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Washington to Beijing's partners: «Sacrifice yourself to help me contain the Dragon»



In a context where Washington has designated Beijing as a systemic geopolitical rival, the US administration is striving to reshape the global geopolitical landscape in its favor. To this end, it is using classic diplomatic instruments – without ceasing to resort to unilateral or coercive measures.

As a corollary to diplomacy, the media play a key role in Washington's anti-China policy. As the mouthpiece of American geopolitics, the Western media are responsible for getting public opinion to adhere to the American narrative that China constitutes a major geopolitical threat. These media and diplomatic tools are used by Washington to serve the same purpose: to keep a tight rein on the level of cooperation China develops with third countries, and to maintain or reaffirm the omnipotence of the United States in world affairs.

Containing China through the media

The justification for American diplomatic offensives against Beijing is abundantly provided by the media, where the American strategy of containment of China goes by more evocative names for the general public.

The media discourse regularly emphasizes the imperative of preserving liberal democracies in the face of the autocratic model embodied by Beijing, and defending “Western values” against the human rights abuses attributed to Beijing. This vitriolic portrait of the world’s second-largest economy suggests that ideology will remain an integral part of the US strategy to contain China, and that US support for separatist movements – in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang – will continue as a means of political and economic pressure against Beijing.

The Western media also stress the need to reduce economic dependence on Beijing and to protect against Chinese technological infiltration. These same media echo the American accusation that China is flooding Western markets with electric vehicles and solar panels because of unfair “overcapacity” in production. This accusation is in line with the Western bloc’s plan to renew its economic model with green energies.

This hostility towards Beijing – and the drastic protectionist measures that followed – reflects Washington’s refusal to tolerate a competitor of China’s stature in a global economic market that the Western bloc has dominated unchallenged for decades. This part of the US strategy also aims to sideline the European Union as a **producer of green energy**, as an outlet for low-cost Chinese electric vehicles, and therefore as a potential competitor for Washington.

As for the narrative concerning the need to guarantee security and freedom of maritime movement in the Indo-Pacific strategic space, it is designed to justify the military pressure exerted by Washington in Beijing’s immediate vicinity.

On Taiwan, Washington continues to maintain ambiguity: it recognizes that Taiwan belongs to China – as clearly stated in the **three joint communiqués** – but will defend Taiwan in the event of reunification imposed by Beijing. This departure from logic was repeated by Antony Blinken the day after his last **official visit** to China. In the meantime, Washington maintains diplomatic relations with the island and continues to sell it arms, in violation of the agreements signed with Beijing.

Based on all of the above, the Western media also take it upon themselves to legitimize unilateral American decisions, such as the imposition of sanctions outside the UN framework, whether against Beijing’s partners such as Russia, Iran, North Korea and Venezuela, or against China itself.

Washington-dominated multilateral structures

With the exception of a few dissident members, Washington-dominated multilateral structures such as NATO, the G7 and the EU have embraced the US strategy of Beijing containment. Although the anti-Russian sanctions adopted by these same blocs do not bear the name of “decoupling from China”, they nonetheless serve the same purpose: to destroy the ramifications of Chinese power.

Confronting China means **banishing bilateralism** and adopting common positions: this is the watchword of the multilateral structures dominated by Washington. This motto is echoed in the “**Strategy on China**” adopted by Berlin in 2023: “*Our Strategy on China is firmly rooted in the common policy on China of the EU*”.

Italy, the only G7 country to have signed the BRI, was forced to abandon the project after much pressure from its allies, who accused Rome of betraying the Western bloc by seeking to open up access to Central and Eastern Europe and NATO’s southern flank to China. Similarly, the American narrative that Chinese Huawei’s 5G technology poses a threat to the national security of EU countries has undermined the agreements signed between the Chinese giant and several European countries, including Portugal. In the same vein, it would no doubt be worth studying the political and media parameters that have tipped the Czech Republic into a particularly hostile stance towards Beijing since Petr Pavel, former Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, came to power.

But sometimes Washington doesn’t get its way. Hungary – about to take over the EU presidency – and Slovakia have not wavered in the face of pressure from the EU and NATO to decouple their economies from China. The plan to abolish unanimous voting in the EU on matters of national security is designed to put an end to these members’ desire for independence. In a recent statement, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico recounted the pressure his government has come under for refusing to align itself with EU and NATO policies. The Slovak leader even pointed the finger of blame at the **opposition parties**, the mouthpieces of NATO and the EU in his country, for the assassination attempt against him.

Apart from these “dissident” members – or those committed to their sovereignty – it is clear that Washington exercises almost total domination over the G7, NATO and the EU.

Multilateral structures that include Southern countries

The situation is more nuanced in hybrid multilateral structures, such as the G20, where countries from the South have a seat, or structures dominated entirely by countries from the South, such as ASEAN. In such structures, it is not as easy for the United States to impose its strategy of containment of Beijing.

At the last G20 summit, **chaired by India**, the final declaration did not include a condemnation of Moscow's actions in Ukraine, as Washington would have liked. Xi Jinping's absence from the summit may have had two aims: to give New Delhi the opportunity to speak on behalf of the global South, by endorsing the African Union's membership of the G20, and to prevent Western countries from making China shoulder responsibility for the final declaration.

In a structure such as ASEAN, emblematic of the strategic Southeast Asian region and characterized by different political orientations, the United States could not unify the positions of the ten members against Beijing. Instead, Washington is striving to develop new partnerships or deepen existing ones (security alliance with the **Philippines**; full strategic partnership with **Indonesia**...), with the ulterior motive of exacerbating tensions between China and its neighbors, and hindering China's rise in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Logically, the defense agreements concluded within the framework of these bilateral partnerships are then passed on to China and ASEAN. Under these conditions, China's wish to establish a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which would exclude interference from powers outside the region, does not seem likely to come to fruition. By preventing consensus among ASEAN members, the United States wants to force China to negotiate separately the settlement of its territorial and maritime disputes with each of its neighbors – knowing that the American strategy is precisely to prevent Beijing and its neighbors from reaching an agreement.

But the situation is less fluid than it seems for Washington. Anxious not to become, to their detriment, instruments of the US strategy to contain China, several ASEAN members have opted for a policy of diversifying their diplomacy and economy. These include Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia – and even the **state of Brunei**, well aware of the importance of its strategic position. Thailand and Malaysia have even expressed their wish to join the BRICS group: more than an expression of non-alignment with US positions, these elements undermine the legitimacy of the US strategy of military encirclement of China.

This indisputable weakening of America's position on the world geopolitical stage gives a new perspective on Washington's decision to play a no-holds-barred game to preserve its hegemony – notably by raising the threat of Taiwan.

The ferocious wars underway in Europe and the Middle East complete the picture. By sacrificing Ukraine, Washington hopes to weaken Beijing's strategic partner, Russia. By entrusting Israel with the unspeakable mission of perpetrating genocide in the Palestinian territories, Washington is demonstrating, to its detriment, that America's historic partners in

the West Asian region, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, no longer implement Washington's directives as zealously as they once did. Like China's neighbors, they are seeking to balance their relations with the great powers in order to give priority to their national interests.

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