

Biden's Strategic Turn to China: An Assessment of U.S.-China Competition and Cooperation

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Abstract

U.S. President Joe Biden and his government officials have put forward a hard line against China in their tenure, describing the authoritarian government as an economic and security challenge to the United States, one which required a more strategic and calculated approach than that of the Donald Trump's administration. This article will focus on the Biden's administration strategic turn to China. The following sections will give an overview of the similarities and differences between Biden and Trump's China policies, U.S. strategic competition and cooperation with China within the rules-based order, U.S. trade policy with China guided by a "foreign policy for the middle class," and concluding remarks with a future development of U.S.-China relations. Finally, it suggests that for any future U.S. toward China strategy to be effective, it must above all be operationalized rather than merely declared.

Keywords: Biden Administration, China Policy, Competition, Cooperation, Rules-Based Order

I. Introduction

U.S. President Joe Biden and his government officials have put forward a hard line against China, describing the authoritarian government as an economic and security challenge to the United States, one which requires a more strategic and calculated approach than that of the Donald Trump's administration.

In his first major foreign policy speech, to the Munich Security Conference (MSC) on February 10, Biden emphasized a firm approach to the country's three main

nemeses: Iran, Russia; and the new one, China. Declaring that the U.S. transatlantic alliance was back in business, he said the U.S. and Europe must “prepare together for a long term strategic competition with China.”¹ China is not a “traditional” enemy, however, Biden and his administration defined China as the main competitor and challenge facing the U.S. in the coming years.



Figure 1. U.S. President Joe Biden Speaks during a Virtual Event with the Munich Security Conference

Source: Leigh Hartman, “Biden: U.S. will work with democratic partners,” February 22, 2021, *SHAREAMERICA*, <<https://share.america.gov/biden-tells-munich-security-conference-america-is-back/>>.

To balance China’s challenge, Biden’s administration is basically adopting bilateral and multilateral approaches. In bilateral relations side, the Biden White House’s first bilateral meeting with a foreign leader, Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will work together to “better compete” with China and counter threats to the two countries’ “interests and values.” On the other hand, Biden spoke with Japanese

1. Joe Biden, “Remarks by President Biden at the 2021 Virtual Munich Security Conference,” February 19, 2021, *White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/19/remarks-by-president-biden-at-the-2021-virtual-munich-security-conference/>>.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on January 28, and reaffirmed the security alliance that commits the United States to defending Japan's territory (which includes the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyutai Islands). In multilateral relations, in his first meeting at the G7 and QUAD Summits, Biden has tried to be a leading country to balance China.

It's worth to noted that for two hours with Xi Jinping, China's President, Biden prioritized economic and military issues and mentioned potential areas of cooperation, including climate change and nuclear proliferation, while calling on China to resolve a series of issues related to its malicious use of technology, unfair trade, and human rights violations. Biden, the readout added, "underscored his fundamental concerns about Beijing's coercive and unfair economic practices, crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan."

A U.S. think tank urged the U.S. government to take a tougher stance against Beijing through the Atlantic Council report, the Longer Telegraph, which appeared to emulate the George Kenan(X)'s telegram in 1946 from Moscow, which was a foundation for successful U.S. containment policy against the Soviet Union. Tougher stance on China, however, issues that Beijing considers internal — such as Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan and matters related to its national security, such as the South China Sea, Senkaku Islands/Diaoyutai Islands — are tackled robustly by Washington, which risks further damaging an increasingly difficult bilateral relationship.

President Biden published the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* in March 2021 as a guide for the new administration to evaluate existing policies and formulate new policies. The *Interim Guidance* emphasizes issues such as the pandemic, climate change, technology, nuclear proliferation and transborder issues; global democracy, the international order and alliance systems are under new threats. "China, in particular, has rapidly become more assertive. It is the only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system."²

2. Joe Biden, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, March 3, 2021, *White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>>.

