



# The ICAS Bulletin

## Institute for China America Studies

### A Survey of Scholarship on U.S.-China Relations

December 15, 2021

#### What's Going On? ↓

#### U.S. Officials Uphold Principles in Multilateral and Public Engagements



Secretary Blinken speaks alongside Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno during his visit to Jakarta on December 14 (Source: U.S. Department of State)

- From December 13-16, Secretary of State Antony Blinken is travelling to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. In Jakarta, Blinken highlighted the importance that U.S. “diploma[ti]c, military, [and] intelligence partnerships” in Southeast Asia played in upholding a “rules-based order” in the Asia-Pacific region.
- From December 9-10, the Biden administration held its ‘Summit for Democracy,’ a forum intended to enhance multilateral cooperation on issues like combating corruption, defending human rights, and bolstering democratic processes.
- On December 7, Secretary Blinken, speaking at *The Wall Street Journal’s* CEO Council Summit, warned that “it would be a very serious mistake” if Beijing were to take unilateral steps to change the status quo in Taiwan.
- On December 4, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke at the annual Reagan National Defense Forum and declared that “America is a Pacific power...working to advance an international system that is free and stable and open.”
- On December 2, the second session of the U.S.-EU China dialogue took place. Officials discussed a joint approach to China on issues of economics and technology, human rights, security and disinformation, and Taiwan.

#### U.S. Legislature and Executive Take Punitive Action Against China



Aerial photo of cotton planting in Southern Xinjiang on March 24 (Source: Wikimedia Commons CC 3.0 via China News Service)

- On December 11, the United States (joined by Canada and the U.K.) issued sanctions on dozens of individuals and entities tied to China, Myanmar, North Korea and Bangladesh, citing action “against those who abuse the power of the state to inflict suffering and repression.”
- On December 8, the United States imposed an arms embargo against Cambodia due to the growing influence of the Chinese military in the country.
- On December 8, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act was passed 428-1 in the House of Representatives. The act would ban all imports involved in supply chains going through Xinjiang province unless the U.S. government verifies that they were not made with forced labor.
- On December 6, the White House—later joined by the U.K., Canada, and Australia—announced that it would not be sending any U.S. officials to the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing in protest of China’s “human rights abuses and atrocities in Xinjiang.”
- On December 5, the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2022 was delayed by a week over a number of controversial issues, including a proposal by Senator Mark Rubio (R., Fla.) to add language of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act to the NDAA.

*Associated News Sources:*

[“Blinken Blasts China, Seeks to Rally U.S. Allies in Asia,”](#) *Bloomberg*, December 13 [Paywall]  
[“US seeks closer ties with ‘key player’ Indonesia as Blinken set to make Indo-Pacific speech,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, December 13 [Paywall]  
[“Biden kicks off first ‘Summit for Democracy’ at White House,”](#) *CNN*, December 10  
[“Blinken Calls China, Russia Efforts to Disrupt Global Order Serious Mistakes,”](#) *The Wall Street Journal*, December 7 [Paywall]  
[“To Counter China, Austin Vows to Shore Up Alliances With Others in Region,”](#) *The New York Times*, December 4 [Paywall]  
[“U.S. and EU Set to Discuss Joint Approach to Assertive China,”](#) *Bloomberg*, December 1 [Paywall]

*Associated News Sources:*

[“U.S. imposes sweeping human rights sanctions on China, Myanmar and North Korea,”](#) *NBC News*, December 11  
[“U.S. imposes arms embargo on Cambodia over Chinese military influence,”](#) *Reuters*, December 8 [Paywall]  
[“House votes to ban imports from Xinjiang over forced labor concerns,”](#) *Axios*, December 8  
[“White House announces diplomatic boycott of Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns,”](#) *NBC News*, December 6  
[“In pointed snub, no U.S. government official will attend Beijing Winter Olympics,”](#) *The Washington Post*, December 6 [Paywall]  
[“Defense Bill Slowed by Fights Over Uyghur, Nord Stream 2 Policy Amendments,”](#) *The Wall Street Journal*, December 5 [Paywall]

