

# COMPARATIVE

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## CONNECTIONS

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US-CHINA RELATIONS

## Trump's Return Scrambles Outlook

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US-China relations through 2024 remained marked by a paradox. On the one hand, ties displayed a distinct stabilization. The two sides translated their leaders' modest "San Francisco Vision" into reality. Cabinet officials and the numerous working groups met in earnest and produced outcomes, functional cooperation was deepened though differences emerged, sensitive issues were carefully managed, and effort was devoted to improving the relationship's political optics. US electoral politics, or threat of Chinese interference in the elections, did not materially impinge on ties. On the other hand, the negative tendencies in US-China relations deepened. With its time in office winding down, the Biden administration went into regulatory overdrive to deepen the "selective decoupling" of the two countries' advanced technology ecosystems. China methodically responded in kind using its now-robust economic lawfare toolkit. The chasm in strategic perceptions remained just as wide. Donald Trump's return to the Oval Office portends a period of disruptive unpredictability in ties, although "Tariff Man" Trump can reliably be expected to enact additional impositions on Chinese imports.

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Two years to the day that they met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali, Indonesia to place a floor under their troubled relationship and initiate a process of emplacing guardrails, Joe Biden and Xi Jinping met for their [third in-person meeting](#) as presidents in Lima, Peru, on the sidelines of the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting. In Lima, the two presidents took stock of the gradual rehabilitation of ties over the past two years, despite its early interruption by the [balloon incident](#), and [pledged to consolidate](#) the fragile stability and make the relationship more predictable. They also patted themselves for harvesting some of the low-hanging fruit since their summit in Woodside, California, 12 months ago. US-China relations have made important incremental progress over the past 18 months, starting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Beijing in June 2023 (Blinken [returned](#) to Beijing again this April). In Spring 2023, aside from meetings of their senior-most officials, there was practically no active communication channel between the two sides. Fast forward to today and there are more than 20 dialogue frameworks that span the range from diplomacy, security, economy, trade, fiscal affairs, finance and military to counternarcotics, law enforcement, agriculture, climate change, and people-to-people exchanges.



Figure 1 US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping greet one another prior to a bilateral meeting on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2024 in Lima, Peru. Photo: Official White House Photo by Oliver Contreras

In Spring 2023, the US Treasury Department was sanctioning Chinese entities for their involvement in supplying chemical precursors to US-bound fentanyl trafficking networks. Today, 55 dangerous synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals have been class scheduled by Beijing, online platforms and pill presses shut down, and arrests connected to the illicit chemical industry

made. Reciprocally, China's Ministry of Public Security-linked Institute for Forensic Studies has been delisted from the Entity List—a rare case of an adversary state entity being delisted without any underlying change in the listed reason for its blacklisting.

In Spring 2023, US-China people-to-people as well as academic ties were frail, having suffered body blows stemming from the polemics associated with the origins of the COVID-19 virus and the Justice Department's earlier "China Initiative." There were only 12 weekly roundtrip passenger flights in service. Today, the two sides are on the [verge of renewing](#) their landmark Science and Technology Agreement (STA), the first major agreement to be signed by the two governments following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations in January 1979, pandas [are returning](#) to zoos in San Diego, Washington, DC and San Francisco, the number of roundtrip passenger flights [has risen](#) to 50 (prior to COVID-19, the number exceeded 150), and the health authorities of the two countries [recently held](#) their first ministerial-level dialogue in over seven years. The cases of "wrongfully detained" Americans have [been resolved](#) (although many others remain on exit bans), reciprocal repatriations of [illegal migrants](#) and [fugitives](#) have been conducted, and the Mainland's Level 3 travel advisory status (Reconsider Travel) has [been lowered](#) to Level 2 (Exercise Increased Caution) by the State Department. For his part, President Xi [has committed](#) to inviting 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study over the next half-decade.



Figure 2 A screenshot from a Smithsonian National Zoo video showing the FedEx truck driving through Washington, DC transporting two pandas newly arrived from China on October 15, 2024. Photo: National Zoo via X/Twitter

In Spring 2023, US-China climate change discussions—a mutually beneficial area of cooperation - were at a standstill and would only resume after the visit to Beijing by Special Climate Envoy John Kerry in July 2023. Today, the US-China bilateral Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s has [met twice](#) and, in keeping with their [Sunnylands Statement](#) of November 2023, the two parties jointly hosted a Methane and Other Non-CO2 Greenhouse Gases Summit at COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. In Spring 2023, the idea of hosting exchanges on AI hadn't even been broached, even as US and Chinese organizations were moving forward with transformative breakthroughs in Generative AI. Today, the two sides have begun a constructive and candid policy dialogue on AI, co-sponsored each other's resolutions on AI at the UN General Assembly, and affirmed the need to ensure that unsupervised AI must not be allowed to dictate command-and-control of critical weapon systems - especially the [decision to use](#) a nuclear weapon. The fear that China would be treated as a political football during the US election season or that it would interfere in the elections using disinformation operations [did not materialize](#) either (although there may have been interference [in down-ballot races](#)).

For all the positives that have flowed from their newly established or restarted dialogue frameworks, not all conversations ended in constructive outcomes. This is understandable. As the “new normal” in US-China relations takes shape, there is no one typology of interaction that can cut across the various “baskets” of US-China issues. A complex relationship demands complex choices that are built as much on ideology and values as much on interests, objectivity and realism.

### **Mil-Mil Conversations Go Sideways on Strategic Arms Proliferation Concerns**

The decision to restart mil-mil communications at the Biden-Xi Woodside summit in November 2023 was a bright spot in bilateral ties, to the extent that “jaw-jaw” is vastly preferable to “war-war.” Mil-mil ties had been suspended by China, it bears remembering, following Speaker Pelosi's visit to Taipei in August 2022. This included the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA) talks, an operational safety dialogue between US INDOPACOM and PLA naval and air forces, which had convened regularly since 1998. The full range of institutionalized

high-level mil-mil communications stand restored as of this writing.

In January and September 2024, the 17<sup>th</sup> and [18<sup>th</sup> editions](#) of the Defense Policy Coordination Talks, an annual deputy assistant secretary level policy dialogue, were respectively conducted. The [MMCA working group](#) met earlier in April and again in November, and a [theater commanders video-teleconference](#) featuring the Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command and the PLA's Southern Theater Commander was held in early-September (the two [met later](#) in September at the Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defense Conference in Hawaii). Topping these engagements was the first in-person meeting between the two countries' defense chiefs, Secretary Lloyd and Minister Dong, in a year-and-a-half on the margins of the Shangri La Dialogue (SLD) in late-May. While both sides had tough words for the other in their SLD remarks, they also [agreed to convene](#) a crisis communications working group by the end of 2024. For added measure, National Security Advisor Sullivan was [afforded the opportunity](#) to meet the Vice-Chairman of the Party's Central Military Commission (CMC), Zhang Youxia, during his late-August visit to Beijing, the first such NSA-CMC vice chair meet [in eight years](#).

The mil-mil communications were wholesome but could not mask the wide chasm between the two sides on strategic arms-racing and deterrence concerns. It [was reported](#) in August that Biden had reoriented a highly classified US nuclear strategic plan, the Nuclear Employment Guidance, in March 2024 to account for an era of multiple nuclear-armed adversaries in the context of China's [rapidly growing](#) nuclear arsenal. Whether linked or not, China [discontinued](#) the bilateral arms control and nonproliferation consultations in July (lamey using Taiwan arms sales card as an excuse) and, later that month, unleashed broadsides against [AUKUS' nuclear submarine cooperation pillar](#) as well as NATO's [nuclear sharing](#) arrangements (it issued a [No-first-use Nuclear Weapons Initiative](#) too). It also conducted its first ICBM test [in 44 years](#) in late-September, with the projectile splashing down in the South Pacific. The US and China also clashed over the deployment of the *Typhon* Mid-Range Capability missile system in the Philippines. The US side cautioned the PLA for its dangerous, coercive, and escalatory tactics in the South China Sea which [could trigger](#) Article V of the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty; the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson

admonished the US side for the [first deployment](#) of a strategic offensive weapon system outside its territory and in the Asia-Pacific since the end of the Cold War.