Therefore, this article will focus on the Biden's administration strategic turn to China. The following sections will give an overview of the similarities and differences between Biden and Trump's China policies, U.S. strategic competition and cooperation with China within the rules-based order, U.S. trade policy with China guided by a "foreign policy for the middle class," and concluding remarks on the future development of U.S.-China relations.



Figure 2. U.S. President Joseph R. Biden's First Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

Source: 〈拜登首份國安戰略指南 明確表態「支持台灣」〉, *Apple Daily*, March 4, 2021, <<https://tw.appledaily.com/international/20210304/3KXWFXUXU5FRBOOFBE5L6A55AY/>>.

II. Similarities and Differences between Biden and Trump's China Policies

The Biden administration has reversed course on much of the Trump administration's foreign policy, but largely shares its view that China's authoritarian political system and global ambitions are a threat to U.S. interests. There are still many conflict points, including China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, threats to Taiwan's autonomy, trade competition, monetary and technology policy, Beijing's lack of transparency in terms of COVID-19, cyber attacks and espionage, and human rights.

In his first major foreign policy speech as president, Biden stated that “American leadership must meet this new moment of advancing authoritarianism, including the growing ambitions of China to rival the United States.”³ He has directed the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct a review of how the military is positioned to deter China’s military ambitions in East Asia.⁴ In an interview, Biden promised that China would face “repercussions” for its human rights violations at home,⁵ and Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said that China’s persecution of ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region constitutes a genocide.⁶ The administration also met the World Health Organization’s investigation into the origins of the coronavirus with skepticism, suggesting China was still obstructing the effort to determine the facts.⁷

3. Joe Biden, “Remarks by President Biden on America’s Place in the World,” February 4, 2021, *White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/>>.

4. Aaron Mehta, “Biden announces new Pentagon-run China task force,” *Defense News*, February 10, 2021, <<https://www.defensenews.com/pentagon/2021/02/10/biden-announces-new-pentagon-china-task-force/>>.

5. Jeff Mason, “Biden says China to face repercussions on human rights,” *Reuters*, February 17, 2021, <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-china/biden-says-china-to-face-repercussions-on-human-rights-idUSKBN2AH0AC>>.

6. Joshua Keating, “Biden Wants to Take On China and Climate Change at the Same Time,” *SLATE*, February 23, 2021, <<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2021/02/china-climate-change-biden-xi.html>>.

7. Jeff Mason & Simon Lewis, “U.S. to scrutinize WHO report that rules out COVID-19 came from Chinese lab,” *Reuters*, February 10, 2021, <<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-white-house-who-int/us-to-scrutinize-who-report-that-rules-out-covid-19-came-from-chinese-lab-idUSKBN2A92PM>>.

