

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

BY EVE OTTENBERG

31.03.2024

## Congress Goes Berserk Over TikTok



Photo by Solen Feyissa

Lots of people have been blamed for the frenzy to ban TikTok, from the CIA and FBI, to the mainstream media, to political elites, to AIPAC, to competitors like Facebook. But I blame Congress. They pulled the trigger. Now as we teeter on the abyss of a Steve Mnuchin takeover of TikTok – a development, make no mistake, that would be disastrous for everything from free speech to ownership of such a platform by a capitalist super-predator, to intelligent, rational foreign policy, to those who simply object to his let-them-eat-cake wife – we can thank the intellectual heavyweights on capitol hill who thought it would be a dandy idea to wade into a hopeless morass of hysteria and hokum and to extract from it an absolute monster of congressionally regulated speech.

As Arnaud Bertrand noted on Twitter March 14, Congress is stealing TikTok because it is “owned by the Chinese government.” He added: “It’s not, China only has a 1 percent stake in

the mother company.” To this, someone else tweeted: “This is exactly how the Nazis forced Jewish owners of companies to sell to German capitalists.” Or, as China’s foreign ministry succinctly summed it up: “This is banditry.”

Whatever you want to call it, it’s bad. It sets a lousy financial and business precedent at a moment jam-packed with lousy financial and business precedents – for instance, the west looting Russia’s frozen assets to the tune of \$300 billion, or previously making off with Afghanistan’s money, or earlier Venezuela’s gold, or the U.S. blowing up the Nordstream pipeline to corner Europe’s energy market. So now we gonna just straight up steal a company because China owns one percent of it? Who in their right mind will do business with the United States if this nonsense becomes law? I’ll tell you who: Other bandits. And that means one stinking awful thing – ordinary Americans will get fleeced. We’re already getting fleeced, but this just sets it in stone for the foreseeable future.

One thing’s for sure: the youth vote ain’t gonna like this. And overall, there are about 180 million TikTok users. So those people, young and less young, may very well drop Biden like a hot potato come November. He doesn’t seem to think so – how else to explain his eagerness to sign this offensive law? But I noticed Trump came out against it. Remember he’s the one who, back in 2020, called for banning TikTok. But unlike Biden, he figured out which way the wind is blowing, and what it’s blowing from Congress is such a putrid stench that over 100 million voters may very well stampede in the other direction. (Trump may also be trying to align with Jeff Yass, the billionaire stakeholder in TikTok, a moneyman who owns much of another company that recently merged with Trump’s Truth Social, thus possibly legally rescuing the former president by helping him make bail.)

This idiotic House TikTok vote comes at a very bad time, too, as Beijing casts a dour and doubtful eye over all parts of the Washington project. Indeed, a Chinese defense representative stated March 16 that Beijing is “ready to intervene,” should NATO or the U.S. attack Russia. NATO troops recently landed south of Kiev in Cherkassy might want to keep that in mind, as might the megageniuses who cooked up this nitwit scheme. Just as ominously, according to Anti-War.com March 14, U.S. Army special forces soldiers are in Kinmen, “a group of islands that are controlled by Taiwan but located just off the coast of mainland China.” Some are just 2.5 miles from the Chinese city of Xiamen. “The U.S. soldiers are also deployed in Penghu, a Taiwanese-controlled archipelago about 30 miles west” of Taiwan, “and 70 miles east of mainland China.” That’s not provocative, oh no, never!

Making matters worse, according to the Global Times March 21, the U.S. wants to expand the AUKUS military alliance, “forming a mini-NATO in Asia.” And everyone with a brain, and the Chinese have plenty, knows what that means. NATO on Russia’s front porch, in Ukraine, started a big, horrible war. It will try to do the same if mini-NATO expands to include Japan and Canada and muscles in on China’s doorstep. Of course, Washington wants to corral the Philippines into it too, and indeed anyone they can to enhance an aggressive posture that Beltway bandits will no doubt insist, just as they did after the 2014 CIA neo-Nazi putsch in Kiev, is purely “defensive.” It’s called creating the enemy from whose much-hyped putative danger your weapons contractors can then get rich.

