


ASIA TIMES EST 1995


Subscribe To The Daily Rep

MAIN	CHINA	INDIA	REGIONS ▾	OPINION	POLITICS	BUSINESS	CULTURE	ABOUT US
------	-------	-------	-----------	---------	----------	----------	---------	----------

ASIA UNHEDGED

REAL-TIME INTEL ON WHAT MOVES MARKETS

1 HOUR AGO

First commercial delivery of new airliner 'in 2021'

Comac wants to get its new C919 passenger jet into the commercial airways as a 'gift' for the Communist Party's 100th birthday

2 HOURS AGO

Fitch lowers India's GDP outlook citing 'weak rebound'

Fitch said the Indian economy's rebound in the September quarter was weaker than expected and hence lowered FY18 growth forecast to 6.7% from 6.9%

4 HOURS AGO

Beijing anxious to deny new aircraft carrier is Soviet copycat

A new round of media hype has played out against a backdrop of doubts as to whether the new carrier is materially different to the Liaoning

[MORE >](#)
The daily Report

Must-reads from across Asia - directly to your inbox

SINO-US RELATIONS OPINION

Why Beijing and Washington will avoid 'Thucydides Trap'


 By **KEN MOAK** | DECEMBER 4, 2017 5:22 PM (UTC+8)


3



The United States and China are unlikely to fall into the "Thucydides Trap", in which a rising power challenges an existing one to have a "piece of the pie." Conditions are very different from those that led to such wars in the past.

In the first place, both countries possess weapons of mass destruction that could lead to mutual assured destruction (MAD). Second, past antagonists' economies were not as intertwined as those of the US and China.

The daily Report

Must-reads from across Asia - directly to your inbox

Your Email here

[SUBMIT](#)

Third, China is not challenging US global hegemony, but is determined to safeguard its national interests and follow an ideology and development path different from those of the US and its allies. Fourth, successive US presidents follow a China policy very different from their campaign rhetoric.

Fifth, anti-China rhetoric is increasingly discredited in the US, particularly among the young.

More from this author

China is no more 'aggressive' than I and its allies

27-11-2017 13:19

Why quadrilateral security pact is very unlikely

20-11-2017 17:25

For US and China, cooperation is the way forward

13-11-2017 00:29

[EVEN MORE](#)

Your Email here

SUBMIT

CHINA DIGEST

ECONOMICS AND POLICY FROM
CHINA'S NEWSPAPERS

7 HOURS AGO

Shanghai adds new
collateral management
infrastructure

Preventing systematic risks from the macro perspective will help maintain the order and stability of the market from the micro perspective

8 HOURS AGO

Guangdong to relax
foreign investment
restrictions

The government aims to gradually improve the opening up of manufacturing, service and financial sectors

9 HOURS AGO

Eight investors to
boost equity in
Aluminum
Corporation of China

By replacing creditor debt with equity and seasoned equity offerings, the total capital of the group has been increased to US\$1.9 billion

MORE >

THE BRIEF

MAIN LATEST

05-12-2017 16:24

Asia giants like India and China are not only trying to reduce their 'crude' dependence on the Middle East, but also considering renewable energy alternatives. ([Alam Srinivas](#))

05-12-2017 15:23

Opinion // No takers yet for US ceasefire in Euphrates valley ([M.K. Bhadrakumar](#))

China-US economic relationship

Never in human history have two major economies been so intertwined as those of the US and China. They are each other's biggest trade partners, with two-way trade estimated at US\$580 billion in 2016 and growing.

Two-way investments are rising, in that Chinese investment exceeded \$45 billion and that of the US in China was nearing the same number last year. What's more, increasing numbers of US executives, state governors and mayors of major cities are traveling to China looking for investment and trade opportunities. The huge and growing Chinese market, according to Tennessee Governor [Bill Haslam](#), cannot be ignored.

Relative political stability, advanced technology and management methods, and an affluent market are big attractions for investors – and they would have invested even more had it not been for a paranoid US Congress' concern over “national security.” It set up a special commission mainly to scrutinize investments from China, sending a message to Chinese investors that they are not welcome.

Military reality

The reality is that a war against China would come with an unimaginably high price and which no one could win. China is now far stronger than it was in the 1950s. Since then, China has been catching up fast: building new stealth jet fighters, drones, missiles, submarines and other weaponry at rapid rates.

The latest development is the Dongfeng-41 missile, which can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads and has a range of 14,000 kilometers, allowing it to hit any US city. Though it is still behind the US in firepower, China could inflict serious losses of human lives and property in the US if attacked.