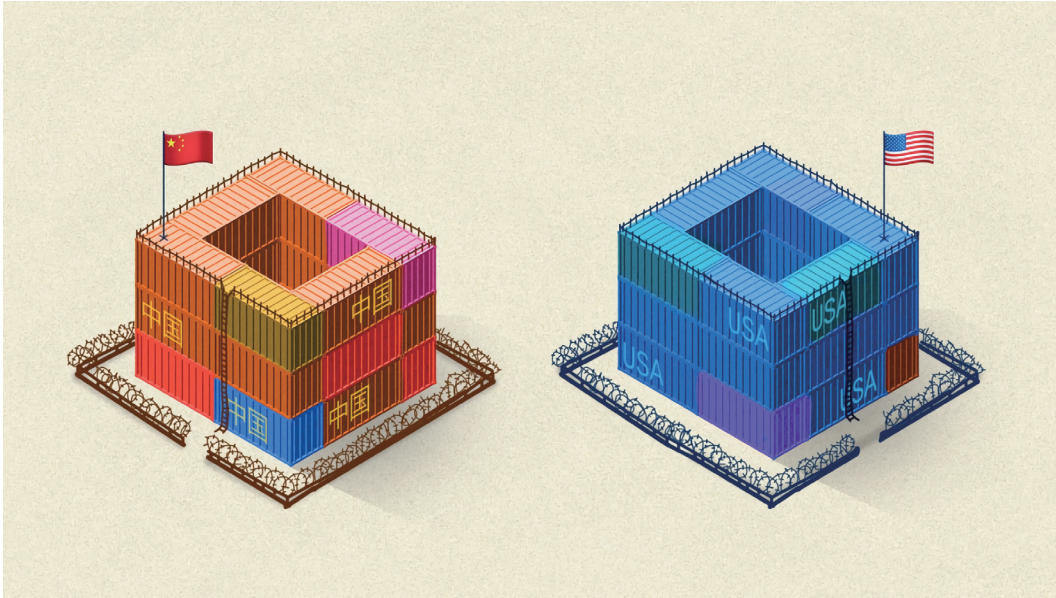


Figure 3. U.S.-China Trade War

Source: Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, “Democrats and Republicans have argued about China for 150 years,” *Axios*, April 29, 2020, <<https://www.axios.com/republicans-democrats-argue-china-election-4416f23e-95b6-4fd3-bc14-7d60c910ce86.html>>.

If Biden and Trump’s policy goals for China are close so far, therefore, the focus of the difference is the way to achieve this goal. U.S. requires a far more strategic and calculated approach than that of the Trump administration. The Biden administration has given few concrete details about how it will put its strategy into practice, however, including Huawei, ZTE, Hytera Communications, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology, and Dahua Technology have all been labelled a “threat to national security” by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Many of Biden’s China policies so far are more about advancing Trump’s policies than turning. This means the convergence of strategy and calculated approaches between the two governments.



Figure 4. Biden Paused Trump's WeChat and TikTok Bans

Source: James Politi, Eric Platt, & Yuan Yang, "Trump moves to ban Chinese payment apps including Alipay," *Financial Times*, January 6, 2021, <<https://www.ft.com/content/0cd2285d-5e39-4d54-81e7-f4c657364af1>>.

Another uncertainty is how Biden and his team will handle Trump's preliminary trade agreement with China, because Beijing has still not fulfilled its promise to purchase hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. products.⁸ The Biden administration may choose to use the deal's enforcement mechanisms (including negotiations and imposing tariffs on Chinese products) or cancel the agreement altogether. This means that whether Biden will recover U.S. trade barriers depends on the speed of China's reforms and policy changes.

III. U.S. Strategic Competition and Cooperation with China under Limited Rules-Based Order

In the past few years, strategic competition has become a feature of U.S.-China relations. Under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, China has become more

8. "China Did Not Fulfill Trade Promises, Report Says," *New York Times*, February 5, 2021, <<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/21/business/us-economy-coronavirus#china-falls-short-on-its-trade-deal-promises-posing-a-test-for-president-biden>>.

repressive at home and more confident abroad. At home, Xi Jinping has concentrated power within the Communist Party of China and has strengthened his control over Xinjiang and Hong Kong. In order to pursue so called from core to overseas interests, China has adopted economic coercion, military intimidation and influence operations. From the Washington perspective, those behavior all go against rules-based order. In a December 2020 interview, Biden said he intends “to make it real clear to China there are international rules that if you want to play by, we’ll play with you. If you don’t, we’re not going to play.”⁹ Biden said China must play by “international norms.”

1. Limited Rules-Based Order

Since at least the 1990s, the United States has adopted rules-based orders, as if these orders might restrict major power politics. Therefore, United States considered that, there is a more or less unified liberal international order. If China is included in this liberal order, the rules-based orders and institutions will shape Beijing more than Beijing shape the world. The task of the United States and its partners is to bring China into the existing order.

The Biden administration has made its foreign policy a top priority and once again committed to a rules-based order. However, this does not mean going back to the vision of the Clinton, Bush, or Obama administrations, in which the global liberal order should replace competition among major powers. On the contrary, Biden can regard free rules and norms as essential to the power and interests of the United States, especially the protection of democracy at home and abroad.