### Careful Management on Taiwan Amidst Lobbing of Rhetorical Salvos

The Taiwan Question remained a bone of contention in US-China relations during the mid and latter part of 2024, to nobody's surprise. In early-May, China's foreign ministry spokesperson [blasted](#) Secretary Blinken's [encouragement](#) as well as that of [seven other allied nations](#) to the WHO to invite Taiwan as an observer at the 77<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly meeting. Later that month, the ministry spokesperson ["deplored and opposed"](#) Blinken's note of [felicitation](#) to Lai Ching-te on his inauguration as president of the self-governing island. Lai had angered Beijing by noting that "the PRC and the ROC are not subordinate to each other" in his inaugural address. He was called out by name; treatment that took Beijing three years to mete out to his predecessor Tsai Ing-wen.

The Biden administration, for its part, was [critical](#) of the PLA's Joint Sword 2024 A and B military exercises that were conducted in the wake of Lai's inaugural address in May and his "Double Ten Day" address in October, respectively. Joint Sword 2024-A had focused on seizing the initiative in the Taiwan Strait battlefield, with the training content aimed at precision strikes on critical land, air and sea targets; Joint Sword 2024-B featuring the PLA Navy and the Coast Guard sought to [execute a blockade](#) of ports and other key locations. The exercises were [denounced](#) as "irresponsible, disproportionate and destabilizing." The Biden administration also strongly condemned the June 2024 [judicial guidelines](#) issued by China's Supreme People's Court which imposes criminal punishments on "diehard Taiwan independence separatists" for conducting or inciting secession, [noting](#) that threats and legal warfare would not achieve peaceful resolution of cross-strait differences. And in conjunction with like-minded ANZUS, NATO and Japanese government allies, the US State Department sought to [develop a common front](#) to debunk China's conflation and "mischaracterization" of UNGA Resolution 2758 with its "One China Principle." China's foreign ministry was [having none of it](#), and political parties at the National Assembly in Taipei too were [unable to arrive](#) at a consensus on

this point. All along, the Biden administration maintained a consistent clip of arms sales to the island, including by [utilizing](#) presidential drawdown authority, as well as periodic transits through the Taiwan Strait in international waters and airspace. China, for its part, built out its Taiwan arms sales-related list of sanctioned US parties under the framework of its Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law.

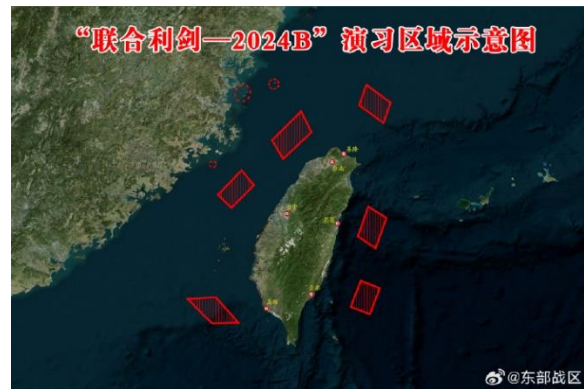


Figure 3 A schematic diagram of the area of the military exercise "Joint Sword 2024B," released by the Eastern Theater Command. Photo: Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, Public Domain

Tit-for-tat skirmishes between the two sides were not the whole story on the Taiwan Question. In Lima, Peru, Biden again assured his counterpart that the US does not support Taiwan independence (Xi had [attempted—unsuccessfully](#)—in Woodside to alter the phraseology to "oppose Taiwan independence") and added that the US [does not use](#) the Taiwan card to compete or contain China. More broadly, Biden yet again reemphasized his "Five Noes": that the US does not seek a Cold War with China; does not seek to change China's system; the revitalization of its alliances is not directed at China; does not support Taiwan independence; and does not seek conflict with China. Whether believed or not in Beijing, these assurances offer a steadying framework for future-oriented ties.

### Playing Cleanup on Advanced Technologies Decoupling

In an important speech in September 2022, NSA Jake Sullivan [had listed](#) three "families of technologies"—computing related technologies; biotechnologies and biomanufacturing; clean energy technologies—as "force multipliers" that would define the geopolitical landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given



their foundational nature, the US would seek to “maintain as large a lead as possible” over adversary nations, including by resorting to a “small yard, high fence” approach on strategic trade controls. Following the speech, the US Commerce Department issued an expansive regulation that instituted controls on China’s access to advanced computing chips as well as semiconductor manufacturing equipment essential to producing such chips.

With the clock winding down on its term in office, the Biden administration maintained its frenetic rulemaking pace, issuing a number of regulations in quick succession to deepen the “selective decoupling” of the two economies’ advanced technology ecosystems. On Sept. 23, the administration [released](#) a Proposed Rule to secure the supply chain for connected vehicles, which prohibits the import of Chinese hardware and software integrated into vehicle connectivity system (VCS) and software integrated into automated driving system (ADS). VCS is the set of systems that allow the vehicle to communicate externally, including telematics control units, Bluetooth, cellular, satellite, and Wi-Fi modules. The ADS includes the components that collectively allow a highly autonomous vehicle to operate without a driver behind the wheel. The Proposed Rule follows an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) [issued earlier](#) this February.

On Oct. 29, the US Justice Department [issued](#) a massive 422-page proposed rule to prevent access to Americans’ bulk sensitive personal data as well as government-related data by countries of concern, such as China. The rule proposes to establish a new national security-based regulatory regime governing the collection and transfer of personal data. Two types of commercial transactions between a “US person” and a “country of concern” are to be prohibited – transactions involving “data brokerage” (with the term defined broadly) and transactions involving human genomic data. The proposed regulation contains an exemption for certain data transfers in connection with biopharmaceutical clinical investigations and post-marketing surveillance data. The Proposed Rule follows a White House [executive order](#) accompanied by an ANPRM [issued earlier](#) this March. It also follows instances of damaging cyberespionage breaches by China-linked hackers, which include the infiltration of US broadband providers’ networks to [sweep up](#) the private communications of hundreds of thousands of Americans as well as [access](#) the

“lawful intercept” system maintained by the Justice Department to place wiretaps on suspected Chinese spies in the US. Earlier in July, the “Five Eyes” countries, joined by Germany and Japan and South Korea for the first time, had issued a rare [joint advisory](#) attributing malicious cyber activities to China. President Xi, for his part, [disavowed](#) any such conduct in his Lima meeting with Biden, with his foreign ministry spokesperson having earlier [thrown the ball back](#) into the US’ court.

Also on Oct. 29, the US Treasury Department [released](#) a voluminous final rule to prohibit outbound investment in semiconductors and microelectronics, quantum information technologies, and AI systems to China. The purpose of the Outbound Order is to [shut down](#) a pathway for Beijing to exploit the “intangible benefits” – including enhanced standing and prominence, managerial assistance, investment and talent networks, market access, and enhanced access to additional financing – that accompany the flow of US investments to China. The order marks the first instance of the US government controlling outbound capital flows for national security reasons. And while the regulation is framed as addressing capital flows, it effectively regulates the coverage of “greenfield” and “brownfield” investments in these national security technologies and products, too. The Final Rule follows a White House Executive Order [issued](#) in August 2023 and a Proposed Rule [issued earlier](#) this July.

Finally, on Dec. 2, the US Commerce Department [issued](#) a final rule that upgrades the existing controls on China’s access to semiconductor manufacturing equipment so as to impair its capability to produce advanced node semiconductors. Twenty-four types of semiconductor manufacturing equipment and three types of software tools are to be additionally denied to Chinese end-users. Beijing response to the measure was swift. On Dec. 3, it announced a ban on several minerals essential to semiconductor, communications and military technologies, as well as a prohibition on exports of dual-use items to US military end users. Alongside the semiconductor manufacturing equipment rule, the US Commerce Department also imposed controls on the transfer of high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips, which are crucial for accelerating AI training and inference as well as added [140 entities](#) spanning tool companies, chip fabs and investment firms to the Entity List. Earlier this May, a number of Chinese

quantum technology companies and research institutes had been [added](#), too, to the List. Overall, the number of Chinese entities placed in the Entity List during the 2018–2023 period have [increased over 300%](#) (from 218 to 787). As for license applications submitted that involve a Chinese Entity List-ed party, they increased from five in 2018 to a high of 1,751 in 2021, with approximately 33 percent of applications either denied or revoked.