Graham Allison, a Harvard University scholar, was correct when he wrote in his new book *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* that both countries should do everything possible to avoid war. A China-US military conflict would no have no winners,



only destruction and despair for both sides and every nation in between.

Policy reversals

Bashing China is a sure way of getting votes in US election campaigns because a lot of Americans have negative opinions about the Asian giant. But once elected, the winner typically makes a U-turn. Bill Clinton, for example, accused incumbent George H W Bush of coddling tyrants while campaigning for the US presidency, but he quickly improved relations with the Chinese “tyranny” after being elected.

Donald Trump is no exception, further upgrading the US-China economic and strategic dialogues first introduced by George W Bush and upgraded by Barack Obama.

China critics may not believe their own rhetoric

The anti-China crowd may not believe the rhetoric it propagates because these critics are highly educated and accomplished analysts, journalists and scholars. For example, it is difficult to surmise that Peter Navarro, a Harvard-educated economics professor at the University of California, Irvine and now Trump’s trade czar, actually believes what he wrote in his 2011 book *Death by China*, accusing China of stealing more than 25 million US jobs and closing 50,000 factories.

Besides, how can China, or any country for that matter, steal US jobs? American consumers have a choice whether to buy Chinese products, and US companies have a choice whether to invest in or relocate production to China.

The anti-China crowd cannot blame the problems of the US on China. It was US American businesses’ decisions that “hollowed out” factories and automation that destroyed many manufacturing jobs. Indeed, automation is spilling over to the services sectors (such as bank machines), leading to more job losses. Whom will the anti-China crowd blame then?

Anti-China, anti-US credibility diminishing

In any event, the anti-China crowd’s credibility appears to be waning. According to a US-based [Pew opinion poll](#), around 55% of Americans between the ages of 19 and 34 view China positively and do not consider it an economic or military threat. Perhaps having visited or worked in China, and having been exposed to alternative news sources, they see the country differently from their fathers and grandfathers, most of whom probably never set foot in or know anything about China.

The Pew poll found a similar picture in China. More than 55% of those

05-12-2017 14:44

Bangladesh opposition leader Khaleda Zia's threat to boycott next year's elections could tilt the country back towards instability. ([Subir Bhaumik](#))

05-12-2017 14:39

The US and South Korea started large military exercises on Monday, a move North Korea said would push the Korean peninsula to “the brink of nuclear war,” ignoring calls from Russia and China to call them off. ([Christine Kim](#) and [Philip Wen](#))

05-12-2017 13:01

Opinion // Sri Lankan regime backing away from conflict resolution vows ([Anura Kumara Dissanayake](#))

05-12-2017 12:57

An anti-corruption campaign in Vietnam aims to burnish the ruling Communist Party's image, settle political scores and attract foreign investors. ([David Hutt](#))

05-12-2017 12:04

The United Nations' political affairs chief will visit North Korea this week, the highest-level visit by a UN official in more than six years as tensions increase over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs. (Michelle Nichols)

05-12-2017 11:38

Shanghai boasts new collateral management and debt guarantee offices (Asia Times Staff)

05-12-2017 11:29

Russia is expanding its free electronic visa program, which allows visitors to receive the document on entry, to all airports in the Far East region as the government seeks to bolster tourism and attract investment. It seems to be working. (Asia Times Staff)

05-12-2017 10:52

Guangdong unveils ten new rules to further open up its economy to foreign investors (Asia Times Staff)

05-12-2017 10:32

After Islamist forces locked down Islamabad for three weeks and got away with it, questions are begged of the military's role in Pakistan's political chaos. (F.M. Shakil)

05-12-2017 10:20

Now that the Trump administration has declined to recognize China's 'market economy' status, it should do the military equivalent and withdraw Beijing's invitation to the next Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) navy exercise in 2018. (Grant Newsham)

05-12-2017 09:28

Aluminum Corporation of China in US\$1.9 billion debt-to-equity replacement plan (Asia Times Staff)

05-12-2017 08:40

Risk-averse Japan wasn't the obvious place for one of cryptocurrency's biggest scandals in the 2014 collapse of the Mt. Gox exchange, but could blockchain technologies also be Tokyo's ticket to redefining

who have visited, studied in or worked in the United States have a positive view of the country. For the most part, they find Americans friendly and helpful and in many ways sharing similar aspirations and hopes.