9. Joseph Choi, “Biden says China must play by ‘international norms’,” *The Hill*, December 3, 2020, <<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/528721-biden-says-china-must-play-by-international-norms>>.



Figure 5. Limited Rules-Based Order

Source: Daniel Larison, “The Hollow ‘Rules-Based Order’,” *The American Conservative*, June 15, 2017, <<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/the-hollow-rules-based-order/>>.

The Biden administration could invest in a rules-based order as an explicit counter to an increasingly aggressive revisionist states, China.¹⁰ As Danielle Pletka writes, for example, that the U.S. should revitalize key institutions, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “to more artfully coalesce its allies around a China policy that contains and begins to reverse the economic and strategic threats that an aggressive and dangerous Xi Jinping poses to us all.”¹¹ Similarly, Matthew Kroenig argues that the U.S. should revitalize and adapt existing rules, working together to

10. Rebecca Lissner & Mira Rapp-Hooper, *An Open World: How America Can Win the Contest for Twenty-First-Century Order* (New York: Yale University Press, 2020), pp. 61-88.

11. Danielle Pletka, “Use Trump’s leverage, American and rules-based order,” November 2, 2020, *Lowy Institute*, <<https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/usa-rules-based-order/articles/use-trumps-leverage/>>.

counter the “primary threat to the international system”— the “revisionist autocratic powers (China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran).”¹²

However, the Biden administration can accept more limited rules-based orders. In certain regions, such as climate change and nuclear proliferation, order can remain “thin”, which is based on common interests rather than common values. In other cases, a rules-based order can be a “club goods”, available only to those who have liberal principles and values. For example, Pletka is correct to believe that China should not use the World Trade Organization (WTO) to promote a “predatory economic plan” (although the United States should also promise to reduce agricultural subsidies and keep its own value unchanged). Likewise, NATO members should be committed to the values of freedom and democracy.

2. Strategic Competition and Cooperation with China

During the foreseeable Biden administration period, the strategic competition with China is almost bound to continue. The United States faces three major challenges in bilateral relations: increasing its deterrence stance along China’s maritime periphery, confronting China’s influence operations in the United States such as sharp power, and the pursuit of principled cooperation with China on climate change and other areas of common concern.¹³

(1) Increasing Deterrence Posture

One of the key points in managing the U.S.-China competition is to increase the deterrence posture in regional hotspots, especially in disputed territories and maritime domain, including China’s maritime gray zone operations in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China

¹² Matthew Kroenig, “A free-world steering body, American and rules-based order,” November 2, 2020, *Lowy Institute*, <<https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/usa-rules-based-order/articles/free-world-steering-body/>>.

¹³ Benjamin Lee & Jeremy Rausch, “The Role of Congress in Managing the U.S.-China Relationship,” February 20, 2021, *NBR*, <https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/us-china-relations_brief_feb21.pdf>.

has become more aggressive and risk-tolerant in asserting its maritime territorial claims. In the Taiwan Strait, Beijing has increased tensions by increasing the frequency and scale of PLA aircraft incursions into Taiwan's airspace. In the South China Sea, Beijing illegally claims "historical rights" over the territory within the "nine-dash line", which accounts for nearly 90% of the South China Sea. In addition, in the East China Sea, Chinese Coast Guard vessels have repeatedly entered the waters around the Senkaku Islands/Diaoyutai Islands, especially after the revision of the *China Coast Guard Law*.



Figure 6. The USS Gabrielle Giffords Conducts Routine Operations in the Vicinity of the Chinese Vessel, July 1, 2020

Source: Jim Garamone, "Biden Announces DOD China Task Force," February 10, 2021, *U.S. Department of Defense*, <<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2500271/biden-announces-dod-china-task-force/>>.