In addition to these advanced technologies and data flow controls, successive rounds of sanctions were enforced on China for its [policies on “forced labor”](#) in Xinjiang and [support for Russia’s war](#) in Ukraine. This included the first US sanctions imposed on a Chinese entity for joint development and production of a [complete weapon system](#) (the *Garpiya* series long-range attack unmanned aerial vehicle) with the Russians. No Chinese financial institutions have as yet been sanctioned, despite Secretary Blinken’s threat to do so in his late-April meetings in Beijing. To the contrary, the US Treasury Department and China’s Finance Ministry maintain a cordial working dialogue that [spans the range](#) from financial sector operational resilience to debt relief for low-income countries to central bank scenario testing of climate change risks. Earlier in April, the two sides had [established](#) dedicated workstreams on Balanced Growth in the Domestic and Global Economies and on Cooperation and Exchange on Anti-Money Laundering under the aegis of their financial and economic working groups.

“Small yard, high fence” export controls has been one component of the Biden administration’s toolkit to vigorously compete with China in the advanced technologies of tomorrow. Alongside, the administration also passed landmark legislation, such as the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), as well as employed an impressive array of industrial policy authorities, such as the Defense Production Act, Buy American Act and the Bayh-Dole Act, to incentivize the expansion of domestic productive capacity in key strategic and high value-added manufacturing industries. To this end, and in its waning days in office, the administration aggressively pushed out CHIPS Incentives Awards totaling in the many billions to the likes of [Intel](#), [BAE Systems](#), [GlobalFoundries](#), and [TSMC](#). There are uncertainties whether this industrial buildout will continue under President Trump and a Republican Congress, particularly with regard to

the proposed IRA project investments (fully 80% of announced Korean and Japanese investments are [tied to IRA money](#)). Trump had vowed to “terminate” the IRA on the campaign trail and no Republican supported passage of the legislation in 2022. On the other hand, three-quarters of announced investments are in Republican-controlled districts and 65% of them located in counties that voted for Trump.

### China Responds in Kind

China was active on the “selective decoupling” front too in 2024, having methodically built a robust economic lawfare toolkit over the past five years. These include the Unreliable Entities Regulation (Sept. 2020), the updated National Security Review Mechanism (Dec. 2020), the Unjustified Extraterritorial Measures Regulation (Jan. 2021), the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law (June 2021), and more lately, a new Dual-Use Export Control Regulation (September 2024) under the framework of its Oct. 2020 Export Control Law. Having absorbed blow after blow of US technology denial measures, China began deploying these tools in earnest in 2024. In March 2024, new procurement guidelines were introduced phasing out foreign operating systems, microprocessors and database software from government PCs and servers. In May, the Cyberspace Administration of China [banned the use](#) of the US semiconductor firm Micron’s products in China’s critical information infrastructure following a failed cybersecurity review. There have been calls for a cybersecurity review of Intel too and more lately, a coordinated advisory issued by four Chinese industry bodies to discontinue the usage of US-made chips given that they are “[no longer safe](#).”

In August, the Ministry of Commerce (MofCom), [announced](#) export controls on antimony, a critical mineral with military and civilian applications including battery storage. The antimony controls follow on the heels of controls on gallium, germanium, and high-purity natural and synthetic graphite materials introduced in 2023. These controls were effectively [upgraded](#) in early-December 2024 to a full ban “in principle” vis-à-vis the US following the latter’s imposition of export controls on China-destined semiconductor manufacturing equipment. Controls on “superhard materials” such as industrial-grade diamonds and tungsten carbide, used in chip manufacturing-related cutting, grinding, and polishing processes, is anticipated to be the next export control shoe to

drop. In September, MofCom announced an investigation into the US parent company of Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger under its Unreliable Entity List mechanism for its exclusion of Xinjiang-originating cotton from supply chains. And in October, sales of key Chinese battery components to the largest US [drone maker, Skydio](#), was revoked under the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law for its role in arms sales to Taiwan, forcing Skydio to [ration batteries](#) to one per drone to customers.

Wave-upon-wave of Taiwan arms-sales related countermeasures against US military companies and senior executives were imposed too in [April](#), [May](#), [June](#), [July](#), [September](#), and [December](#) by China's foreign ministry under its Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law. For added measure, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, General Dynamics Land Systems, and Boeing Defense, Space & Security were separately added to the Commerce Ministry's Unreliable Entities List in May. In February 2023, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Missiles & Defense became the first US entities to be placed on this list for their role in arms sales to Taiwan. The upshot is clear: China's countersanctions and reciprocal export control regime is being ramped up which will inevitably lead to more US (and foreign) companies being caught in the crossfire between the US and Chinese regimes.

#### **Doubling-down on Section 301 Tariffs**

Trade frictions returned to the fore in US-China relations during the latter half of 2024. The first shot of this new great power rivalry, it bears remembering, was fired in the trade policy arena in the Summer of 2018 when the Trump administration introduced Section 301 List 1 tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese imports. In total, \$370 billion of Chinese imports spread across four lists were thereafter subjected to tariffs, with China imposing lesser retaliatory tariffs also. On May 14, 2024, following a statutory four-year review of the Trump-introduced tariffs, the Biden administration not only retained the tariffs but [selectively augmented](#) them to the tune of \$18 billion for semiconductors, electric vehicles, batteries, battery parts and critical minerals, solar cells, and certain personal protective equipment (final modified rates were [notified](#) in September). Concurrently, the White House and the [Treasury Secretary](#) accused China of engaging in non-market practices that was creating excess supply to the detriment of industry and workers abroad. China was failing to meet its industrial

subsidies-linked notification requirements at the WTO too, especially regarding proliferation of sub-central level "public-private investment funds" which were driving this structural overcapacity. The additional Section 301 tariffs were justified, in the administration's telling, [to protect](#) the historic Chips Act and IRA investments in strategic sectors (semiconductors, batteries, EVs, solar, medical equipment) from being unfairly undercut by Chinese exports.

The administration's accusations are not without merit. China's domestic savings remains excessively high. The fear that these excess savings (and domestic under-consumption) will macroeconomically manifest itself in the form of overproduction that is dumped overseas is genuine. And because a component of this overproduction is the product of non-transparent industrial subsidies, this would amount to unfair trade-distorting competition in international markets. Beijing [rejects](#) this characterization. In its view, the current global production landscape is the result of market competition and the international division of labor. Within China, competition in its new energy marketplace is intense; as such, only the fittest survive and therefore tend to prosper in international markets. Export volumes too should not be taken as a benchmark for determining overcapacity either. US, Japan, and Germany's auto exports for instance account for 23%, 75%, and 50%, respectively, of domestic production; China's EV exports by comparison account for only 12.5% of production. Besides, there is a huge demand for new energy products in global markets, and it is the fragmentation of global industrial and supply chains due to the adoption of discriminatory subsidy measures by the West that is the primary contributor to "[so-called overcapacity](#)," Beijing counters. China's subsidy programs adhere to fair competition and non-discrimination rules, are mainly for R&D, are targeted at the consumption end, and are not contingent upon export performance. The [WTO secretariat](#) and the European Commission might [beg to differ](#) with some of these contentions.



Figure 4 A Donald Trump impersonator standing in front of the White House in Washington, DC in a mask and pointing at the camera. Photo: UnSplash, CC2.0

### The Return of “Tariff Man” and the Uncertain Future of Bilateral Ties

*“I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in and raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power. We are right now taking \$billions in Tariffs. MAKE AMERICA RICH AGAIN.”*

So tweeted President Donald Trump, three days after a [tense but positive](#) meeting with President Xi on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 2018 as the two sides tried to head-off tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars of bilateral trade.

