will lay down an important marker. A lengthier China strategy document is expected to remain classified, but provide important guidance for US government agencies.

CHRONOLOGY OF US-CHINA RELATIONS

JANUARY—APRIL 2022

Jan. 3, 2022: United States and China, along with France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, [issue](#) a joint statement on preventing nuclear war and avoiding arms races.

Jan. 5, 2022: Secretary of State Antony Blinken [expresses](#) concern about China's attempts to bully Lithuania by pushing US and European companies to stop building products with components made in Lithuania or risk losing access to the Chinese market.

Jan. 10, 2022: Blinken [says](#) China's sanctions in December on four US Commission on International Religious Freedom commissioners "constitute yet another PRC affront against universal rights."

Jan. 12, 2022: State Department [releases](#) a study rejecting the legality of the Chinese government's expansive sovereignty claims in the South China Sea.

Jan. 13, 2022: China's consul-general in New York Huang Ping [calls](#) on US business leaders to help improve US-China relations in a video speech to the China-US Business Alliance.

Jan. 13, 2022: China [condemns](#) the US for imposing sanctions on six North Korean nationals connected with North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, and calls for reconvening the six-party talks.

Jan. 14, 2022: State Department issues a [statement](#) on the passing of Zhang Qing, wife of human rights defender Guo Feixiong, who is being held incommunicado in China. It calls for the PRC to release Guo and allow him to travel to the US to be reunited with his children and grieve the death of his wife.

Jan. 19, 2022: Biden [says](#) at a press conference that he is not ready to lift the Trump-era taxes because Beijing failed to deliver on the promises it made under the phase-one trade deal that expired at the end of last year. **Jan. 20, 2022:** USS *Benfold* (DDG 65) of the 7th Fleet [conducts](#) freedom of navigation operation in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands.

Jan. 21, 2022: State Department [imposes](#) sanctions on three Chinese entities for engaging in missile-technology proliferation activities.

Jan. 21, 2022: Transportation Department [issues](#) an order to suspend 44 China-bound flights from the United States by four Chinese carriers in response to the Chinese government's decision to suspend some US carrier flights over COVID-19 concerns.

Jan. 25, 2022: White House [announces](#) the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force, chaired by the Department of Homeland Security, will work to implement the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and prohibit the importation of goods made by forced labor from China.

Jan. 26, 2022: In an anti-dumping dispute that dates back to 2012, the World Trade Organization [rules](#) in China's favor, permitting it to slap duties on \$645 million worth of US imports per year.

Jan. 26, 2022: Secretary Blinken [holds](#) a call with China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss the Russia-Ukraine situation, health security and climate change. The MFA [readout](#) says Wang Yi called on the US to "stop interfering with the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, stop playing with fire on the Taiwan issue, and stop creating various anti-China 'small cliques.'"

Jan. 27, 2022: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission [holds](#) a hearing titled "CCP Decision-Making and the 20th Party Congress."

Jan. 27, 2022: USTR spokesperson Hodge [expresses](#) concern about China's "discriminatory trade practices against Lithuanian goods and EU products with Lithuanian content."

Jan. 27, 2022: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [revokes](#) China Unicom America's telecom services authority in the United States, citing national security concerns.

Jan. 28, 2022: In an interview with NPR, China's ambassador to the US Qin Gang [says](#) the Taiwan issue "most likely will involve China and the United States...in the military conflict" if "the Taiwanese authorities, emboldened by the United States...keep going down the road for independence."

Jan. 30, 2022: Chinese Foreign Ministry "[lodges](#) solemn representation" with the United States over meetings between Taiwan's Vice President Lai Ching-te and several US officials, including with Vice President Kamala Harris in Honduras and a virtual meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.

Jan. 31, 2022: FBI Director Christopher Wray [delivers](#) speech on countering threats posed by the Chinese government inside the United States, saying they are "more brazen, more damaging than ever before."

Feb. 3, 2022: Speaker Pelosi [delivers](#) testimony at the Congressional-Executive Commission on China's hearing on "the Beijing Olympics and the Faces of Repression," in which she criticizes China for "perpetrating a campaign of gross human rights violations, including genocide."

Feb. 7, 2022: State Department [approves](#) a possible arms sale to Taiwan of equipment and services to support the Patriot Air Defense System for an estimated cost of \$100 million.

Feb. 8, 2022: United States and other member countries of the Media Freedom Coalition [issue](#) a statement expressing "their deep concern at the Hong Kong and mainland Chinese authorities' attacks on freedom of the press and their suppression of independent local media in Hong Kong."

Feb. 8, 2022: Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security [adds](#) 33 Chinese entities to its Unverified List.

Feb. 10, 2022: State Department [issues](#) statement welcoming an International Labor Organization report calling on the Chinese government to review, repeal, and revise its laws and practices of employment discrimination against racial and religious minorities in Xinjiang.

Feb. 11, 2022: White House [releases](#) its Indo-Pacific Strategy, which notes the challenges that China poses on the United States.