As China uses a gray zone strategy to openly challenge, threaten, and harass American partners in China's maritime periphery, careful review of China's behavior in these maritime hot spots and strengthening the United States' deterrence posture are critical to ensuring the United States' allies and partners in the region. In addition

to supporting the freedom of navigation operations and joint military exercises with like-minded partners, the United States took a step by inviting European allies to carry out Freedom of Navigation Operations in the Indo-Pacific, for example, France and Germany, in early 2021.

(2) Countering CCP's Influence

A second key challenge is to counter Beijing influence in the home and abroad. In terms of the former, China seeks to take advantage of the open nature of the social and political landscape in the U.S. Beijing influence operations in U.S. institutions that conduct research on strategically important emerging technologies require scrutiny and countermeasures. No matter of Confucius Institute or Thousand Talents Program, CCP has provided generous funding to U.S. researchers and recruited them to conduct research on cutting-edge technological issues. The Confucius Institute became a makeup artist to promote the CCP in the name of cultural exchange. Another issue of particular concern is Beijing's disinformation campaigns across multiple social media platforms to question the origins of coronavirus and the extent of human rights abuses against Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region.

In terms of the latter, how will the United States compete with China for influence in the Indo-Pacific region, especially in China's "One Belt, One Road" infrastructure construction and vaccine diplomacy? For example, after the summit of the leaders of the QUAD, they will raise funds and resources to distribute one billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the Indo-Pacific region by the end of 2022.

(3) Cooperating on Common Interests

Strengthening the deterrence of regional hot spots and responding to Beijing's influence may not exclude the Biden administration from conducting principled cooperation with China on climate change and other issues of common concern. Such cooperation can ensure that the United States does not make concessions on other issues in exchange for cooperation on climate change.

After all, compared with Trump's *National Security Strategy*, Biden's *Interim Guideline* has the six major trends and formulations: First, China has surpassed Russia

to become America's biggest competitor. Second, "regard domestic security and international security as a whole."¹⁴ If domestic problems are not resolved well, they can easily be exploited by authoritarian countries. Third, it emphasizes the importance of uniting allies, claiming to establish effective international rules, and "ensure that the United States, not China, sets the international agenda." Fourth, put diplomatic means first, while military means are the last option. Fifth, emphasize the importance of democratic values, and Sixth, competition and survival are the new normal in U.S.-China relations.

In short, although this *Interim Guidance* uses the word "interim", it is essentially the overall embodiment of the Biden administration's thinking on governance. This *Interim Guidance* has been described as "a moderate version of Trump's 'America First' policy." From Blinken's eight foreign policy priorities, it can be seen that responding to China's challenges is one of the eight major tasks and is in the same line as the *Interim Guidance*. Blinken claimed that the U.S. policy towards China will follow the principle of compete when it is competing, cooperate when it can cooperate, and adversarial when it must be. It can be seen that the trinity of competition, cooperation, and confrontation together constitute the three-dimensional structure of the U.S. policy toward China. This article suggests that, competition is the norm, cooperation is conditional, and confrontation in all aspects will become the main way for the Biden administration to deal with China.

IV. U.S. Trade Policy with China Guided by 'Foreign Policy for the Middle Class'

As an integral part of foreign policy, the proposition of international economic policy has "establishing a fair system for American middle class in international trade"¹⁵ as its core, this is Biden's slogan for handling foreign affairs, and it is said that it will measure any policy through its policy on middle-income families and

14. Joe Biden, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*.

15. Salman Ahmed, Wendy Cutler, Rozlyn Engel, David Gordon, Jennifer Harris, Douglas Lute, Daniel M. Price, Christopher Smart, Jake Sullivan, Ashley J. Tellis, & Tom Wyler, *Making U. S. Foreign Policy Work Better for the Middle Class*, September 23, 2020, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/09/23/making-u.s.-foreign-policy-work-better-for-middle-class-pub-82728>>.

its characteristics can be summarized as emphasizing fairness, rules, multilateralism, and security.



