



The ICAS Bulletin

Institute for China America Studies

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

January 29, 2025

What's Going On?

Blacklisting And Probes Overshadow U.S.-China Ties



President Trump's official presidential portrait. (Source: White House, Public Domain)

- On January 21, President Donald Trump threatened to impose a 10% tariff on Chinese imports starting February 1, citing concerns about fentanyl shipments entering the U.S. through China, Mexico, and Canada.
- On January 16, China launched an investigation into alleged dumping of U.S. mature node chips, citing concerns about unfair competition due to U.S. government subsidies.
- On January 16, Baicells Technologies, a telecom hardware firm founded by former Huawei employees, was investigated by the U.S. Commerce Department and the FBI for security risks.
- On January 17, the U.S. Trade Representative announced that investigating China's shipbuilding subsidies could lead to tariffs or penalties.
- On January 14, the U.S. government added 37 Chinese companies to its import blacklist under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, citing concerns over alleged forced labor in China's Xinjiang region.

Trump's Trade And Geopolitical Gambit Stirs Global Attention



Donald Trump Jr. made a private visit to Greenland. (Source: Photo by EMIL STACH/Ritzau Scanpix/AFP via Getty Images)

- On January 21, President Donald Trump reiterated the United States' interest in acquiring Greenland, citing its strategic importance for international security against Russian and Chinese activities in the Arctic.
- On January 20, President Donald Trump refrained from imposing immediate tariffs on China and ordered federal agencies to investigate trade deficits, with potential 25% duties on imports from Canada and Mexico.
- On January 20, President Donald Trump announced intentions to reclaim the Panama Canal and impose tariffs of up to 60% on Chinese imported goods, aiming to restore "proud, prosperous and free" America.
- CNN reported that Chinese companies operating in Mexico are apprehensive about the potential negative impact on their businesses as Trump threatened to impose a 25% duty on imports from Mexico.
- On January 14, Nicholas Burns, then ambassador to China, expressed concerns that President Donald Trump's threats toward Canada and Greenland could

Associated News Sources:

["Trump Delivers Fresh Tariff Threats Against Eu And China."](#) Reuters, January 22
["China Begins Probe Into Us Chip Grants, Alleged Dumping."](#) Bloomberg, January 16
["Exclusive: Chinese Tech Firm Founded By Huawei Veterans In The FBI's Crosshairs."](#) Reuters, January 16
["US Probe Opens Door To Tariffs Over China Shipbuilding Subsidies."](#) Bloomberg, January 16
["U.S. Blocks Imports From 37 More Chinese Companies Over Forced-Labor Concerns."](#) The Wall Street Journal, January 15

undermine U.S. efforts to counter China's global influence.
 - On January 15, President Donald Trump's interest in purchasing Greenland sparked discussions in China regarding Taiwan's future.

Associated News Sources:

["Trump: US Needs Greenland To Combat Russia And China."](#) Politico, January 21
["No Day-One Tariffs From Trump, But He Says Canada, Mexico may get duties Feb 1."](#) Reuters, January 21
["Donald Trump Returns To Tariffs, Panama Canal, Theme Of 'Winning' In Inaugural Address."](#) South China Morning Post, January 20
["An Industrial Chinatown Near The US Southern Border Readies Its Options Should Trump Tariffs Come."](#) CNN Business, January 18
["Trump's Canada And Greenland Threats Imperil China Fight, Says Departing Envoy."](#) The Wall Street Journal, January 15
["Trump's Greenland Bid Stirs Debate In China About What To Do With Taiwan."](#) Reuters, January 15

A Seventy Days Pause On The U.S. TikTok Ban



TikTok users protesting outside the U.S. Supreme Court. (Source: Andrew Harnik via Getty Images)

- YouTube star MrBeast (Jimmy Donaldson) and tech entrepreneur Elon Musk are reported to be among the potential buyers for TikTok's U.S. operations.
- On January 20, President Donald Trump signed an executive order delaying the enforcement of the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act (PAFACA) for 75 days, allowing TikTok to continue operations in the U.S. while seeking a resolution.
- On January 20, China's Foreign Ministry expressed willingness to allow companies to make their own decisions regarding operations and acquisitions,

Asia-Pacific Parties Adjust to Trump's Prioritization Strategy



The aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) transits the Atlantic Ocean. (Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Public Domain)

- On January 22, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reaffirmed the United States' "ironclad" defense commitments to the Philippines under the Mutual Defense Treaty.
- On January 18, the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command conducted its first joint naval and air combat patrol of the year in the South China Sea, aiming to maintain regional peace and stability amid ongoing tensions with the Philippines.
- On January 18, Taiwan and the Philippines government officials are reassessing their strategies in response to President Donald Trump's return to office,

signaling openness to a deal that would keep TikTok operating in the U.S.