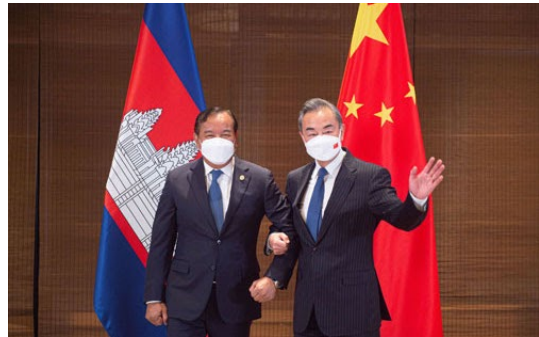
## U.S.-China Economic Rivalry Shows Signs of Escalation and Détente



The Chinese flag flies next to the American flag at the New York Stock Exchange (Source: Jens Schott Knudsen via Flickr)

- On December 12, the U.S., Australia, and Japan announced that they will jointly fund the construction of undersea internet cables to Nauru, Kiribati and Micronesia. Beijing, whose funding for this cable project was shunned in September after U.S. intervention, announced that it began work on domestic undersea internet cables in the South China Sea on December 8.
- On December 3, Chinese ride-sharing company Didi Global Inc. announced that it plans to de-list from the New York Stock Exchange in favor of a listing in Hong Kong. The move comes amid a cybersecurity probe of the company by Beijing and SEC demands that US-listed Chinese firms comply with audits.
- On December 2, the Security and Exchange Commission mandated that Chinese companies that list on American stock exchanges must disclose if they are publicly-owned and turn over evidence of their auditing inspections.
- On December 2, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told the *Reuters Next* conference that lowering Trump-era tariffs on Chinese imports could ease some inflationary pressures, but that tariff exclusion is “not a game changer.”

## Chinese Public and Private Diplomacy Reveal Varied Goals



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with his Cambodian counterpart Prak Sokhon on December 4 (Source: Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- From December 4-5, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with several of his ASEAN counterparts, saying that Southeast Asian states should voice their “joint opposition” to external efforts to provoke a “new cold war.” The Foreign Ministry followed up Wang’s démarche with vociferous criticism of Biden’s ‘Summit for Democracy’ the following week, calling the summit hypocritical and subversive in light of the U.S.’ own democratic challenges and its invitation of Taiwan.
- On December 5, it was reported that American intelligence believes that Beijing has made overtures to Equatorial Guinea in an effort to establish a naval base at the port of Bata – which would be China’s first permanent military presence on the Atlantic Ocean.
- On December 3, the \$5.9 billion Chinese-built railway connecting the Laotian capital of Vientiane to Kunming in China’s Yunnan province was inaugurated.
- On December 1, it was reported that earlier this year China demanded that Indonesia cease drilling for oil and natural gas in an area of the South China Sea – claimed by both states – north of the Natuna islands.

Associated News Sources:

[“China builds undersea cable bases amid digital infrastructure rivalry,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, December 12 [Paywall]  
[“New undersea internet cable for Nauru, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia will be funded by Australia, the US and Japan,”](#) *ABC News*, December 12  
[“Didi Global Plans to Delist From New York Stock Exchange,”](#) *The Wall Street Journal*, December 3 [Paywall]  
[“SEC finalizes rule that allows it to delist foreign stocks for failure to meet audit requirements”](#) *CNBC*, December 2  
[“Yellen says cutting some tariffs on Chinese goods could ease price pressures,”](#) *Reuters*, December 2 [Paywall]

Associated News Sources:

[“China and Russia attack Biden's 'so-called' Summit of Democracy,”](#) *CNN News*, December 9  
[“China urges Southeast Asia to join united front against new cold war,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, December 5 [Paywall]  
[“China Seeks First Military Base on Africa’s Atlantic Coast, U.S. Intelligence Finds,”](#) *The Wall Street Journal*, December 5 [Paywall]  
[“Laos-China Railway Inaugurated Amid Mounting Debt Concerns,”](#) *The Diplomat*, December 3 [Paywall]  
[“China protested Indonesian drilling, military exercises,”](#) *Reuters*, December 1 [Paywall]