Figure 7. Biden Administration will Bring the Middle Class Perspective into U.S. Foreign Policy

Source: Daisie Hobson, “A U.S. Foreign Policy for the Middle Class, Reshoring Institute,” September 9, 2020, *Reshoring Institute*, <<https://reshoringinstitute.org/a-u-s-foreign-policy-for-the-middle-class/>>.

The first is fairness. Biden advocates that U.S. middle class should be put first in trade policy and has zero tolerance for the theft of U.S. intellectual property rights and unfair subsidies that weaken U.S. manufacturing industry. The 2020 Democratic Party Program pointed out that it will focus on protecting American manufacturing jobs, emphasize buying American goods, and canceling the Trump administration’s tax and trade policies that encourage large companies to transfer jobs overseas and

avoid fair tax burdens. In addition, all available tools will be used to take action against countries that steal U.S. intellectual property rights, manipulate their national currencies, dump steel and aluminum products, or provide unfair subsidies to weaken U.S. manufacturing.

The second is to emphasize rules. Biden opposes trade disputes and emphasizes the formulation of trade rules. On the one hand, he emphasizes that the United States should step up efforts to implement existing international trade rules, such as establishing new international rules in the fields of digital and biotechnology, and proposed to revise international trade rules on subsidies and government procurement in order to “buy American goods”. On the other hand, he emphasizes the expansion of the *Anti-Foreign Corruption Law* to combat overseas bribery and strengthen supervision of cross-border transactions. Anti-corruption will be a priority of foreign policy, prevent illegal funds from flowing through the U.S. financial system, and implement measures to strengthen transparency and strengthen supervision of cross-border transactions. It is worth noting that although it is no longer possible for Biden to impose tariffs as much as Trump does, his senior advisers have indicated that they will not hesitate to use tariffs tool if necessary when punishing trade violations.

The third is multilateralism. Biden advocates abandoning Trump's “deal” approach, adopting more multilateralism and international cooperation approaches, no longer adopting unilateral approaches to allies, supporting the reform of the World Trade Organization, ending trade disputes with allies, and improving cross-border trade. At the same time, Biden intends to unite with allies to put pressure on foreign countries (*e.g.* China) within a multilateral framework to maintain the rules-based international economic order.

The fourth is security. Biden has emphasized that “economic security is national security” and advocated the implementation of economic nationalist policies such as “promoting the return of manufacturing industries,” reducing the dependence of key raw materials and key industries on foreign competitors, and “buying American products” to ensure the security of the supply chain and increase supply chain flexibility. Biden plans to conduct a supply chain review within 100 days of the establishment of the new government to ensure that key products are produced in the United States, so that the United States can have sufficient manufacturing capacity during a crisis

and regularly check supply chain loopholes.

Biden will fully implement the “Made in America” policy, including the return of manufacturing to the United States, prioritizing investment in the United States, prioritizing government procurement to “buy American products,” tightening the rules on American origin ingredients, and penalizing companies that transfer jobs overseas, *etc.* In the case of the new coronavirus pandemic that highlights the risks of excessive reliance on global supply chains, it particularly emphasizes the relocation of key supply chains, including medical supplies, medicines, and key materials, back to the United States. It also clearly proposes to cooperate with allies to revitalize the U.S. manufacturing industry, in order to lessen dependence on China. In addition to the pharmaceutical and medical industries, energy and power grid technology, semiconductors, electronic and telecommunications equipment, key raw materials are also the focus of Biden’s attention.

However, we can be sure that, so far, a related trade issue with China is the supply chain. Biden asked his government to identify and repair potential cracks in the supply chain that could lead to shortages of key items such as chips in cars, minerals in flat-screen TVs, batteries in electric vehicles, and ingredients in life-saving medicines. And, perhaps more critically, he wants to find out how much of the supply depends on places like China. Rebuild the supply chain will see in Biden administration trade policy with China in the future.