- On January 16, TikTok CEO Shou-Zi Chew was confirmed to attend President Donald Trump's inauguration, highlighting the company's efforts to maintain operations in the U.S. amid potential bans.
- On January 16, TikTok sponsored an inauguration party for President Donald Trump, with CEO Shou Zi Chew attending the event.

Associated News Sources:

- ["TikTok's Fate Remains Unclear. Here's Who Wants To Purchase The Social Media Platform," USA Today, January 22](#)
- ["Trump Signs Executive Order To Pause TikTok Ban, Provide Immunity To Tech Firms," NPR, January 20](#)
- ["China Signals It Is Open To A Deal Keeping Tiktok In U.S.," The Wall Street Journal, January 20](#)
- ["TikTok CEO To Rally With Trump Before The Inauguration As Ban Looms," The Washington Post, January 16](#)
- ["TikTok To Sponsor Trump Inauguration Party - Live Updates," Politico, January 16](#)

considering his transactional approach to foreign policy.

- On January 21, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba congratulated U.S. President Donald Trump on his return to office and expressed his intention to strengthen the Japan-U.S. partnership, emphasizing collaboration towards a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- On January 21, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with his counterparts from Australia, India, and Japan in Washington, D.C., signaling a continued focus on countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Associated News Sources:

- ["Marco Rubio Says US Committed to Philippines Defense Under Trump," Bloomberg, January 22](#)
- ["PLA Carries Out First South China Sea Patrol Of Year As Philippine Tensions Continue," South China Morning Post, January 21](#)
- ["Taiwan And Philippines Try To Figure Out How To Navigate The Return Of Donald Trump," South China Morning Post, January 21](#)
- ["Japan PM Hopes For 'Enduring' US Ties As Trump Returns To Power," South China Morning Post, January 21](#)
- ["Quad Foreign Ministers Meet In Washington In A Signal Of Trump's China Focus," NPR, January 20](#)

China And The U.S. Explore Potential Diplomatic Exchanges



President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office on January 20, 2025, in Washington, DC. (Source: Photo by Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

- On January 21, China's Foreign Ministry signaled a willingness to engage in dialogue with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, indicating a potential openness to discussions under the new U.S. administration.
- On January 17, then-President-elect Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping held a phone conversation

- In Other News -



Secretary Antony J. Blinken delivers remarks at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., on January 17, 2025. (Source: Official State Department photo by Freddie Everett, Public Domain)

- ["Chinese Hackers Breached US Government Office That Assesses Foreign Investments For National Security Risks," CNN Politics, January 23](#)
- ["Jamie Dimon On Tariffs: 'Get Over It,'" CNN Business, January 22](#)
- ["Singapore PM Warned The Possibility Of WWII If](#)

discussing trade, fentanyl trafficking, and the future of TikTok in the United States. Both leaders described the call as positive.

- On January 21, President Donald Trump refrained from imposing new tariffs on China and proposed renewed negotiations, suggesting a potential reset in U.S.-China relations.

- On January 19, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, serving as President Xi Jinping's special representative, met with U.S. Vice President-elect J.D. Vance and business leader Elon Musk in Washington, D.C., to discuss trade, regional stability, and cooperation on issues like fentanyl production.

- On January 20, President Donald Trump emphasized plans to reclaim control of the Panama Canal, citing concerns over Chinese influence.

- On January 17, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng planned to attend President Donald Trump's inauguration, marking the first time a senior Chinese leader has participated in such an event.

Associated News Sources:

["China Signals Willingness to Speak With Sanctioned Marco Rubio."](#) *Bloomberg*, January 21

["Trump Holds 'Very Good' Phone Call With China's President Xi."](#) *CNN*, January 21

["Trump Raises Prospects Negotiated Reset US-China Ties,"](#) *Reuters*, January 21

["The Chinese President's Envoy Meets With Vance And Musk On The Eve Of Trump's Inauguration,"](#) *AP News*, January 20

["Donald Trump Goes Light On China On Day 1, Except Where The Panama Canal Is Concerned,"](#) *South China Morning Post*, January 20

["China To Send A Vice President To Donald Trump's Inauguration."](#) *The Washington Post*, January 17

["US-China Relation Is Mismanaged."](#) *Fortune*, January 22

["China And US Partners Are Moving Closer As Trump Returns To The White House."](#) *AP News*, January 22

["We'll Be Surprised' By US-China Improvements, Harvard Scholar Argues In Davos."](#) *South China Morning Post*, January 21