Trump may be notorious for his unpredictability and embellishment. But on the issue of trade and tariffs, he has been a pillar of consistency. From his formative 1980s days as a young Manhattan real estate developer, it has been his cardinal belief that goods consumed in the US must be produced at home using US workers. To the extent that some of these goods are imported, an equivalent dollar amount of US goods should be purchased by that country. At day’s end, bilateral trade must be balanced. Anything less is a “loss” for the US. And hence his dislike of the large bilateral trade surpluses run by China and his sense of personal affront when run by allies, such as Japan and Germany originally and South Korea and the Europeans today, which doubly happen to benefit from expensive treaty-underwritten US defense guarantees.

As president-elect in 2016, Trump vowed to withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement; renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement under threat of withdrawal; label China a currency

manipulator; bring cases against China at the WTO; and use every lawful presidential power to remedy trade disputes with China and other countries, including the application of tariffs consistent with Section 201 and 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 and Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. Each vow was fulfilled. With Trump now promising to impose tariffs of at least 60% on all Chinese goods (he had threatened China with 45% tariffs during his 2016 political campaign and ended up imposing 25% tariffs), the president-elect deserves to be taken not just seriously but (quite) literally.

Be that as it may, Beijing is not likely to be in any hurry to flatter the president-elect, having learnt from bitter experience of the limits of its own flattery. Within three months of Trump’s inauguration in 2017, Xi had snagged a high-profile meeting in Mar-a-Lago, which delivered a [shiny 100-Day Action Plan](#) under the framework of the US-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue. Later that November, Trump was feted with a “state plus” visit to Beijing where he became the first foreign leader since the founding of the People’s Republic to dine inside the Forbidden City. None of this flattery prevented his national security team from listing China as a [“revisionist power”](#) and inaugurating a new era of great power rivalry just a month later in its National Security Strategy of December 2017. Or prevented his trade policy team from slapping Section 301 tariffs in Summer 2018 and launching the trade war.

It is not lost on Xi’s China either that engaging “dealmaker” Donald Trump has the potential to backfire, should the attempt at dealmaking fail. The US-China technology war, with its initial focus on kneecapping Huawei, [almost-literally dates back to the day](#) in May 2019 when the “90 Day [trade] talks”—that the two leaders initiated at the December 2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit – formally collapsed. China’s drive toward technological “self-reliance” can be specifically dated to this collapse, too. Xi Jinping reportedly observed to his closest confidants that he had considered the 90-Day talks to be an economic matter and [“demonstrated utmost sincerity”](#) but the Trump administration deliberately scuppered the negotiation (by insisting that Beijing sign an unfair bargain) to pursue its true objective: complete suppression of China. China would not succumb to pressure, Xi noted. “We have to come together to survive this situation.”



Where this leaves US-China engagement, remains to be seen. At minimum, the two sides will approach the other warily during the likely-chaotic first year of the second Trump presidency. Almost none of the senior officials who had played a major role in charting the outlines of China policy during Trump's first term—Secretary of State Pompeo, NSA Robert O'Brien, Deputy NSA Pottinger, and USTR Robert Lighthizer—will be returning in Trump 2.0. Some were even sanctioned by Beijing [on their way out](#) in January 2021. One thing is fairly certain though. The multitude of working groups that the two sides had successfully stumbled upon during the Biden-Xi years will be disbanded. In Trump 1.0, the clunky and top-heavy Obama-era Strategic and Economic Dialogue was discarded in favor of four newly established dialogue mechanisms in the areas of diplomacy and security, economic and trade, law enforcement and cybersecurity, and people-to-people exchanges. In Trump 2.0, the wheel will once again be reinvented.

From a longer-term policy standpoint though, the overarching approach toward China will more-or-less remain the same. Two weeks before the first Trump administration left office, NSA O'Brien [had declassified](#) the administration's overarching strategy document for the Indo-Pacific region, titled the US Strategic Framework for The Indo-Pacific. The strategy document featured five elements: (1) advance economic decoupling and prevent China's industrial policies and unfair trading practices from distorting global markets and harming US competitiveness; (2) maintain US industry's innovation edge over China; (3) promote US values and influence in the Indo-Pacific and counter Chinese models of governance, coercive behavior and influence operations; (4) maintain an intelligence advantage over China, and against Chinese intelligence activities; and (5) deter China from using military force against the US and its allies and partners by maintaining the capability to deny China sustained air and sea dominance inside the first island chain in a conflict, defending the first island chain nations, including Taiwan, and dominating all warfighting domains outside the first island chain. These elements will continue to guide China policy in Trump 2.0. And Beijing, for its part, will continue to pursue its interests reactively but firmly within this framework.

# CHRONOLOGY OF US-CHINA RELATIONS

## MAY-NOVEMBER 2024

**May 1, 2024:** US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [releases](#) a statement encouraging the World Health Organization to reinstate an invitation to Taiwan to participate as an observer at the 77th World Health Assembly.

**May 1, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury [announces](#) new actions to degrade Russia's military-industrial base with nearly 300 new sanctions, expressing particular concern about entities based in the PRC.

**May 2, 2024:** US Department of Justice [sentences](#) the leader of one of the largest counterfeit trademark cases ever prosecuted in the US, whose lengthy operation introduced “tens of thousands of counterfeit and low-quality devices trafficked from China into the US supply chain, jeopardizing both private-sector and public-sector users, including highly sensitive US military applications like the support platforms of US fighter jets and other military aircraft.”

**May 2, 2024:** US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [co-convenes](#) a United States-Japan-Australia Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting in Hawaii with his counterparts during which they discuss the “concerning and destabilizing conduct” by China in the South China Sea and reject any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo in the East and South China Seas.

**May 2, 2024:** Secretary of Defense Austin [meets](#) with Australian, Japan and Philippine counterparts in Hawaii, during which they emphasize their commitment to support “regional security and stability” and call on China to “abide by the final and legally binding” 2016 South China Sea Arbitration.

**May 6, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) the “International Cyberspace and Digital Policy Strategy: Towards an Innovative, Secure, and Rights-Respecting Digital Future,” in which China is called the “broadest, most active, and most persistent cyber threat” to US networks, being made up of both state-sponsored activity and PRC-linked actors who are also working to reshape norms governing cyberspace amidst surveillance and disinformation campaigns.

**May 6-10, 2024:** US Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources Richard Verma

[travels](#) to China, alongside a visit to the Philippines, to visit the US Embassy in Beijing, the US Consulates General in Shenyang, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, and members of the US business community.

**May 8, 2024:** Guided-missile destroyer USS *Halsey* (DDG 97) [conducts](#) a routine transit through the Taiwan Strait “in accordance with international law.”

**May 8, 2024:** US Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller, in response to questions regarding the Hong Kong authorities banning the song “Glory to Hong Kong,” [says](#) the US remains “seriously concerned about the continued erosion of protections for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, including the freedom of expression.”

**May 8-9, 2024:** US Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy [John Podesta](#) and PRC Special Envoy for Climate Change [Liu Zhenmin](#) co-lead a meeting of the US-China Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s in Washington, DC

**May 9, 2024:** US Department of Defense [releases](#) its annual Freedom of Navigation Report for Fiscal Year 2023, in which five “Excessive Maritime Claims” are listed against the People's Republic of China—two more claims than any other claimant listed—all five of which are associated with “multiple operational challenges” and one of which being the only claim in this list noted as challenged jointly with international partners and allies.

**May 9, 2024:** US Senior Official for the DPRK [Jung Pak](#) meets PRC Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs [Liu Xiaoming](#) in Tokyo, Japan, as a follow up to Secretary of State Blinken's visit to China in late April 2024.

**May 10, 2024:** US Navy destroyer USS *Halsey* (DDG 97), as described in a comparatively extensive notice, [asserts](#) navigational rights and freedoms in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands and continues operations with a freedom of navigation operation in the South China Sea.