V. Concluding Remark: Operationalized Rather than Declared

U.S. President Biden has announced the establishment of a China Task Force in the DOD on February 10, to provide a baseline assessment of department policies, programs and processes in regard to the challenge China poses. There are several working groups or committees with the name of “China,” such as China Task Force in the U.S. government, whose purpose is to review U.S.-China relations, formulate China policies, and coordinate with departments. The principals of these departments have a hard line policy toward China. This phenomenon shows that the U.S.’ hardline policy toward China will continue during the Biden administration, and it may not be easy to change even during the next few presidencies.

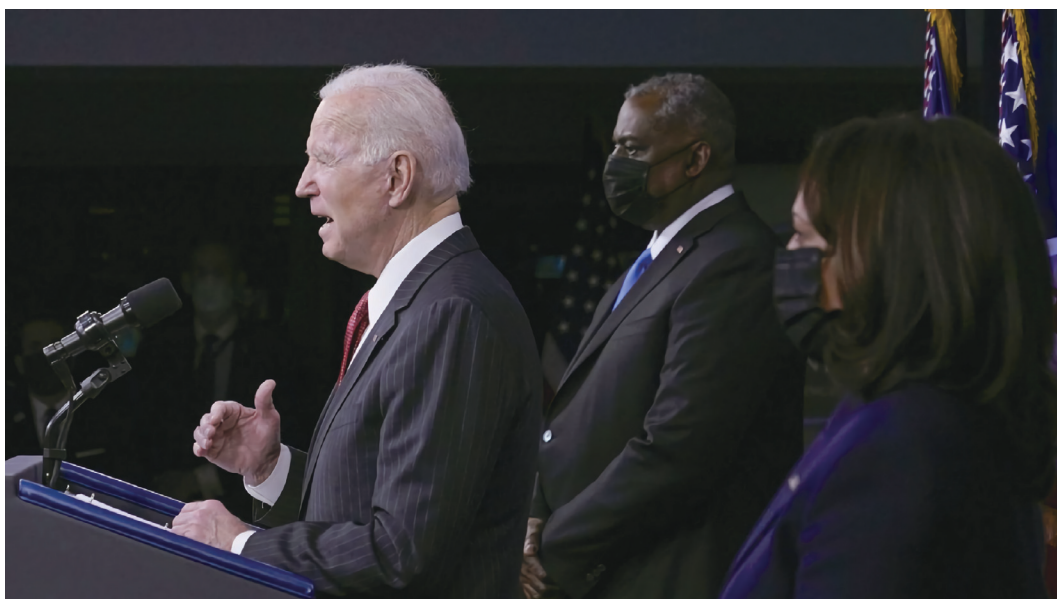


Figure 8. U.S. President Joe Biden Speaks to Department of Defense Personnel

Source: Austin Landis, “Biden Announces China Task Force, Speaks to Troops in First Visit to Pentagon as President,” *Spectrum News 1*, February 10, 2021, <<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/northern-ky/news/2021/02/10/biden-announces-china-task-force-in-pentagon-visit-speaks-to-troops>>.

The China Task Force announced by Biden is composed of 15 civilian and military experts from various departments of the U.S. DOD. It is expected to submit an important investigation report to the U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin after four months. The main considerations are the deployment, technology, intelligence, allies and partnerships, and military relations with China. The Task Force will also engage in dialogue with cross-agency partners to ensure that the defense response is consistent with the president’s hopes for the whole-of-government approach toward China.

The Task Force is led by U.S. Secretary of Defense Senior Assistant to China Affairs, Ely Ratner, who specializes in China issues, and is Biden’s long-time staff. In addition, Melanie Hart is a member of the Center for American Progress, a think tank in Washington, and has participated in restricting Huawei policies and the “Clean Network” program; another is Elizabeth Rosenberg, a member of the New American Security Center and who serves as an adviser to the U.S. Treasury Department. She has also publicly supported a tough policy toward China on many occasions.