## U.S. Appears Mercurial on Taiwan



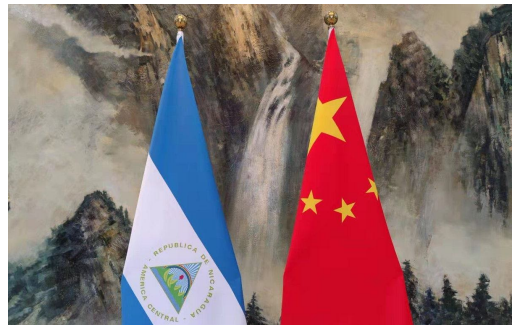
ASD (IPSA) Ely Ratner testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on December 6 (Source: Anna MoneyMaker/Getty Images)

- On December 12, it was reported that the White House cut the video feed when a presentation by a Taiwanese minister at the Summit for Democracy showed a map labelling Taiwan in a different color than China, an apparent violation of Washington’s ‘One China Policy.’  
 - On December 6, Ely Ratner, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, testified at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that Beijing’s threats “unify” China are “real and dangerous” – a sentiment shared with Taipei – and that “bolstering Taiwan's defenses is an urgent task.”  
 - On December 4, Defense Secretary Austin warned at the Reagan National Defense Forum that Beijing’s recent air incursions and naval exercises in the Taiwan Straits look “a lot like rehearsals,” but he did not elaborate on how the U.S. would respond to a military action by Beijing.

Associated News Sources:

[“PLA drills near Taiwan may turn into full-scale attack, island’s defence ministry warns,”](#) *South China Morning Post*, December 13 [Paywall]  
[“White House cut Taiwanese official's video feed over map: report,”](#) *The Hill*, December 12  
[“US sees 'urgent' need to boost Taiwan defenses, official says,”](#) *The Hill*, December 6  
[“US defence chief warns of China ‘rehearsals’ for attack on Taiwan,”](#) *Financial Times*, December 4 [Paywall]

## - In Other News -



Nicaraguan and Chinese flags on display at talks in Tianjin between the two countries' officials on December 10 (Source: Handout)

[“Nicaragua breaks diplomatic relations with Taiwan, recognizes Chinese sovereignty,”](#) *The Hill*, December 9  
[“China is rapidly becoming a 'tremendous threat' in the solar system, says US Space Force leader,”](#) *Business Insider*, December 6 [Paywall]  
[“China easing rules for US business travellers, approvals in 10 days,”](#) *Reuters*, December 3 [Paywall]  
[“Twitter and Facebook hit back at Chinese propaganda campaigns,”](#) *The New York Times*, December 2 [Paywall]  
[“Beijing wanted to ‘break’ Australia -U.S. Indo-Pacific adviser,”](#) *Reuters*, December 1 [Paywall]