**May 13, 2024:** US National Economic Advisor Lael Brainard, speaking in a background press call on

Biden administration efforts to protect US workers and business from China's unfair trade practices, [says](#) "China is simply too big to play by its own rules."

**May 13, 2024:** US President Biden [issues](#) an order arguing the real estate acquisition by MineOne Partners Limited, a company majority owned by Chinese nationals, is a national security threat as the company prepares to conduct "specialized cryptocurrency mining operations in close proximity" to Frances E. Warren Air Force Base on that real estate.

**May 13, 2024:** US Consul General Gregory May at the US Consulate General Hong Kong & Macau [provides](#) keynote address at event on the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy since 2020, during which he describes the US relationship with Hong Kong as having three components: "very good people-to-people ties...productive business and trade cooperation, and...a very challenging relationship with the Hong Kong government."

**May 14, 2024:** President Biden [initiates](#) actions to protect US workers and business from "China's unfair trade practices concerning technology transfer, intellectual property, and innovation," [leading to](#) the increase of tariffs on \$18 billion of imports from China. Directly after his announcement, he [gives](#) lengthy remarks which include comparisons of the US and Chinese markets and a conversation with President Xi Jinping on the issue.

**May 14, 2024:** Office of the US Trade Representative [releases](#) a four-year review of the actions taken in the Section 301 investigation against China's technology transfer-related acts, policies, and practices, summarizing that these actions have been "effective," especially in diversifying the supply chain, but, "[i]nstead of pursuing fundamental reform, the Government of China has persisted and even become more aggressive, particularly through cyber intrusions and cybertheft, in its attempts to acquire and absorb foreign technology."

**May 14, 2024:** Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Technology and National Security Tarun Chhabra and Department of State Acting Special Envoy for Critical and Emerging Technology Seth Center [lead](#) interagency US delegation to meet a [PRC delegation](#) in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss artificial intelligence risk and safety.

**May 15, 2024:** Secretary Blinken, responding to a question during a joint press conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, [clarifies](#) that Washington's concern is "not about China providing weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine...China's held back from that," but is about the "support that China's providing to Russia to rebuild its defense industrial base"—namely, machine tools and microelectronics—in ways that are making a difference to Russia's campaign against Ukraine.

**May 16, 2024:** Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Ely Ratner [speaks](#) via teleconference with PRC Maj. Gen. Li Bin, director of the Central Military Commission Office for International Military Cooperation, to discuss issues of mutual concern and maintain "open lines of communication in defense channels to reduce the risks of miscommunication."

**May 16, 2024:** National Economic Advisor Brainard [delivers](#) remarks at a Center for American Progress event centered around responding to the challenges of China's industrial overcapacity.

**May 17, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [adds](#) 26 additional PRC-based textile companies to Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List, with Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas noting that the US will continue to "hold the PRC accountable for their exploitation and abuse of the Uyghur people."

**May 19, 2024:** Secretary Blinken [releases](#) a congratulatory message to Dr. Lai Ching-te on his inauguration as Taiwan's fifth democratically elected president and commemorating President Tsai Ing-wen for her role in strengthening US-Taiwan ties.

**May 21-23, 2024:** Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Industry & Analysis Grant Harris [participates](#) in the 14th annual United States-China Tourism Leadership Summit in Xi'an, China, making him the highest-ranking official ever to lead the US delegation to this summit, which Harris calls "an important vehicle" in enhancing tourism back to pre-pandemic levels.

**May 22, 2024:** US naval forces [conduct](#) operations in the South China Sea in partnership with the Royal Netherlands Navy as part of efforts to maintain "stability and free use of vital sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific."

**May 23, 2024:** US Department of State China Coordinator and Deputy Assistant Secretary for China and Taiwan Mark Lambert and PRC Director-General for Boundary and Ocean Affairs Hong Liang [hold](#) the second round of consultations on bilateral maritime affairs virtually to [discuss](#) the “current situation in the South China Sea and East China Sea, as well as other maritime issues,” and to reaffirm the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

**May 23, 2024:** US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, speaking ahead of the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meetings, [lists](#) “China’s industrial overcapacity” as one of three priority areas for the US, adding that it is “not a bilateral issue between the US and China.”

**May 23, 2024:** Robert Silvers, undersecretary for strategy, policy, and plans at the Department of Homeland Security, [releases](#) a blog post discussing the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) in which he announces the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force’s plans to “further scale up” efforts to expand the UFLPA Entity List.

**May 24, 2024:** Office of the US Trade Representative [extends](#) certain exclusions in the Section 301 tariffs investigation, extending them through May 31, 2025.

**May 24, 2024:** US Department of Justice [announces](#) guilty plea of a Hong Kong-born, naturalized US citizen and former Central Intelligence Agency officer who admitted to, along with a co-conspirator, gathering and delivering “a large volume of classified US national defense information” to the People’s Republic of China Shanghai State Security Bureau starting in 2001.

**May 25, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement expressing deep concern over PLA joint military drills in the Taiwan Strait and around Taiwan, urging Beijing “to act with restraint” and reiterating the US commitment to its “longstanding one China policy.”

**May 29-30, 2024:** US Ambassador to China [Nicholas Burns](#) and Chinese Ambassador to the US [Xie Feng](#) provide video remarks to the US-China High-Level Event on Subnational Climate Action, hosted by the California-China Climate Institute in Berkeley, California, each encouraging bilateral collaboration and exchanges on climate.

**May 30, 2024:** Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell [hosts](#) PRC Executive Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu for an official visit in Washington, DC during which they mutually reaffirmed the importance of open channels of communications at all times and discussed a variety of “regional and global issues, including areas of difference and areas of cooperation that matter most to the American people and the world.”

**May 31, 2024:** SecDef Austin [meets PRC](#) Minister of National Defense Dong Jun in Singapore on the margins of the Shangri-La Dialogue to discuss bilateral defense relations and communicate points of concern and cooperation.

**June 4, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the “Tiananmen Square massacre,” reaffirming the US commitment to promoting “accountability for PRC human rights abuses both within and outside its borders.”

**June 5, 2024:** FBI Cyber Division Assistant Director Bryan Vorndran, delivering a keynote address at the 2024 Boston Conference on Cyber Security, [calls](#) China “the most prolific threat” in cybersecurity, emphasizing the “hundreds of examples” of intellectual property or personally identifiable information theft conducted by Chinese actors.

**June 6, 2024:** US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Financial Markets Nicholas Tabor [delivers](#) public remarks summarizing the progress made by the Financial Working Group co-chaired by the US Treasury and People’s Bank of China over the last year.

**June 11, 2024:** Department of Homeland Security [adds](#) three China-based companies—a seafood, an aluminum, and a footwear company—to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List.

**June 13, 2024:** US Secretary of the Treasury Yellen [calls](#) the US and Chinese economies and their interactions “crucial to global growth,” believes the US has “nothing to fear from healthy economic competition,” denies that “decoupling” would be in any way beneficial for the US economy, and expresses particular concern about China’s “enduring macroeconomic imbalances” and “unfair trade practices.”



**June 14, 2024:** Group of Seven leaders [release](#) the G7 Apulia Leaders' Communiqué, which extensively acknowledges China's importance to, influence within, and supposed responsibilities in sectors across the globe, including but not limited to: cyberspace, international peace and security, global trade, maritime affairs, human rights, Russia's military industrial base, and its cross-strait relations with Taiwan.

**June 14, 2024:** US Ambassador to China Burns [gives](#) a commencement speech to Hopkins-Nanjing Center, emphasizing the "hope" he still has for US-China relations in spite of how "the most important relationship between two countries in the world today" was pulled apart over the last few years, also challenging the students to make positive progress in this fundamental bilateral relationship going forward by working with one another with a common purpose.

**June 16-17, 2024:** US Navy [conducts](#) a Maritime Cooperative Activity with Canadian, Japanese, and Philippine counterparts in the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone in the South China Sea to demonstrate their "collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in the maritime domain."