The number of Americans and Chinese visiting, studying and working in each other's countries will likely surge. According to the US-based [Institute of International Education](#), the number of Americans studying in China rose from 6,300 to 12,800 from 2005 to 2015. That number is likely to grow because the US government is encouraging more of its young people to visit, study in or work in China. Meanwhile, more 300,000 Chinese study in the US each year. Like their American counterparts, the majority view the US positively.

Having been exposed to each other's culture, values and customs, young Americans and Chinese see themselves as having more in common than differences. The vast majority of people on both sides of Pacific are trying to make enough income to provide themselves and families a better life. Since the young are the future, one can be cautiously optimistic that better US-China relations might be in the offing.

No reason for US-China war

There is no reason for the US or China to fall into the "Thucydides Trap." Neither government is threatening the other nor is it in their interest to do so. Whether one believes it or not, China has always called for cooperation, preferring to work with rather than challenging US hegemony.

Further, there is no reason for the US to attack China and indeed it seems to recognize the benefits of a cooperative relationship. Trump's 100-day plan that he forged with Xi Jinping at his Florida resort is bearing fruit, with the signing of more than US\$250 billion worth of deals for US businesses and securing Chinese cooperation in reining in North Korea's nuclear-weapons development program.

Asia Times is not responsible for the opinions, facts or any media content presented by contributors. In case of abuse, [click here to report](#).



#SINO-US RELATIONS #OPINION #THUCYDIDES TRAP #WAR #CHINA #UNITED STATES #ANTI-CHINA #US-CHINA TRADE #NUCLEAR ARMS #CHINA INVESTMENT #CHINESE MILITARY #DONALD TRUMP #DIALOGUE #GRAHAM ALLISON #PETER NAVARRO #PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Ken Moak

Ken Moak taught economic theory, public policy and globalization at university level for 33 years. He co-authored a book titled China's Economic Rise and Its Global Impact in 2015. His second book, Developed Nations and the Economic Impact of

an underperforming economy? ([William Pesek](#))

05-12-2017 04:09

Opinion // Branding Singapore as a talent hotbed is a passionate goal ([Marcus Loh](#))

04-12-2017 19:55

Opinion // Solving the mystery of Jim Thompson's murder ([Barry Broman](#))

04-12-2017 17:22

Opinion // Why Beijing and Washington will avoid 'Thucydides Trap' ([Ken Moak](#))

04-12-2017 14:59

The furious debate on when ethnic Rohingya first arrived in Rakhine state is set to intensify as Bangladesh and Myanmar begin to negotiate the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees. ([Carlos Sardiña Galache](#))

04-12-2017 14:34

Opinion // A struggling Royal Navy to set sail for East Asia in 2018 ([Emanuele Scimia](#))

04-12-2017 14:00

Employer couple who allegedly abused maid found not guilty ([Asia Times Staff](#))

04-12-2017 13:10

Opinion // When world leaders descend into twitterdom ([Neville Sarony](#))

04-12-2017 12:58

The Cold War era in space was always depicted as involving a looming showdown between the US and the Soviet Union, but China has emerged in the 21st Century as the most likely to upend the US dominance in space. ([Peter J. Brown](#))

04-12-2017 12:35

Opinion // China may once again be the leader in mankind's technical adventure ([Tom Velk And Jade Xiao](#))

04-12-2017 11:21

Singapore Prime Minister

Globalization, was just published by Palgrave McMillan Springer.

Comments

Lee Hsien Loong's authoritarian regime is reimposing a climate of fear similar to his father's after a brief dalliance with more openness. [\(Kirsten Han\)](#)

04-12-2017 11:06

Opinion // When will Hong Kong women speak up about sexism? [\(Andrea Lo\)](#)

04-12-2017 10:50

Chinese enterprises have undergone profound changes in their overseas mergers [\(Asia Times Staff\)](#)

04-12-2017 10:14

Shuffle of state-owned enterprises essential for survival of emerging industries [\(Asia Times Staff\)](#)

04-12-2017 09:41

Huawei Tech Co., a subsidiary of the Chinese technology giant Huawei, has beat out Finland's Nokia for a \$51 million contract to connect the Kuril Islands in Russia's Far East to broadband internet. [\(Asia Times Staff\)](#)

04-12-2017 09:25

China Unicom to set up capital operation subsidiary, says chairman [\(Asia Times Staff\)](#)

04-12-2017 08:40

For investors, sleepless nights come with the territory. But 14,600 of them? That's what those gorging on the 40-year tranche of Alibaba's epic \$7 billion bond sale Thursday may be courting. [\(William Pesek\)](#)

MORE >