Feb. 14, 2022: Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security [adds](#) a Chinese entity, Jiangsu Tianyuan Metal Powder Co. Ltd., to its Entity List "based on determination that it engaged in activities that warranted the imposition of measures pursuant to the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act."

Feb. 16, 2022: USTR [releases](#) its annual report on China's WTO compliance, which concludes that China "has a long history of violating, disregarding and evading WTO rules to achieve its industrial policy objectives."

Feb. 16, 2022: Treasury Department [issues](#) the Chinese Military-Industrial Complex Sanctions Regulations, which prohibits all transactions pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13959 as amended by E.O. 14032.

Feb. 17, 2022: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission [holds](#) a hearing titled "China's Cyber Capabilities: Warfare, Espionage, and Implications for the United States."

Feb. 21, 2022: Secretary of State Blinken [holds](#) a call with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss developments in North Korea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Feb. 21, 2022: China [imposes](#) sanctions on US defense firms Raytheon Technology Corporation and Lockheed Martin Corporation in response to their arms sales to Taiwan.

Feb. 22, 2022: White House [announces](#) major investments to expand the domestic critical minerals supply chain to break dependence on China and boost sustainable practices.

Feb. 23, 2022: At George Mason University's National Security Institute, Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen [announces](#) that the department will end the "China Initiative."

Feb. 24, 2022: Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying [criticizes](#) the US for Russia's aggression against Ukraine, saying the United States "started the fire and fanned the flames."

Feb. 24, 2022: China's ambassador to the United States Qin Gang [delivers](#) the keynote address at a Nixon Foundation event commemorating the 50th anniversary of Nixon's visit to China.

Feb. 25, 2022: United Nations Security Council [fails](#) to adopt a draft resolution, submitted by the United States and Albania, intended to end Russia's military offensive against Ukraine. The United States and 10 member countries vote in favor of the draft resolution, and China and two member countries abstain from voting; Russia vetoes the draft resolution.

Feb. 25, 2022: Based on Biden administration leaks, *The New York Times* [reports](#) that the US shared intelligence with China on Russia's troop buildup around Ukraine over a three-month period and urged Beijing to tell Putin not to invade. The Chinese dismissed the intelligence and allegedly shared it with Moscow.

Feb. 26, 2022: *USS Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) of the 7th Fleet [conducts](#) a Taiwan Strait transit.

Feb. 28, 2022: China's State Council Information Office [releases](#) "The Report on Human Rights Violations in the United States in 2021."

March 1, 2022: USTR [releases](#) its Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, in which one of its objectives is to "pursue strengthened enforcement to ensure that China lives up to its existing trade obligations."

March 1, 2022: USTR [releases](#) its 2022 President's Trade Policy Agenda and 2021 Annual Report, which includes details on "how USTR and the Biden Administration have re-aligned the United States-China bilateral trade relationship in order to defend the rights of American workers, farmers, producers, and businesses and ensure they can fairly compete on a level playing field."

March 1, 2022: Delegation of former US security and defense officials sent by President Biden and led by Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, [travels](#) to Taiwan.

March 1, 2022: In response to the US delegation's visit to Taiwan, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin [says](#) that "the attempt by the US to show support to Taiwan will be in vain, no matter who the US sends."

March 5, 2022: Secretary of State Blinken [holds](#) a call with China's Foreign Minister Wang and discusses Russia's war against Ukraine.

March 5, 2022: New US ambassador to China, Nicholas Burns, [arrives](#) in China.

March 8, 2022: Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines [delivers](#) the Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Committee to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, in which she describes China as "an unparalleled priority for the Intelligence Community."

March 8, 2022: In an interview with *The New York Times*, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo [warns](#) that Chinese companies that defy US restrictions against exporting to Russia will be denied access to US equipment and software they need to manufacture their products.

March 13, 2022: Special Representative for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Sung Kim [holds](#) a call with China's Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming and discusses North Korea's February 26 and March 4 ballistic missile launches.

March 14, 2022: National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [meets](#) Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi in Rome and discusses issues in US-China relations, Russia's war against Ukraine, and the "importance of maintaining open lines of communication between the United States and China."

March 15, 2022: US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) [announces](#) that it is detaining merchandise produced or manufactured by Li-Ning Sporting Goods at all US ports of entry as a result of a CBP investigation indicating the company uses North Korean labor in its supply chain.

March 17, 2022: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission [holds](#) a hearing titled “China’s Energy Plans and Practices.”

March 18, 2022: Approximately 12 hours before a call between President Biden and Chinese President Xi, Chinese aircraft carrier *Shandong* [conducts](#) a Taiwan Strait transit. The destroyer *USS Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) of the 7th Fleet [shadows](#) the carrier.

March 18, 2022: President Biden [holds](#) a call with President Xi and discusses Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Biden also “reiterate[s] that US policy on Taiwan has not changed and emphasize[s] that the United States continues to oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo.”

March 21, 2022: The State Department [imposes](#) visa restrictions on Chinese officials “who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, policies or actions aimed at repressing religious and spiritual practitioners, members of ethnic minority groups, dissidents, human rights defenders, journalists, labor organizers, civil society organizers, and peaceful protestors in China and beyond.”