**June 17, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement condemning the "unjust sentencing" of activists Huang Xueqin (Sophia Huang) and Wang Jianbing, calling the sentences "the PRC's continued efforts to intimidate and silence civil society."

**June 17, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement on "US Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea," condemning China's "escalatory and irresponsible actions" keeping humanitarian supplies from Philippine service members at the BDP Sierra Madre and China's "consistent disregard" for international law in the South China Sea.

**June 18, 2024:** US Department of Justice [announces](#) a superseding indictment involving a partnership between Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel and a Chinese criminal syndicate to launder drug money underground, thus perpetuating the import of narcotics into the US.

**June 18-20, 2024:** US Navy [conducts](#) bilateral operations with Royal Canadian Navy in the South China Sea "as a demonstration of our shared commitment to the rules-based international order."

**June 19-20, 2024:** White House Director of National Drug Control Policy Dr. Rahul Gupta [leads](#) an interagency delegation of senior officials to Beijing to discuss counternarcotics cooperation, meeting separately with State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong, members of the shipping industry, as well as the PRC Minister of Sport to discuss zero tolerance for sports doping.

**June 20, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury [delivers](#) its semiannual Report to Congress on Macroeconomic and Foreign Exchange Policies of Major Trading Partners of the United States, listing China as one of seven countries on its "Monitoring List" and reiterating Washington's call for increased transparency from China.

**June 20, 2024:** US Secretary of the Treasury Yellen [describes](#) counternarcotics as a focus in the US-China bilateral relationship, especially as China is "the key source of the precursor chemicals used to manufacture fentanyl."

**June 21, 2024:** American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States [host](#) consultations in Taipei, Taiwan, with representatives from the US Department of State and the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss expanding Taiwan's meaningful participation in international fora like the UN system.

**June 21, 2024:** US Ambassador to China Burns, speaking in an interview with BBC, [says](#) China has "agreed to increase our military-to-military communications" to prevent misunderstandings, also noting that Washington has "warned the Chinese not to involve themselves in our election in any way, shape or form."

**June 26, 2024:** US Department of State releases the 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom, produced under the direction of Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Rashad Hussain, who [notes](#) the report continues to highlight "ongoing crimes against humanity and genocide the Chinese Government is perpetrating."

**June 26, 2024:** US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [holds](#) a call with Philippine National Security Advisor Eduardo Año. They shared concerns over China's "dangerous and escalatory actions against the Philippines" lawful maritime operations" in the South China Sea.

**June 27, 2024:** US Deputy Secretary of State Campbell [holds](#) a call with China Executive Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu to discuss areas of both cooperation and differences as part of “ongoing efforts to maintain open lines of communication.”

**June 27, 2024:** US Consul General Gregory May [reminisces](#) on the more than two centuries of connected history between the US and Hong Kong, also emphasizing the several points of commonalities and strongly shared interests that remain therein today.

**July 1, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control [sanctions](#) China-based members of a money laundering organization with criminal links to the Mexico-based Sinaloa Cartel as part of efforts with China on countering money laundering and other illicit finance issues, including those linked to the fentanyl trade.

**July 1, 2024:** US Space Force publishes an article titled “Combat-Ready—Embracing a new US Space Force Generational Model” in which China [is](#) described as one of two “ambitious” authoritarian regimes “challenging established rules and norms” with “irresponsible behavior” that threatens both US national security and a smooth functioning global economy.

**July 2, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [announces](#) the first large charter flight since 2018 to remove Chinese nationals from the US to China, which was conducted in close coordination with the National Immigration Administration of the PRC, who will continue to work with the US on additional removal flights.

**July 8, 2024:** US National Security Agency, jointly with the Australian Signals Directorate and other global agencies, [releases](#) a Cybersecurity Advisory titled “PRC MSS Tradecraft in Action,” detailing the tradecraft used by the cyber actor group known as APT40 that is associated with the People’s Republic of China Ministry of State Security.

**July 9, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [releases](#) an updated Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Strategy, identifying new high priority sectors for enforcement—aluminum, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and seafood—for the first time and redeclaring the US commitment to countering forced labor.

**July 10, 2024:** US Secretary of State Blinken [discusses](#) challenges posed by China, including its support for Russia’s military industrial base, in a bilateral meeting with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

**July 10, 2024:** US Under Secretary for International Affairs Jay Shambaugh [delivers](#) remarks detailing the Biden administration’s “pursuit of a healthy economic relationship between the US and China with a level playing field for American workers and firms.”

**July 10, 2024:** President Biden [extends](#) the national emergency with respect to Hong Kong, including “recent actions taken by the People’s Republic of China to fundamentally undermine Hong Kong’s autonomy,” for one year.

**July 11, 2024:** US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Ely Ratner, speaking at the 2024 CSIS South China Sea Conference, [says](#): “Let me be clear that the PRC’s claim to the Shoal has no more credibility today than it did when the Arbitral Tribunal issued its unanimous ruling in 2016. And the kind of revisionism and coercion we’ve seen there from the PRC is both destabilizing and dangerous.”

**July 11, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a press statement on the eighth anniversary of the Philippines-PRC South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal ruling, reaffirming the US’ call to the PRC to abide by the ruling and to “cease its dangerous and destabilizing conduct” such as those taken over the last year against Philippine vessels in the South China Sea.

**July 12, 2024:** President Biden [signs](#) into law S.138, the “Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act” that encourages the two parties to resume direct dialogue and “seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet.”

**July 20, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement marking the 25 years since China “began a campaign of repression against practitioners of Falun Gong” and calls upon the PRC to “cease its repressive campaign and release all who have been imprisoned for their beliefs.”

**July 22, 2024:** US Department of Justice [unseals](#) an indictment of a Chinese national and Texas resident for his role in a 2023 conspiracy to import what is believed to be one of the largest amounts of fentanyl precursors in the United States.

**July 22, 2024:** US Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks [says](#) China “seeks greater influence in the region, greater access to the region and a greater say in its governance...[to] internationalize the Arctic region,” also noting that the US has “seen growing cooperation between the PRC and Russia in the Arctic” both commercially and militarily which is “concerning.”

**July 24, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control [imposes](#) sanctions on a network of six individuals and five entities based in the PRC for involvement in the procurement of items supporting the DPRK’s unlawful WMD and ballistic missile programs.

**July 25, 2024:** US Department of Justice [accepts](#) the guilty plea of two Chinese citizens residing in California who acted as unregistered agents of the PRC government directed “to further the PRC’s campaign to repress and harass Falun Gong practitioners” in the United States.

**July 27, 2024:** US Secretary of State [Antony Blinken](#) and PRC Director of the CCP Central Foreign Affairs Commission and Foreign Minister [Wang Yi](#) meet in Vientiane, Laos, on the margins of the ASEAN-related ministerial meetings for “open and productive discussions” and agree to maintain open lines of communication at all levels.

**July 30, 2024:** US Secretary of State Blinken and Secretary of Defense Austin [release](#) a joint statement with Philippine counterparts that expresses serious concerns about the dangerous behavior in the South China Sea over the past year and calls on the PRC to comply with both the international law of the sea and the 2016 *Philippines v. China* arbitration ruling.

**July 30, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control [targets](#) five individuals and seven entities based in Iran, the People’s Republic of China, and Hong Kong that have facilitated procurements for Iran’s ballistic missile and unmanned aerial vehicle program.

**July 31, 2024:** US and China [hold](#) a multiagency, senior official meeting as part of the US-PRC Counternarcotics Working Group in Washington, DC in which they reviewed progress and discussed further cooperation.

**Aug. 1, 2024:** US Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy Vipin Narang [mentions](#) that Washington was “encouraged” by China’s affirmation that a nuclear war must never be

fought, but notes the PRC’s construction of hundreds of new ICBM silos in recent years, fueled by Russia, and shares that the “PRC has likely completed silo construction and has begun loading them with missiles.”

