

Preventing China's Rise: The "America COMPETES Act of 2022" Risks Turning Taiwan into the Next Front Line

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The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science (COMPETES) Act of 2022 only needs to be passed by the President and it will become law. The bill sounds innocuous but the contents of it are not. While the bill is partly about promoting U.S. science and technology it is just as much about preventing the rise of China's 1.5 billion as well as the Global South who have democratically partnered with China to build a new world through the Belt and Road Initiative.

In attempting to prevent China's rise the bill pays special attention to preventing peaceful cross straits reunification. This could lead to chaos on both ends of the Eurasian continent while the far-off U.S. benefits.

Already, in the west, the Ukrainian front has been opened at the expense of Europeans who are now forced to buy U.S. gas. All the while, as reported in "The Global Times", the U.S. has increased its purchase of Russian crude oil by 43 percent. In the East a similar strategy is at play. Taiwanese and European tech companies have, for some time, been forced to limit their sales to mainland China while the U.S. has made special tech provisions to continue selling tech.

If the America COMPETES Act of 2022 is passed then stoking tensions with China by playing the Taiwan card will become U.S. law!

If a war can also be sparked in the east then the U.S. will, as in Ukraine, seek to profit geopolitically and economically by fuelling tensions through weapons sales and "sitting it out" while others are sacrificed in a proxy war.

Many do not realise the seriousness of the "America COMPETES Act of 2022" because, on March 28th, its contents were quietly replaced "lock stock" with the more aggressive

“United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021” which has yet to pass the House. Unfortunately, looking at the bill it is less about competing and more about making sure there are no other competitors.

The bill is more about preventing China’s rise as it is about improving U.S. technology and science. As a point in case the bill references the word “science” 582 times; “technology” 811 times; China 666 times, and Chinese 202 times. Indeed, “America” is only raised 297 times.

There is also an obsession with China’s regions such as Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. “Taiwan”, for example, is referenced 185 times which is bizarre considering this bill, concerned with “technology” and “science”, doesn’t even mention “California” the centrepiece of U.S. hi-tech once. Imagine the consternation that Americans would feel if China was on the verge of signing a bill into law that mentioned how they were going to deal a blow to U.S. states!

One way the U.S. plans to deal with Taiwan is to “recognize Taiwan as a vital part of the United States Indo-Pacific strategy.” However, what can this achieve except for heightened tensions? Beijing might consider this as crossing the sovereign red line, especially when the bill calls for “regular transfers of defence articles to Taiwan.”

Just like talk of NATO expanding east exacerbated tensions with Russia and goaded it into military action this bill will exacerbate Chinese concerns that the U.S. is cooking up a similar stratagem. Of course, for China the existential crisis is more pronounced considering Taiwan is recognised, even by the U.S., as part of China’s territory, albeit with a different de-facto government.

As such, this bill, due to heightening tensions, rather than protecting Taiwan could throw them into a proxy war as Beijing using force rushes in to protect its integratory fearing peaceful reunification will be impossible if the U.S. makes Taiwan a de-facto colony. If war breaks out, the U.S. on the other side of the Pacific, would profit handsomely especially as the bill urges “Taiwan to increase its defence spending.”

Section 3215 of the bill entitled “Treatment of Taiwan government” states that the U.S. will drop the practice of “referring to the government in Taiwan as the Taiwan authorities” and instead engage with government departments as “the legitimate representative of the people of Taiwan.” This has the terrifying implication of “tiptoeing” to full recognition of Taiwan as an independent state and destroying the bedrock of peace in East Asia which has been the “One China Policy.”

Bizarrely, the bill goes on to say: “Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as entailing restoration of diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) or altering the United States Government’s position on Taiwan’s international status.” As such, the U.S. stance is further obfuscated, which risks misjudgement on both sides. While for the U.S. this may be a “play of words” for those on both sides of the Taiwan Strait these words threaten their basic peace and security.

The ripping up of the “One China Policy” and the goading towards war is even more obvious considering the bill will give legitimacy to the Republic of China’s official emblems such as flags in official ceremonies.

The bill even suggests it will meddle with Taiwan’s media and political institutions. For example, there will be “media training for Taiwan officials and other Taiwan entities targeted by disinformation campaigns.” However, as we have seen with the fake Uygur genocide claims, which have been thoroughly debunked by independent Western media, such as the Gray Zone, the masters of disinformation do not reside in Beijing. As such, this “media training” will add another layer media distortion onto Taiwan.

Even Taiwan’s claim of democracy is at threat. Traditionally, liberal Democracies have the problem of being captured by capital which is able to fund the media and pay off politicians. Of course, the U.S. as the prime capitalist state with the most capital and best “logistics” for influencing elections is no stranger to capturing foreign elections. However, the American COMPETES 2022 act goes a step further by seeking to plant “fellows” directly into Taiwan’s governing system.

This could amount to Taiwan’s governing organs being completely captured by a foreign entity to observe and dictate Taiwan’s policies. Unlikely, would such a parasite tolerate those who sympathise with China’s peaceful unification. This is because the “disaster of peace” would disrupt revenue coming from the U.S.’ traditional field of “technological excellence” which is the profits garnered from advanced weapons sales.

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