March 23, 2022: USTR [announces](#) its determination to reinstate certain previously granted and extended product exclusions in the China Section 301 Investigation.

March 24, 2022: US [imposes](#) sanctions on Chinese entity Zhengzhou Nanbei Instrument Equipment Co. Ltd for supplying Syria with equipment controlled by the Australia Group chemical and biological weapons nonproliferation regime.

March 25, 2022: FCC [adds](#) equipment and services from two Chinese entities—China Telecom (Americas) Corp and China Mobile International USA Inc. —as well as a Russian entity—AO Kaspersky Lab—to its list of communications equipment and services that have been deemed a threat to national security.

March 28, 2022: Department of Defense [transmits](#) to Congress the classified 2022 National Defense Strategy, which identifies China as the “most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department.”

March 30, 2022: USTR Ambassador Katherine Tai [delivers](#) testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee, in which she says “our strategy must expand beyond only pressing China for change and include vigorously defending our values and economic interests.”

March 30, 2022: US Securities and Exchange Commission [places](#) 11 Chinese entities on its provisional or conclusive list of issuers under the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act, which requires the securities issuers to “establish that they are not owned or controlled by a foreign government.”

March 30, 2022: US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield [meets](#) China’s Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming and discusses opportunities to encourage North Korea to denuclearize and engage in meaningful negotiations.

March 30, 2022: Special envoys for Afghanistan from China, the United States and Russia, a group known as the “Extended Troika,” [meet](#) in Tunxi in Anhui province.

March 31, 2022: In response to US visa restrictions on Chinese officials who are believed to have violated human rights, China [imposes](#) reciprocal visa restrictions on US officials “who concocted lies about China’s human rights issues, pushed for sanctions against China and undermined China’s interests.”

March 31, 2022: State Department [releases](#) the 2022 Hong Kong Policy Act Report, which documents actions by leaders in Hong Kong and China from March 2021 through March 2022 that have further eroded both democratic institutions and human rights.

March 31, 2022: Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women’s Issues [holds](#) a hearing titled “China’s Role in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

April 1, 2022: Department of Defense [releases](#) its annual Freedom of Navigation Report for Fiscal Year 2021, which lists excessive maritime claims by 26 claimants, including China.

April 5, 2022: Department of State notifies Congress that it has agreed to [sell](#) Taiwan equipment, training, and other services totaling \$95 million to support the island's Patriot Air Defense System.

April 5-6, 2022: Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming visits Washington, DC for consultations with US counterparts.

April 6, 2022: Ambassador Nick Burns [meets](#) China's Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng and exchanges views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual concern.

April 9, 2022: China [lodges](#) "solemn representations" with the United States for its "groundless accusations against China's epidemic response policies."

April 12, 2022: State Department [releases](#) the 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which highlights human rights issues in China such as "arbitrary or unlawful killings" and "forced disappearances by the government."

April 12, 2022: Defense Intelligence Agency [releases](#) "2022 Challenges to Security in Space" report, which examines "space and counterspace strategies and systems pursued primarily by China and Russia."

April 13, 2022: Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen [delivers](#) address at the Atlantic Council on the future of the global economy and US economic leadership and says, "China cannot expect the global community to respect its appeals to the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity in the future if it does not respect these principles now when it counts."

April 14, 2022: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission [holds](#) a hearing titled "Challenging China's Trade Practices: Promoting Interests of US Workers, Farmers, Producers, and Innovators."

April 14-15, 2022: Sen. Lindsey Graham [leads](#) a congressional delegation to Taiwan during which they discuss US-Taiwan relations, regional security, and other significant issues of mutual interest with senior Taiwan leaders.

April 20, 2022: Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [holds](#) his first phone call with China's Minister of National Defense Gen. Wei Fenghe since the beginning of the Biden administration. They discuss US-China defense relations, regional security issues, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

April 24, 2022: In a CBS 60 Minutes interview, FBI Director Wray [says](#) the Chinese Communist Party is "targeting our innovation, our trade secrets, our intellectual property on a scale that's unprecedented in history."

April 25, 2022: State Department spokesperson Ned Price [issues](#) a statement on the Panchen Lama's 33rd birthday, urging Chinese authorities to "account for Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's whereabouts and well-being immediately."

April 26, 2022: *USS Sampson* (DDG 102) of the 7th Fleet [conducts](#) a Taiwan Strait transit.

April 26, 2022: During a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing [on](#) the FY 2023 State Department budget request, Secretary of State Blinken [says](#) the administration is "determined to make sure that [Taiwan] has all necessary means to defend itself against any potential aggression, including unilateral action by China to disrupt the status quo that's been in place now for many decades."

April 27, 2022: USTR [releases](#) the 2022 Special 301 Report on intellectual property protection and enforcement, which places China on its Priority Watch List, indicating that "particular problems exist in that country with respect to IP protection, enforcement, or market access for U.S. persons relying on IP."

April 27, 2022: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee [holds](#) a closed hearing titled "Recent Developments in China's Nuclear Capabilities."

Chronology by GMF Research Intern Ki Suh Jung

