

# Controlling China's Energy Supply Lines Without Declaring Hostility

(Translated)

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At the heart of the contemporary world, major powers are vying for dominance in the economic and technological arenas. The United States and China are confronting each other in what can be described as a struggle for artificial intelligence and economic control. This is not merely a commercial or political rivalry, but a struggle to define the contours of the emerging world order. China's rapid technological advancement and expanding economic influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America threaten America's traditional hegemony and are reshaping the international balance of power. We do not mean to suggest that China is suited to lead the world or impose a new world order; China lacks its own distinct ideology. However, China possesses the weight to curb American hegemony, undermine its ability to lead the world, and usher in a multipolar world.

In this context, every economic decision, every technological deal, and every move in maritime straits and energy corridors becomes a pawn on a strategic chessboard.

China's rise is no longer merely that of an industrial power; it has become a transcontinental economic and technological force. The United States is attempting to manage this rise through indirect pressure to contain Chinese expansion without engaging in direct warfare.

We observe the US stifling Chinese technology by preventing the export of advanced chips and their manufacturing components to China. These advanced chips are used in artificial intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing equipment, and advanced photolithography technologies. The US has worked to reshape supply chains by relocating factories from China to Vietnam, India, and Mexico, and has encouraged domestic manufacturing through legislation such as the CHIPS Act of 2022. It has also forged economic alliances with Asian countries to reduce dependence on China. The goal is to lessen global reliance on Chinese factories, thereby depriving Beijing of a strategic bargaining chip.

Furthermore, the US has strengthened alliances in Asia, such as the Quad and the AUKUS partnership, aiming to create an arc of economic and military containment around China in the Indo-Pacific.

**However, three points remain extremely sensitive: Maritime Routes, Land Energy Corridors, and Taiwan.**

## 1. Pressure on Sea Routes:

Pressure on sea routes is not exerted through an overt blockade, but instead through building deterrence capabilities or creating conflict zones that make China aware that its maritime lifeline can be disrupted if the conflict escalates. This can be termed "controlling the potential for action."

**South China Sea: Curbing Maritime Expansion:** The US exerts pressure by conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) near islands controlled by China, supporting the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia in their maritime disputes, deploying forward operating bases in the Philippines, and conducting joint military exercises near Taiwan. In this way, the US is capable of disrupting China's maritime domain when necessary.

**The Indian Ocean: A Far-Reaching Objective:** With American bases on Diego Garcia, close military cooperation with India, and a strengthened Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) agreement with Australia, the goal is to prevent China from transforming the Indian Ocean into a permanent sphere of influence.

**The Strait of Hormuz: Energy Pressure:** This strait is crucial for a significant portion of Gulf oil destined for China. While the current situation, including the attack on Iran and the threat to close the strait, may be a pressure tactic for Iran, it cannot completely close it. This suggests a potentially protracted conflict, or the possibility of agreements that would allow the US to control and close the strait at will.

**Taiwan: A Maritime Flashpoint:** This is a political and sovereign issue, as well as a crucial maritime chokepoint. The US presence there poses a threat to Chinese trade routes.

This is neither a blockade, nor a direct confrontation. Instead it is what could be termed a deterrent that can be activated. The US is building a network of alliances and bases that enable it to disrupt, delay, and increase the cost of shipping for China. It is not declaring a blockade officially, but rather using this as leverage.

**Strait of Malacca: The Most Dangerous Chokepoint:** Approximately 60% of China's oil imports pass through this strait. US pressure is exerted through a permanent naval presence of its Seventh Fleet, security partnerships with Singapore and Malaysia, and the strengthening of the Quadrilateral Coalition (India, Japan, Australia, and the US). Traffic through the strait can be rapidly restricted when necessary.

## 2. Pressure on Land Routes:

Through its Belt and Road Initiative, China has sought to leave the Malacca route and reduce maritime dependence by establishing a network of roads, railways, and energy pipelines across Central Asia, Russia, and Pakistan.

The American pressure here is not to close the route, but rather to make it more costly, fragile, and less stable.

**Central Asia: Rebalancing China's Flank:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan transport gas, oil, and goods to western China. The indirect American pressure aims to push these countries to diversify their partnerships away from Beijing, support alternative European and American investments, and utilize financial instruments and international institutions to reduce their dependence on China. The goal is to diminish China's monopoly on economic influence in the region.

**Russia: Pressure Through Sanctions:** These sanctions have affected transportation networks, banking transactions, shipping companies, and insurance companies. Their aim is to complicate China's overland trade through Russian territory and increase operational costs. In the future, a way may be found to sever the energy link between Russia and China.

**The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC):** It passes through Pakistan and terminates at the port of Gwadar. The US is currently exerting pressure by supporting regional balances with India, monitoring Chinese investments in Pakistani infrastructure, and applying financial pressure on Islamabad through international institutions. The goal is to keep the project vulnerable to domestic and security vulnerabilities. It could be affected by any conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which could lead to the complete destruction of the corridor, if the US deems it necessary, as a result of a regional conflict between the two countries.

**Iran, Considered a Key Land-Based Energy Hub:** The current war could indirectly undermine any solutions for accessing energy through Iran to China. The chaos and war could lead to pipelines and transport routes being cut off unexpectedly, delivering an indirect blow to China when needed.

Land routes are not like sea routes; a land route cannot be easily closed. However, this could be described as a strategy of indirectly weakening China's land-based energy network.

## 3. Finally, the Taiwan issue:

This is the most sensitive point, considered a tipping point. Taiwan lies at the heart of the first island chain that encircles China by sea. If Taiwan were to completely break free from China's orbit, China would lose its strategic maritime depth. Moreover, Taiwan is a global hub for advanced chip manufacturing, and any instability there would paralyze the global economy and could ignite a war if China were to seize it, or if formal independence were declared from Taipei, or if there were direct US military intervention. Therefore, this issue exists in a gray area of strategic ambiguity, and Taiwan is the knot where all these threads could converge.

Ultimately, America does not appear inclined to engage in a direct war with China at present. Instead, America seems preoccupied with engineering a strategic environment that makes pressure a readily available and complete option to be used at any moment. America is not declaring a blockade, but it is redrawing energy maps, redistributing military bases, building naval alliances in the South China Sea, supporting alternative routes to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and restricting sensitive technologies without completely severing trade. America is not closing doors to China, but it is narrowing the corridors. America is not firing a bullet, but it has its finger on the trigger. America raises the cost of China's resilience and keeps containment options open.

Thus, a landscape of dominating power emerges, reshaping its surrounding environment, so that all Chinese progress becomes conditional, every step calculated, and every move costly. The reality with China becomes one of undeclared pressure and conflict without war, at least for the time being.

**The question then becomes:** Will China withstand this pressure? Will the equation change? Are there other factors at play that could turn the tables? These questions remain open to answers over time.