

To: Rep. Meeks, Sen. Menendez, Rep. Pelosi, Sen. Schumer

As the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021 (USICA) moves towards a conference process, we, the undersigned non-governmental organizations, call on leaders in the House and Senate to finalize a bill that responsibly manages tensions between the U.S. and China.

We recognize the value of provisions aimed at supporting domestic manufacturing and science, and share many of the concerns around the increasingly authoritarian Chinese government that motivate the authors of USICA, particularly the deteriorating human rights situation in China. Unfortunately, however, in its current form USICA is one-sidedly confrontational. It advocates an approach that is likely to exacerbate nationalism in China, while feeding the mutually destructive security competition underway between the US and China and undermining the urgent need to enhance bilateral cooperation around shared global challenges including climate change, pandemics, and global poverty. As President Biden has said, “All the major powers of the world have a duty, in my view, to carefully manage their relationships so they do not tip from responsible competition to conflict.... We are not seeking a new Cold War.”

Getting the U.S.–China relationship right is a matter of great importance not only to the people of the US and China, but also to the rest of the world. The zero-sum approach pursued by the Trump administration has left many other countries feeling pressured to choose sides between the U.S. and China. Addressing this concern, Secretary Blinken has said, “The United States won’t force our allies into an us-or-them choice with China.” Any proposed legislation must be consistent with this position, but passage of USICA in its current form threatens to aggravate these pressures.

As you move towards conference, we urge you to amend the following aspects of USICA that contradict the above principles:

1. Approaches that focus on competition and conflict at the expense of cooperation and reassurance, by embracing a framework of zero-sum rivalry and containment;
2. Extreme policies to combat “Chinese Communist Party malign influence” that will predictably encourage U.S. government agencies to engage in profiling against people of Chinese descent;
3. Policies that promote an arms race with China, including arms sales and military support for governments responsible for human rights violations or the stationing of nuclear assets in the region;
4. Policies that pressure countries to make an us-or-them choice between the U.S. and China;
5. Policies that unnecessarily inflame tensions in the Taiwan Strait by undermining the longstanding U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity.

We believe that the following are important statements of U.S. policy that must be incorporated into any final legislation:

1. Support for U.S.–China cooperation to provide universal global public goods, including basic public health protections and greater support for climate mitigation and adaptation efforts worldwide;
2. Support for U.S.–China engagement to reform the global economy, including a significant increase of sustainable investment in developing countries and the creation of a global labor rights system;
3. Support for human rights in China, including expanded refugee protections for pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong and for ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, and a repudiation of the

counterterrorism framework that is used to justify Islamophobia and widespread human rights violations in Xinjiang, in the U.S. War On Terror, and in the policies of many other countries;

4. Enforceable human rights controls on U.S. arms sales and all forms of U.S. military aid;
5. Support for negotiations around arms control as well as safety protocols and confidence-building measures regarding Taiwan and disputes in the South China Sea.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues that are critical to ensuring the U.S. and China resolve bilateral and global challenges through dialogue and cooperation, rather than conflict and one-upmanship.

Sincerely,

1. Justice Is Global
2. Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
3. Win Without War
4. Institute for Policy Studies, New Internationalism Project
5. Women's Action for New Directions (WAND)
6. American Friends Service Committee
7. National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies
8. Friends Committee on National Legislation
9. MADRE
10. Common Defense
11. Indivisible
12. Campaign for Peace Disarmament and Common Security
13. Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action
14. Women Cross DMZ
15. Yemen Relief and Reconstruction Foundation
16. NAKASEC
17. InterReligious Task Force on Central America
18. United for Peace and Justice
19. Peace Action
20. Center for International Policy
21. RootsAction
22. World BEYOND War
23. Environmentalists Against War
24. Committee for a SANE US-China Policy
25. Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington, DC
26. Peace Action New York State
27. Rising Voices
28. OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
29. Randolph Area Peace & Justice Coalition, VT
30. Upper Hudson Peace Action
31. Peace Action WI