["Here Are Trump's Executive Orders."](#) *The New York Times*, January 20

["Jake Sullivan, White House National Security Adviser, Reflects On China Policy."](#) *The New York Times*, January 19

["China's Economy Grows More Than Expected. But Fears Of Trump Tariffs Loom."](#) *CNN Business*, January 16

What Are We Reading? ↓

- *The Wire China*: ["Who's Who on Trump's China Team"](#) by Noah Berman (January 22)
- *CNN Business*: ["How Tiktok Became A 'Poker Chip' In A High-Stakes Game Between Trump And China"](#) by Brian Stelter (January 22)
- Brookings Institution: ["How Will South Korea Navigate US-China Competition In 2025?"](#) by Evans J.R. Revere et al. (January 22)
- *Financial Times*: ["Trump's Second Coming And The World"](#) by Martin Wolf (January 21)
- *The New York Times*: ["Opinion | TikTok, Trump And The Economic Cost Of C.E.O.s Cozying Up To Trump"](#) by Filipe Campante and Raymond Fisman (January 21)

- *The New York Times*: [Opinion | The Dark Roots Of Donald Trump's Obsession With Panama And Greenland](#) by Greg Grandin (January 21)
- *Foreign Affairs*: ["The Trump-Biden-Trump Foreign Policy: American Strategy's Strange Continuity"](#) by Richard Fontaine (January 20)
- *The Washington Post*: ["Trump's Inauguration Vow To Uphold The Law Clashes With TikTok Stance"](#) by Jim Geraghty (January 20)
- *The New York Times*: ["It's Trump's Messy, Dangerous World Now"](#) by Leon E. Panetta (January 20)
- *The Washington Post*: ["Trump Sees A New Threat On The Mexican Border. It's Called China."](#) by Mary Beth Sheridan (January 18)
- *The New York Times*: ["Rubio Aims to Take on the Axis of Anger: China, Russia, North Korea And Iran"](#) by Edward Wong (January 15)
- *The Atlantic*: ["No More Mr. Tough Guy On China"](#) by Michael Schuman (January 15)
- *Nature*: ["How To Sustain Scientific Collaboration Amid Worsening US-China Relations"](#) by Valerie J. Karplus et al. (January 14)

What's Happening Around Town? ↓

- Past Events -

- [China & the BRICS](#)
January 28 hosted by Asia Society
- [Huawei Redux: Understanding the World's Most Infamous Company and Its Geopolitical Significance](#)
January 27 hosted by Center for Strategic & International Studies
- [Strategic Competition in the Second Trump Administration](#)
January 22 hosted by Wilson Center
- [Naval Competition in the Indian Ocean Region](#)
January 22 hosted by Stimson Center
- [Book Talk: How Chinese Tech Got Caught Up in an American Political Storm](#)
January 21 hosted by Asia Society
- [Daughters and sons guest event-personal histories global perspectives](#)
January 16 hosted by Council on Foreign Relations

- Upcoming Events -

- [What to expect from the new Trump administration](#)
January 29 hosted by Brookings Institution
- [Updating US-Japan Cybersecurity Cooperation](#)
January 31 hosted by Hudson Institute
- [A New Era for U.S.-Japan Economic Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges under New Leaders](#)
February 4 hosted by Asia Society
- [Standoff at the Border: Rebuilding the India-China Relationship](#)
February 4 hosted by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- [Steering the Transatlantic Relationship in a New Era of Geopolitics](#)
February 6 hosted by German Marshall Fund of the United States
- [Biopower: Securing American Leadership in Biotechnology](#)
February 6 hosted by Center for a New American Security

What ICAS Is Up To ↓

---Expert Voices Initiative Interview---



Adam Lajeunesse on the Arctic: Canada

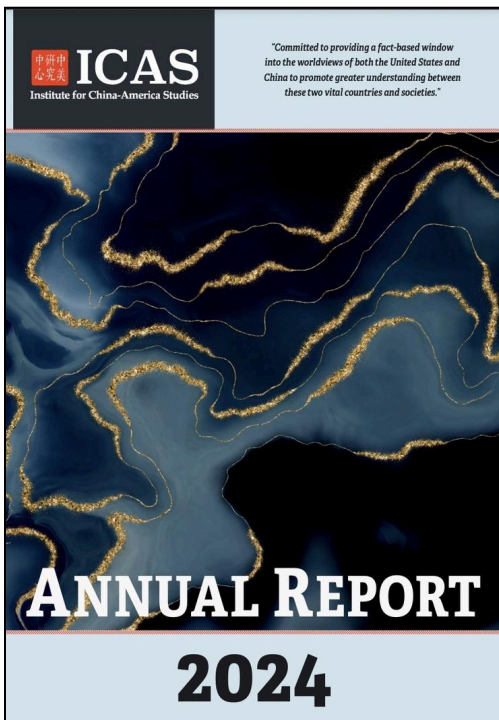
In January 2025, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) launched a new Expert Voices Initiative (EVI) series dedicated to exploring the Arctic. This series brings together leading experts from the five Arctic littoral states and other stakeholder nations to share their research and perspectives on a wide range of Arctic-related topics. These include geopolitics, international law, shipping, environmental conservation, resource management, mining, the rights of Indigenous peoples, climate change, and