## What Are We Reading? ↓

- *Foreign Affairs*: "[The Growing Danger of U.S. Ambiguity on Taiwan](#)" by Richard Haass and David Sacks (December 13, 2021) [Paywall]
- *The Wall Street Journal*: "[What's Behind China's Regulatory Storm](#)" by Barry Naughton (December 12, 2021) [Paywall]
- *South China Morning Post*: "[China in Africa: no more hard cash as debt-hit nations battle Covid-19 disruptions](#)" by Jevans Nyabiage (December 12, 2021) [Paywall]
- *BBC News*: "[How the West invited China to eat its lunch](#)" by Faisal Islam (December 11, 2021)
- *The National Interest*: "[Has Washington's Policy Toward Taiwan Crossed the Rubicon?](#)" by Paul Heer (December 10, 2021) [Paywall]
- *Responsible Statecraft*: "[US official signals stunning shift in the way we interpret 'One China' policy](#)" by Michael D. Swaine (December 10, 2021)
- *Bloomberg*: "[Washington Hasn't Learned the Real Lesson of the China Shock](#)" by Shawn Donnan (December 10, 2021) [Paywall]
- *Foreign Affairs*: "[Xi Jinping's New World Order: Can China Remake the International System?](#)" by Elizabeth Economy (December 9, 2021) [Paywall]
- Belfer Center: "[The Great Rivalry: China vs. the U.S. in the 21st Century](#)" by Graham Allison (December 7, 2021)
- *The Wall Street Journal*: "[China Will Soon Lead the U.S. in Tech](#)" by Graham Allison and Eric Schmidt (December 7, 2021) [Paywall]
- *Foreign Policy*: "[The U.S.-China Relationship Has Entered a New Phase](#)" by Robert A. Manning (December 6, 2021) [Paywall]
- *Nikkei Asia*: "[Pakistan's cautionary tale of digital dependence on China](#)" by Jonathan E. Hillman (December 3, 2021) [Paywall]
- *The New York Times*: "[With Its Exit, Didi Sends a Signal: China No Longer Needs Wall Street](#)" by Alexandra Stevenson and Paul Mozur (December 2, 2021) [Paywall]
- *Defense One*: "[Ending strategic ambiguity won't help Taiwan](#)" by Eric Sayers (December 2, 2021)
- *MIT Technology Review*: "[The US crackdown on Chinese economic espionage is a mess: We have the data to show it](#)" by Eileen Guo, Jess Aloe, and Karen Hao (December 2, 2021)

## What's Happening Around Town? ↓

### - Past Events -

- [Advancing U.S.-China Health Security Cooperation in an Era of Strategic Competition](#)  
December 1 hosted by Center for Strategic and International Studies
- [US-EU cooperation in the Indo-Pacific](#)  
December 3 hosted by Brookings Institute
- [Shedding Taiwan's 'Invisibility Cloak': Global and Regional Prospects](#)  
December 6 hosted by Sigur Center for Asian Studies
- [The Future of U.S. Policy on Taiwan](#)  
December 8 hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

### - Upcoming Events -

- [Safeguarding America's Critical Supply Chain Capabilities: A Discussion with Senators Bob Casey and John Cornyn](#)  
December 15 hosted by Hudson Institute
- [Reality Check: Can China Achieve Its Climate Goals?](#)  
December 16 hosted by Center for Strategic and International Studies
- [Debate: Should the U.S. Seek to Contain China?](#)  
December 16 hosted by Quincy Institute
- [Containing Crisis: Strategic Concepts for Coercive Economic Statecraft on China](#)  
January 2022 (postponed) hosted by Center for a New American Security

# What ICAS Is Up To

---*ICAS Events and Co-sponsored Events*---

**2021 ICAS Annual Conference**  
 Thursday, December 9, 2021  
 9:00am - 1:00pm EST (GMT -5)



On Thursday, December 9, ICAS successfully held its hybrid 2021 Annual Conference bringing together more than a dozen esteemed panelists to discuss the prospects for U.S.-China relations under the Biden administration! The hybrid event featured two discussion panels — (1) Strategic Rivalry, and (2) Trade, Technology, and Climate Engagement — and a keynote dialogue between:

- **Xu Xueyuan** - Deputy Chief of Mission & Minister, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States, and
- **Susan Thornton** - Senior Fellow, Paul Tsai China Center, Yale Law School

You can read **Deputy Chief of Mission & Minister Xu Xueyuan’s remarks** made at the Conference on the website of the Chinese Embassy in the U.S.: [http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/sgzc/202112/t20211211\\_10466944.htm](http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/sgzc/202112/t20211211_10466944.htm)

A special thanks to our many expert panelists — whose information can be found at the link below — our live audience, and our co-sponsors. A **written summary** and **recordings** of the Annual Conference are now available on our website: <http://chinaus-icas.org/events-2/annual-conferences/2021-annual-conference/>



---ICAS In the News---



On Thursday, **December 2, 2021**, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta discussed the inauguration of the China-Laos Railway on *CGTN America's China 24*.

- Watch the Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JC4TRDxO-E>

On Thursday, **December 9, 2021**, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was interviewed by the *Global Times* regarding the Biden administration's Summit for Democracy.

- Read the Interview: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202112/1241114.shtml>