**Aug. 6, 2024:** US National Security Council [releases](#) a statement on the People’s Republic of China’s announcement of fentanyl scheduling actions, calling it “a valuable step forward” and the “third significant scheduling action by the PRC” since bilateral counternarcotics cooperation resumed in November 2023.

**Aug. 7-8, 2024:** US Indo-Pacific Command, along with Australia, Canada, and the Philippines, [conduct](#) a Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity within the Philippines’ Exclusive Economic Zone and release a statement that “reaffirm[s] the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Tribunal Award as a final and legally binding decision.”

**Aug. 13, 2024:** US Department of Justice [accepts](#) guilty plea of a US Army soldier and intelligence analyst indicted in March 2024 over conspiracy to obtain and disclose national defense information, including technical data related to US military weapons systems, to an individual who lived in Hong Kong and is suspected of being associated with the Chinese government in exchange for money.

**Aug. 15-16, 2024:** Senior officials from the US Department of the Treasury and the People’s Bank of China [lead](#) the Fifth Meeting of the Financial Working Group Between the US and China in Shanghai, [concluding](#) with an exchange of letters in support of coordination in times of financial stress.

**Aug. 19, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a press statement saying that the US “stands with its ally the Philippines and condemns the dangerous actions by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) against lawful Philippine maritime operations in the South China Sea,” stating that the “PRC ships employed reckless maneuvers, deliberately colliding with two Philippine Coast Guard ships” earlier that day.

**Aug. 22, 2024:** guided-missile destroyer USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) [conducts](#) a routine transit through the Taiwan Strait “in accordance with international law...through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal state.”

**Aug. 23, 2024:** US Department of State [announces](#), along with the Department of the Treasury, the designation of nearly 400 entities and individuals, including entities in China, in new measures designed to degrade Russia's international supply chains and wartime economy.

**Aug. 28, 2024:** US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [meets](#) Gen. Zhang Youxia, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission in Beijing, China, where Sullivan emphasized the two countries' mutual "responsibility to prevent competition from veering into conflict or confrontation."

**Aug. 29, 2024:** US National Security Advisor Sullivan [meets](#) Chinese President Xi as part of "ongoing efforts to maintain channels of communication and responsibly manage the relationship."

**Aug. 30, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement on the second anniversary of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' Assessment on the Human Rights Situation in Xinjiang, expressing disappointment that, after two years, the PRC "continues to reject the OHCHR assessment's findings" that "serious human rights violations have been committed in Xinjiang" and urges the PRC to "end these ongoing atrocities."

**Sept. 4, 2024:** FBI Director Christopher Wray [says](#) the FBI will "continue to keep a close eye on China's efforts to denigrate down-ballot candidates it sees as a threat, and on their broader efforts to sow discord."

**Sept. 4-6, 2024:** US Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy [John Podesta](#) and China Special Envoy for Climate Change [Liu Zhenmin](#) co-lead the second meeting of the US-China Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s in Beijing, China, during which both sides reaffirm their intention to jointly host, with the COP29 Presidency of Azerbaijan, a Methane and Other Non-CO2 Greenhouse Gases Summit at COP29.

**Sept. 6, 2024:** US Departments of State, Agriculture, Commerce, Homeland Security, and Treasury jointly [release](#) an Amendment to the July 2021 Business Advisory on Risks and Considerations for Businesses Operating in Hong Kong "to highlight new and heightened risks" for US companies operating in Hong Kong.

**Sept. 7, 2024:** US Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade [Marisa Lago](#) and China's Vice Minister of Commerce [Wang Shouwen](#) hold the second Vice-Ministerial meeting of the US-China Commercial Issues Working Group in Tianjin, China, with both sides agreeing to continue their regular engagement.

**Sept. 9, 2024:** Head of US Indo-Pacific Command Adm. Paparo [holds](#) a video teleconference with the commander of the People's Liberation Army's Southern Theater Command Gen. Wu Yanan, as part of efforts to resume high-level military-to-military communication.

**Sept. 13, 2024:** Biden-Harris administration [announces](#) new actions to counter the "increased abuse of the *de minimis* exemption," the majority of which is conducted by several China-founded e-commerce platforms.

**Sept. 13, 2024:** US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, after the US announced the increased use of the *de minimis* exemption, [defends](#) the increase, saying that "for too long, Chinese e-commerce platforms have skirted tariffs by abusing the *de minimis* exemption."

**Sept. 13, 2024:** Office of the USTR [announces](#) that final modifications concerning the statutory review of the tariff actions in the Section 301 investigation of China's Acts, Policies, and Practices Related to Technology Transfer, Intellectual Property, and Innovation were largely adopted.

**Sept. 14-15, 2024:** Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China, Taiwan, and Mongolia Michael Chase [meets](#) Chinese counterpart Deputy Director of the Central Military Commission Office for International Military Cooperation Maj. Gen. Ye Jiang in Beijing for the 18th US-PRC Defense Policy Coordination Talks.

**Sept. 17, 2024:** A US Navy P-8A Poseidon [transits](#) the Taiwan Strait in international airspace "operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law."

**Sept. 18, 2024:** US Department of the Navy, led by the Chief of Naval Operations Lisa Franchetti, [releases](#) the Chief of Naval Operations Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy 2024 (NAVPLAN 24), most of which is centered around achieving "readiness for the possibility of war with the People's Republic of China by 2027" because the "PLA Navy, Rocket Force, Aerospace Force, Air Force, and Cyberspace Force are coalescing into an integrated warfighting



ecosystem specifically designed to defeat ours, backed by a massive industrial base...[that] is on a wartime footing.”

**Sept. 18, 2024:** US National Security Agency, along with national and global partners, [release](#) a joint cybersecurity advisory assessing that PRC-linked cyber actors have “compromised thousands of Internet-connected devices” to create a botnet, which has been controlled and managed by Integrity Technology Group, a PRC-based company “with links to the PRC government,” since mid-2021.

**Sept. 18, 2024:** FBI Director Wray [announces](#) that the FBI and its partners have successfully disrupted a second Chinese botnet known as Flax Typhoon, like Volt Typhoon “working at the direction of the Chinese government,” that had been targeting critical infrastructure via hundreds of thousands of internet-connected devices.

**Sept. 19-20, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Under Secretary for International Affairs [Jay Shambaugh](#) and Vice Minister of Finance at China’s Ministry of Finance [Liao Min](#) co-lead fifth meeting of the Economic Working Group (EWG) in Beijing. While in Beijing, the Treasury delegation also meets Vice Premier He Lifeng to whom they pass along US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen’s positive sentiments on the efficacy of the EWG.

**Sept. 20, 2024:** Head of US Indo-Pacific Command Adm. Paparo [meets](#) the commander of the PLA’s Southern Theater Command Gen. Wu Yanan during the 26th annual Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defense in Hawaii.

**Sept. 23, 2024:** White House [releases](#) a fact sheet titled “Protecting America from Connected Vehicle Technology from Countries of Concern,” specifically referring to the People’s Republic of China and Russia and starting with the following statement: “Chinese automakers are seeking to dominate connected vehicle technologies in the United States and globally...”

**Sept. 24, 2024:** G7 Foreign Ministers [put out](#) release addressing various global issues, including how they “seek constructive and stable relations with China...[and] recognize the importance of China in global trade,” but also remain “seriously concerned” about maritime security in several locations across the Indo-Pacific as well as the “human rights situation in China.”

**Sept. 25, 2024:** US Department of Defense spokesperson, responding to a question about the PRC’s ICBM test launch, [notes](#) “we believe that that [advanced notice from China about the launch] was a good thing. That was a step in the right direction. And it does lead, you know, to preventing any misperception or miscalculation.”

**Sept. 26, 2024:** US Embassy in China [highlights](#) information about a historical photo exhibition on US-China cooperation during World War II at the Beijing American Center.

**Sept. 27, 2024:** US Secretary of State [Antony Blinken](#) meets PRC Director of the CCP Central Foreign Affairs Commission and Foreign Minister [Wang Yi](#) on the margins of the 79th UN General Assembly and hold “candid, substantive, and productive discussions on a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues” while emphasizing the need to maintain open lines of communication.