And that’s not all. Global Times reports March 14 that “the UK is now mulling curbs on the number of Chinese nationals who can enter the UK on official business and bypass normal visa checks...” The article notes that with an election approaching, “Conservatives could resort to more hawkish China policies and enhance their coordination with the U.S.” It quotes a Shanghai Academy of Global Governance and Area Studies researcher to the effect that the UK has been “hyping China espionage threats since 2023.” Another Chinese researcher cites coordination between the UK and the U.S. on international affairs. This at a time when no diplomat in their right mind wants to “coordinate” with the U.S. on China. But rampant Western Sinophobia long ago ditched the concerns of mere diplomacy.

Also on the bad news radar March 14, a Global Times headline: “Trilateral summit suggests Manila intensifying collusion with U.S., Japan to further complicate S. China Sea issues.” This report warns that the upcoming April summit could destabilize a pelagic expanse already bristling with warships from multiple nations. The three countries will discuss China’s growing “hegemonic activities,” a descriptor Beijing vigorously denies, with a foreign ministry spokesman arguing “that China’s activities in those waters fully comply with domestic and international law.”

Well, good luck with that. If the U.S. is involved, so is the so-called “rules-based order,” which means all bets are off, what Washington says goes and if those imperial commands defy international law, tough luck. The Empire loves is rules-based order, making up those rules as it goes along, and discarding them when they’re no longer convenient. Oh, and the rest of the world better not imitate Washington. Copycats not allowed. Only Beltway mandarins get to junk these opaque rules when they get in the way.

Also alarming to Beijing is the recent replacement of Victoria “Fuck the EU” Nuland as deputy secretary of state by China Hawk Kurt “Let Congress Critters Swarm Taiwan” Campbell, famous for calling out Beijing’s “provocative” behavior. In what context did he

mention such provocations? Back on August 12, 2022, in a statement where he turned a simple factual narrative into a pretzel to trash Beijing. In short, then House speaker Nancy “My Husband’s Stock Trades Are His Business” Pelosi had just jetted into Taiwan, something everyone knew, because Beijing told them, crossed a very bright red line. Even Pelosi herself publicly aired Pentagon worries that her jet might get shot down and thereafter was careful to sneak into Taiwan in the dead of night, like someone who knew darn well she was doing something she shouldn’t. Well, according to Campbell, Pelosi’s little performance – against which everyone with an IQ above the double digits warned and which utterly spoiled Sino-American relations for over a year – was “a visit that is consistent with our One China Policy and is not unprecedented.” So yes, China’s worried about this loose cannon.

There is some good news, however. The head of the House Select Committee on (Bashing) China, Mike “The Chinese Are Coming” Gallagher, a rabid opponent of the 5000-year-old civilization, announced his retirement in February. He’s even leaving early, in April. This should hearten anti-war advocates everywhere, as it will decrease congressional Sinophobic pugilism and the chances of military fireworks erupting between two of the world’s three superpowers. Because we’re all on the same page here – right? We don’t want to glow in the dark or starve via nuclear winter. The five billion of us who would perish come Atomic Armageddon, aka war between the U.S. and China, don’t want that. So anything that blocks such a disaster is a good thing. Besides, it was a good bet Gallagher would find very lucrative employment anyway at a K Street lobby shop or in a right-wing think tank; then came news March 22 via Forbes that Gallagher in fact snagged a comfortable berth at Palantir, a very defense and intelligence connected tech company if ever there was one and one that has led the fight against...dum, da, dum, dum, you got it – TikTok! And by an astonishing coincidence, so did Gallagher while in the House! Golly gee, don’t his goals and Palantir’s dovetail nicely and, evidently, remuneratively, for the congressman?

So in the end, no matter how much of a ruckus our congressional luminaries make while in office, they usually manage a soft, cushy landing when they leave. A win/win situation for everyone who counts, which excludes, of course, all ordinary Americans and most of the rest of the world’s people. But we’re not resentful. We’re just happy they condescend to let us live.

*Eve Ottenberg is a novelist and journalist. Her latest book is Lizard People. She can be reached at her [website](#).*

MARCH 29, 2024