

65+ Orgs: Cold War with China is a Dangerous and Self-Defeating Strategy

WASHINGTON — *In response to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's recent vote to advance the [Strategic Competition Act of 2021](#) (SCA), and reports that it will receive a Senate floor vote this week, 66 organizations said:*

We, the undersigned organizations that represent millions of people across the United States, are deeply concerned about the growing Cold War mentality driving the U.S. approach to China. Although our organizations may have different mandates or ideological persuasions, we know that the new Cold War with China currently being pushed in Washington does not serve the millions of people demanding change across this country nor the billions of people affected by U.S. foreign policy abroad, and will instead lead to further insecurity and division.

Worryingly, both political parties are increasingly latching onto a dangerously short-sighted worldview that presents China as the pivotal existential threat to U.S. prosperity and security and counsels zero-sum competition as the primary response. This narrative is not only growing in our foreign policy discourse, but also is increasingly being used to justify widely popular domestic policies, like those in the [Endless Frontier Act](#), that provide broad social and industrial investments. Anti-China framing for such initiatives is not only politically unnecessary; it is harmful, as it inevitably feeds racism, violence, xenophobia, and white nationalism.

The true global security challenges of today — like economic inequality and lack of opportunity, climate change, nuclear proliferation, pandemics, financial crises and supply chain disruption, and ethnonationalism — will require joint, non-military solutions with China and other countries. While the administration and many in Congress acknowledge the need for cooperation on issues of global concern such as climate change, presenting the U.S.-China relationship as a zero-sum economic and military struggle between democracy and authoritarianism, as the [Strategic Competition Act](#) does, creates a political environment that leaves little room for such cooperation.

Instead, the level of demonization and outdated Cold War thinking driving such efforts threatens to fuel destabilizing arms-racing and risks escalation towards a predictably devastating conflict. It also undermines the human rights agenda, providing ammunition for the Chinese government's claim that criticism of abuses — including from rights advocates within China — is aimed at weakening China. Moreover, such approaches pave the way for U.S. policy to undermine human rights and good governance in pursuit of short-sighted security partnerships with rights-abusing, authoritarian governments simply to compete with Beijing.

President Biden and Congress should focus on innovation, cooperation, and multilateral approaches, not hostility and confrontation, to address shared challenges and areas of concern. What everyday Americans need to secure their futures is not the suppression of the Chinese economy — one that is intimately intertwined with our own — but a fundamental restructuring of our own economy through investments in innovation and green jobs; strengthening labor and raising wages; rooting out systemic racism, sexism and inequality; and ensuring affordable health care, housing, education, and a livable planet. More broadly, the prosperity of working people in the United States and China alike demands building a more

equitable global economy that maximizes human wellbeing overall rather than corporate profits. Wasting more money on the Pentagon and inflaming ethnonationalism and racism will not serve these goals.

This moment presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to fundamentally change how the U.S. government builds the security of its people — and more militarization and demonization of China is a distracting and self-defeating strategy toward this goal. If the U.S. government doesn't change course quickly, this dangerous bipartisan push for a new Cold War with China risks empowering hardliners in both countries, fueling more violence against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, and failing to confront the truly existential shared threats we face this century.

ActionAid USA • American Friends Service Committee • Asia-Pacific Working Group • Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) • Beyond the Bomb • Brooklyn For Peace • Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security • Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) • Center for International Policy • Center on Conscience & War • Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy • CODEPINK • Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach • Common Defense • Concerned Families of Westchester • Council for a Livable World • DC Dorothy Day Catholic Worker • Demand Progress • Democracy For America • Detroit Action • Friends Committee on National Legislation • Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action • Indivisible • Just Foreign Policy • Justice Democrats • Justice is Global • Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives • MADRE • Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns • Massachusetts Peace Action • MoveOn • National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) • National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights • National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies • Organized Uplifting Resources & Strategies • Peace Action • Peace Action New York State • Peace Direct • Peace Education Center • People's Action • Physicians for Social Responsibility • Project Blueprint • Proposition One Campaign • Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft • Rachel Carson Council • Rising Voices • RootsAction.org • San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility • Sunrise Movement • Support and Education for Radiation Victims (SERV) • Syracuse Peace Council • The Committee for a SANE U.S.-China Policy • The Freedom BLOC • The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society • Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a Radioactive Environment) • U.S. Campaign for Burma • Union of Concerned Scientists • United for Peace and Justice • Veterans For Peace • Western States Legal Foundation • Whatcom Peace & Justice Center • Win Without War • Women Cross DMZ • Women's Action for New Directions • Working Families Party • World BEYOND War •

###