

Trump Scared China Into Playing 'Nice' With the US Again

By Victor Davis Hanson

President Donald Trump just met recently with [Chinese leader Xi Jinping](#). And they had a mini summit of sorts, not a long one. But they were trying to resolve the growing tensions over trade and tariffs. And we'll let the analysts and the pundits sort out who won or who lost. But I think most people feel the United States did pretty well.



In other words, although we agreed to lower tariffs, they're still going to be, nominally, 47% on incoming Chinese goods, maybe smaller or less severe in certain areas. But China, in return, is going to drop tariffs against us, restrictions about sending things into China, it's going to buy U.S. soybeans, and it's gonna stop its blockade or embargo of rare earth materials.

And so, there was a give and take. But the question I have is,

why now is China willing, after all of this rhetoric of resistance, why is it willing to even talk to [Donald Trump](#)? I thought we were gonna be in a trade war. I thought China was winning. And the answer is that, I guess, Donald Trump exposed China for what it is.

We had been told by people on the right and left, if you gave China leeway, space, exemptions—forget about them cheating on copyrights, patents; forget about them manipulating currency, dumping product below the price of production, cost of production; forget about their Belt and Road, neo-imperialistic, mercantile system. Forget all about that. They're even more insidious.

The way that they transfer technology that they don't have and cannot produce is to send over 300,000 students and hope that 1% or 2% or 3%—several hundred or several thousand—would then engage in U.S. industry, universities, corporations, and send that expertise back. And they have been doing that for 30 or 40 years.

There's another thing they do. They look and encourage [DEI](#). They really think it's a great idea that we have dropped, over the last five or six years, meritocratic standards because they had done it in their own past.

They know what Mao Zedong did. He took the intellectuals, he took the engineers, the scientific community, put them out in the field and treated them like peasants. This was his Cultural Revolution. Seventy million people died. But more importantly, merit was not important. Ideology—that is communist ideology of the Chinese sort—made people get promoted or fired. And the result was China's economy imploded and people starved.

And China thinks, gosh, this is really good that the United States is doing this. We gotta really encourage how people that are Asian and people that are non-white are maltreated by

the U.S.

They also did it with the open border. They encourage it. They sent fentanyl in there that killed 70,000 people. Since 1999, probably when we first started to be aware and to document these accidental deaths and suicide by fentanyl, 600,000 Americans have died. That's as many people that died in the Civil War. And China was supplying the raw product to the Mexican cartels.

Maybe the biggest con they pulled off against the United States in particular and the West in general was the solar/wind, green agenda, global warming con.

In other words, they captured the solar panel and the wind turbine market by dumping product below the cost of production, putting their Western rivals out of business, and then shipping vast amounts of green energy devices to the West while they did what? They built coal plants. They built nuclear plants. They built oil, hydroelectric plants. Yes, they had some green energy.

But the point I'm making—they wanted us to have high-cost, subsidized, and limited amounts of energy while they did just the opposite and would have more fossil fuels at their disposal for cheaper and more efficient energy, and would further dominate the world global market.

I could go on with Wuhan and their stonewalling about the origins and nature of the COVID-19 virus.

But here's the point. We were in a virtual war with China. They were ignoring any entreaty or effort to adjudicate with the [Biden administration](#), with the Obama administration. Trump comes along and says: These are gonna be your tariffs. No more fentanyl. And ba-da-da, we have a big blowout. And suddenly China, I think, backs down and wants to talk.

Why? Well, because we have a president that took out the

Iranian nuclear facilities. We have a president that said to Israel, you were attacked on Oct. 7, deal with Hezbollah and Hamas and the Houthis as you see fit. We have a president who said to Russian President Vladimir Putin during his first term, do not dare leave your borders. And who, this time, will adjudicate that war. We have a president that has achieved six or seven ceasefires all over the globe.

We have an economy now where inflation is only about 3%. Gross domestic product may be over 3.5% at the end of the year. We were told that the tariffs would create a recession and crash the stock market. The stock market is at all-time highs, record highs.

In other words, we have a very robust economy. We are preeminent on the world stage. Our military does not have a shortfall, as it did in 2023, of 40,000 soldiers. We have completely met all of our recruitment. We're looking at all new types of weaponry—smaller companies, drones, artificial intelligence, robotics. It's a very dynamic time, both in the civilian sphere and in our military.

Add it all up and China says to itself, oh my gosh, we thought that the Americans were asleep. We kept poking it and we woke this dragon up.

And all of a sudden, they think, you know what? We better be careful about buying farmland next to U.S. military bases. I thought they didn't care or they were too weak to stop us. We gotta be careful about sending balloons across the United States. They'll shoot it down in two seconds. We've gotta be very careful about cyberwarfare. We won't go to Alaska and dress down and insult their diplomats, like we did with former national security adviser Jake Sullivan and former Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

In other words, [China](#) is trying to be nice to us because it's afraid. Because it understands that the United States always

had the potential, as a free, consensual society, to be more dynamic, stronger, and have a much greater role in the world.

And then, by our own volition, by our own lack of confidence, by our own divisiveness, we adopted policies that China encouraged because they knew they would weaken us. And suddenly, that's all gone with the wind. It's as if the United States said to China, you think you're winning and you think you're gonna take advantage of us? We're in a renaissance. And all we have to say is, not yet, China. Not yet.

First published in the [Daily Signal](#)