Beside DOD, the members of the Biden administration have taken a tough line with China. For example, before the U.S. Senate voted to approve career diplomat Linda Thomas-Greenfield as United Nations Ambassador, a Cabinet-level position, she said of China, “They are a threat to their neighbors, and they are a threat across the globe.” In a written testimony for her confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee, Katherine Tai, Biden’s choice for U.S. trade representative, said she would “prioritize rebuilding our international alliances and partnerships, and re-engaging with international institutions” to present Beijing with “a united front of U.S. allies.”¹⁶

Furthermore, Biden’s nominee to lead the CIA, William Burns, told the Senate Intelligence Committee “There are a growing number of areas in which Xi’s China is a formidable, authoritarian adversary.” When pressed for details on China, he said the U.S. needed to prepare for challenges that would last decades. He said it was critical for the U.S. to develop a long-term consensus on how to approach China. “We have to buckle up for the long haul in competition with China.” “This is not like the competition with the Soviet Union in the Cold War, which was primarily in security and ideological terms. This is an adversary that is extraordinarily ambitious in technology and capable in economic terms as well.”¹⁷

As mentioned above, from the China Task Force of U.S. DOD to the individuals in Biden administration, cabinet members have had almost same tone toward China. For example, Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, has said “I disagree, very much, with the way that he went about it in a number of areas, but the basic principle was the right one,” Blinken told senators referring to Trump’s approach toward China. “And I think that’s actually helpful to our foreign policy.”¹⁸

16. Katherine Tai, “Opening Statement of Ambassador-designate Katherine Tai Before the Senate Finance Committee,” February 24, 2021, *Office of the United States Trade Representative*, <<https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2021/february/opening-statement-ambassador-designate-katherine-tai-senate-finance-committee>>.

17. Greg Myre, “Nominee William Burns Talks Tough On China,” *NPR*, February 24, 2021. <<https://www.npr.org/2021/02/24/971013669/cia-nominee-william-burns-talks-tough-on-china>>.

18. Yifan Yu, “Biden’s top diplomat pick says Trump ‘right’ to be tough on China,” *Nikkei Asia*, January 20, 2021, <<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Biden-s-top-diplomat-pick-says-Trump-right-to-be-tough-on-China>>.

So far, the Biden administration's strategic behavior is very clear. This is to contend with China. This is no different from Trump's previous policy, which is to try to defend the United States' interests in various fields such as business, military, and human rights. The biggest difference between Biden and Trump is that he pays more attention to coordination and cooperation with allies and partners. We have seen that after he took office at the end of January this year, when he first talked with the leaders of allies and partner countries, and then with the Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

The current diplomatic strategy has not changed. Blinken will first go to Asia to talk with U.S. allies and partners, and then meet with China's diplomatic leaders Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi. The information revealed by this is the same, which means that the door of dialogue between the United States and China has not been closed, and that it will cooperate with China in certain areas.

Blinken's visit to Asia and the QUAD dialogue and cooperation between the United States, Japan, Australia, and India, certainly has military implications, although its significance is actually more far-reaching. It covers the economy and is not only limited to military security issues, human rights, *etc.* The Biden administration has always emphasized that the relationship between the United States and China and the relationship with its allies and partners is not limited to the military, but must take into account various fields.

From Taiwan perspective, the U.S. former President Donald Trump was seen by many as the toughest U.S. leader on China in years and appreciated because he deepened America's ties with Taiwan by sending senior officials to visit and selling Taiwan more arms in four years than President Obama did in eight. So far, Biden seems to be continuing to take this approach-taking a hard line on China while demonstrating his commitment to Taiwan. What United States should do is to avoid cross-Taiwan Strait military conflicts, not to intervene after conflicts. Therefore, United States should do more in this area and avoid China's decision to cause conflicts in a more open manner, and to make China retreat, instead of waiting for China to decide and intervene when there is a possibility of conflict with Taiwan.