multilateral cooperation. On January 22, 2025, Dr. Adam Lajeunesse, an Arctic expert from Canada, met with ICAS Executive Director and Senior Fellow Dr. Nong Hong to discuss Canada's pivotal role in shaping the Arctic region's future in light of significant regional developments over the last few years.

[Watch The Full Interview](#)

[Learn More About the ICAS Expert Voices Initiative](#)

---ICAS 2024 Annual Report---



The ICAS 2024 Annual Report is now available!

The team at Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) is excited to share with you this snapshot of our accomplishments in 2024. Each year, ICAS produces an annual report highlighting the work of our scholars and the impact it has had on addressing the most critical challenges in U.S.-China relations. In addition to highlighting the accomplishments of our scholars, ICAS annual reports provide a comprehensive overview of our organizational growth and programmatic activities of the preceding year.

We are delighted to provide you with a comprehensive overview of our organizational growth and programmatic activities of the preceding year. ICAS is committed to maintaining our ongoing engagement with the global community, dedicated to conducting timely and relevant analyses of the U.S.-China relationship. We are excited about the potential achievements that lie ahead and sincerely appreciate your continued support.

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---6th "U.S.-China Plus" Roundtable Summary---

De-risking, Geopolitics, and Climate: Key Takeaways from the U.S.-China Plus Roundtable

On December 13, 2024, the Institute for China-America Studies hosted the 6th "U.S.-China Plus" Roundtable Washington, D.C. Originally launched in 2019 as the "China-U.S.-Canada" Trilateral Roundtable, this event marked the first expansion to include perspectives from additional third-party countries. The event, which expanded beyond its original trilateral format, featured 20 speakers across three panels, centered on the consequences of U.S.-China economic de-risking, geopolitical tensions, and climate cooperation...



[Read the Full Summary](#)

---Commentary---

Global Times Interview: Implementing unilateral economic rules will ultimately harm the US itself

By Sourabh Gupta

January 26, 2025

Despite their differences, both the US and China want to have a stable and healthy relationship. Their relationship is by differing political views and a win-lose situation mindset. China has found ways to adjust to the US's protectionist policies by looking for new markets and changing how it does business. While the two countries compete in areas like technology, it's still possible to manage things in a way that keeps the peace. The US's focus on protecting its own economy might hurt its global trade position, while China's growth is more about its own development, not trying to overtake the US.

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Academic Engagement

Research Associate Jessica Martin talked on US-China relations at a local community gathering

On January 22, 2025, ICAS Research Associate Jessica Martin acted as the guest expert speaker for a local Great Decisions gathering, delivering a presentation on U.S.-China relations.

After providing a historical overview of U.S.-China relations and its evolution over time, the presentation addressed the differences in U.S. and Chinese government structures, national priorities, perspectives, and geopolitical strategies. An interactive question and answer session followed, in which a variety of issues such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, tariffs, people-to-people engagement, maritime relations, and the 2024 U.S. presidential election were discussed.

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[ICAS In the News](#)

On Monday, January 20, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta quoted by *South China Morning Post* on President Donald Trump's inauguration address and the outlook for U.S.-China relations.

- “The strategies are essentially premised on the US remaining the dominant global economic power and using this abundance, and leverage, to exert collective discipline among the key centres of industrial and military power in their dealings with Beijing.”

On Monday, January 20, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta was [quoted](#) by *South China Morning Post* on the executive order of TikTok and Trump's inauguration.

- “Granted, Project Texas dealt with the data and content issue and not the ownership issue, and thus it was the ‘foreign adversary controlled application’ aspect that did not pass judicial muster.”

On Monday, January 20, 2025, Senior Fellow Sourabh Gupta [appeared](#) by *CGTN* to discuss President-elect Trump's initiative to restore TikTok access after taking office.

- “At the end of the day, TikTok's recommendation algorithm is export controlled so Donald Trump can have discussions with TikTok on what the future might hold but it also involves the Chinese government, so I think this is going to snowball into not being just a commercial issue and it is going to become a political issue.”