**Sept. 28, 2024:** US naval forces, alongside counterparts from Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, [conduct](#) a Maritime Cooperative Activity within the Philippines’ Exclusive Economic Zone in the South China Sea to demonstrate their “shared commitment to the rules-based international order.”

**Oct. 2, 2024:** US Secretary of State Blinken [releases](#) a congratulatory message to the people of the PRC on the occasion of its 75th National Day, adding that the US is “committed to responsibly managing our bilateral relationship with the PRC and will maintain open lines of communication.”

**Oct. 2, 2024:** Department of Homeland Security [adds](#) two China-based entities, one steel company and one aspartame company, to the Uygur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List.

**Oct. 8, 2024:** US Secretary of Commerce [Gina Raimondo](#) conducts a call with Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China [Wang Wentao](#) to candidly exchange concerns and maintain an open channel of communication.

**Oct. 11, 2024:** US Secretary of State Blinken, responding to a press question in Laos on potential Chinese military activities near Taiwan on Taiwan’s National Day, [states](#) “China should not use [the so-called 10/10 speech] in any fashion as a pretext for provocative actions...we want to reinforce...the imperative of preserving the status quo.”

**Oct. 11, 2024:** US Secretary of State Blinken [participates](#) in the 19th East Asia Summit during which he addresses the “PRC’s provocations” in the South China Sea and East China Sea and reaffirms the “US commitment to maintaining open channels of communication with the PRC.”

**Oct. 13, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement expressing serious concerns over the “unwarranted” PLA joint military drills in the Taiwan Strait and around Taiwan.

**Oct. 14, 2024:** US Department of Defense [releases](#) a statement on the PLA exercise, JOINT SWORD 2024B, conducted around Taiwan the day after Taiwan’s national day, calling this “military pressure operation...irresponsible, disproportionate, and destabilizing” while concluding that the US remains committed to its longstanding one China policy.

**Oct. 17, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control [announces](#) sanctions on three PRC-based entities and one individual for their involvement in the development and production of Russia’s *Garpiya* series long-range attack drone that has been used in Russia’s war against Ukraine, marking the first US sanctions imposed on PRC entities directly developing and producing complete weapons systems in partnership with Russian firms.

**Oct. 20, 2024:** guided-missile destroyer USS *Higgins* (DDG 76) and Royal Canadian Navy frigate HMCS *Vancouver* (FFH 331) [conduct](#) a routine transit through the Taiwan Strait “in accordance with international law...through a high seas corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal state.”

**Oct. 21, 2024:** US Department of Justice [issues](#) a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that would help establish a new program to prevent access to US bulk sensitive data by China and other countries of concern.

**Oct. 24, 2024:** US Department of Justice [announces](#) the indictments placed against eight China-based chemical companies and eight employees who are charged with alleged fentanyl manufacturing and distribution.

**Oct. 25, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Under Secretary for International Affairs Jay Shambaugh and Vice Minister of Finance at China’s Ministry of Finance Liao Min [co-lead](#) the sixth meeting of the Economic Working Group in

Washington, DC, discussing both concerns and cooperation.

**Oct. 28, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury’s Assistant Secretary for International Affairs [Brent Neiman](#) and Deputy Governor of the People’s Bank of China [Xuan Changneng](#) co-lead the sixth meeting of the Financial Working Group in Washington, DC, discussing both concerns and cooperation.

**Oct. 28, 2024:** US Department of the Treasury [issues](#) a final rule to implement Executive Order 14105, “Addressing United States Investments in Certain National Security Technologies and Products in Countries of Concern,” in which the PRC had been identified as a country of concern.

**Oct. 30, 2024:** US Department of State [announces](#), along with the Departments of the Treasury and Commerce, the sanctioning of nearly 400 entities and individuals, including entities in the People’s Republic of China, for “enabling Russia’s prosecution of its illegal war.”

**Oct. 30, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a fact sheet reflecting on the Department’s last three years of efforts to strengthen national security, in which the first critical missions listed is the successful establishment of the Office of China Coordination, also known as “China House,” a “whole-of-enterprise approach to strategic competition and diplomatic relations with the PRC.”

**Oct. 31, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [adds](#) three PRC-based textile companies to the Uygur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List.

**Nov. 6-8, 2024:** Representatives from US Indo-Pacific Command, US Pacific Fleet, US Pacific Air Forces, and US Coast Guard [travel](#) to Qingdao, China to meet with PLA Army, Navy, and Air Force for the semi-annual working group and annual plenary session of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, meetings which “serve to clarify intent and reduce the risk of misperception, miscalculation, or accidents, and therefore help foster stability within the US-PRC military-to-military relationship.”

**Nov. 7, 2024:** President Biden [extends](#) the national emergency with respect to the threat from securities investments that finance certain companies of China for one year beyond its expiration date of November 12, 2024 as the “PRC

military-industrial complex...continues to constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat.”

**Nov. 12, 2024:** US Department of State, along with China and Azerbaijan, jointly [convene](#) “The Sprint to Cut Climate Super Pollutants: COP 29 Summit on Methane and Non-CO2 GHGs” to collaboratively battle and bring attention to super pollutant greenhouse gases.

**Nov. 13, 2024:** US FBI and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) [release](#) a joint statement on the continued investigation into the PRC’s “targeting of commercial telecommunications infrastructure has revealed a broad and significant cyber espionage campaign,” noting that actors have been identified.

**Nov. 14, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [announces](#) the indictment of a Chinese chemical company and its senior leaders for allegedly selling fentanyl precursor chemicals and xylazine globally.

**Nov. 15, 2024:** US Attorney General Merrick Garland [states](#) “[w]e know that the fentanyl supply chain, which ends with the death of Americans, often starts with chemical companies in China.”

**Nov. 16, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [completes](#) a third large-frame charter removal flight to China of Chinese nationals with no lawful basis to remain in the United States in “yet another example of the Department’s ongoing cooperation with the PRC.”

**Nov. 16, 2024:** Presidents [Joe Biden](#) and [Xi Jinping](#) meet in Lima, Peru and hold a “candid, constructive discussion on a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues, including areas of cooperation and areas of difference,” both stressing the importance of “all countries treating each other with respect and finding a way to live alongside each other peacefully.”

**Nov. 19, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement condemning the “unjust sentencing” of 45 defendants in Hong Kong’s National Security Law trial of pro-democracy advocates known as the NSL 47, stating such “harsh

sentences erode confidence in Hong Kong’s judicial system and harm the city’s international reputation” and calling on the PRC government and Hong Kong authorities to uphold Hong Kong’s judicial independence.

**Nov. 22, 2024:** US Department of Homeland Security [announces](#) the addition of 29 PRC-based companies to the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act Entity List, bringing the total number of entities on the UFLPA Entity List to 107.

**Nov. 26, 2024:** A US Navy P-8A Poseidon [transits](#) the Taiwan Strait in international airspace “operating within the Taiwan Strait in accordance with international law.”

**Nov. 26, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting Statement that, among other notes, states their desire for “constructive and stable relations with China” and “readiness to cooperate with China to address global challenges,” recognizes the “importance of China in global trade,” and calls on China to “refrain from adopting export control measures” and “step up efforts to promote international peace and security,” especially in regards to Russia, North Korea, and the East and South China Seas.

**Nov. 27, 2024:** US Department of State [updates](#) its Travel Advisory for Mainland China and Hong Kong, shifting them from Level 3 (“Reconsider travel”) to Level 2 (“Exercise increased caution”).

**Nov. 29, 2024:** US Consulate General in Hong Kong & Macau [releases](#) updated summary of their tracking list on “Arrests Under 2020 National Security Law (NSL) and 2024 Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) in Hong Kong.”

**Nov. 29, 2024:** US Department of State [releases](#) a statement condemning the “unjust sentencing” of PRC journalist Dong Yuyu, saying it “highlight[s] the PRC’s failure to live up to its commitments under international law and its own constitutional guarantees to all its citizens” and calling for his immediate release.

