



# China: Friend or Foe?

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Communist China is the biggest challenge America faces on the world stage.

It's a challenge that we ignored for far too long.

For decades, United States leaders in both parties encouraged deep ties with China. The idea was that China would move away from communism and embrace freedom and democracy.

This idea was wrong.

The Chinese Communist Party is now more oppressive at home and aggressive abroad than ever before. It uses every tool at its disposal to strengthen itself while weakening America.

Let's start with trade. Trade is a fundamental—and fundamentally beneficial—part of our economy. But not all trade with all trading partners is the same.

The father of capitalism, Adam Smith, observed in *The Wealth of Nations* that Great Britain's command of the seas must trump trade benefits. "Defense," he wrote, "is of much more importance than opulence."

America has long understood this truth. During the Cold War, we limited trade with the Soviet Union. We didn't want the communist country to use our innovation and economy against us and our allies. Now it's time to take a similar approach with China. For anyone who might have doubted the need for this, the coronavirus pandemic has provided a very loud wake-up call. As Americans rushed to purchase medical equipment, masks, and gloves, it became obvious we had outsourced a lot of what we needed to China. We had become dependent on them for not only PPE, but many of our everyday medicines.

Making America dependent on China for critical supplies didn't happen by accident. It's part of a strategic plan. China's communist rulers have manipulated supply chains to China's advantage, often illegally, to give it an edge over America and the free world.

It wasn't supposed to go this way. As it gathered economic strength, China became *less* free and *more* aggressive. Now we face an expansionist communist China whose economic power vastly exceeds anything the Soviets could ever muster. China is using its growing economic clout to advance its authoritarian vision. The country's rulers are determined to control or eliminate anyone who stands in their way. This explains why China's communist rulers ethnically cleanse their minorities. They have forced at least a million Muslim Uighurs into concentration camps.

It's why they impose a surveillance state on their own citizens. Why they have moved to strip freedom from Hong Kong. Why they threaten to take over Taiwan. Why China's spies have infiltrated American college campuses and classrooms. Why China has stolen intellectual property from our most innovative companies. And why they seek to dominate the United Nations and international agencies like the World Health Organization.

The simple fact is that communist China will not stop. This is why America must respond—and lead. That starts with American resolve. To stand up to China, we need to stand up for our principles. While China has abused the free market to its own advantage, America must defend the integrity of the free market—the only pathway to economic prosperity.

We must ensure that our trade relationship is fair, and that China isn't using the rules to its advantage. We must ensure that our most important security-related industries—from essential medicine to semiconductors—have American-friendly supply chains, instead of depending on an authoritarian rival state. We must also end China's intrusion into American businesses. That means limiting Chinese investment in critical parts of our economy. And, of course, we must support the Chinese people's right to live free. It's the right thing to do, and the smart thing to do.

Make no mistake: China's belligerence is not America's challenge alone; free countries must unite to face it. In the Pacific region, Japan, India and Australia recognize the Chinese danger. Our European friends have been slower to the cause, but Chinese duplicity on the coronavirus is waking them up, too. Our allies and partners should know that America always has their back, just as we expect them to have ours.

National security is the foundation of economic security. And economic security is the foundation of national security. Both are threatened by Chinese communist aggression. Both can only be protected by American strength and ingenuity.

Standing up to Chinese communism will ensure that America has a safer, stronger, and more prosperous future. That's what this is all about, and that's why we must never lose sight of the Chinese communist threat.

Let's get to work.

I'm Nikki Haley for Prager University.