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The Latest Data Proves that Chinese-US Trade Is Mutually Beneficial

By Andrew Korybko
Global Research, October 29, 2021

Region: Asia, USA
Theme: Global Economy

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The latest trade data shows that the American business community doesn't agree with continuing former US President Trump's counterproductive trade war, nor are they boycotting Chinese products due to the tensions that incumbent US President Biden has provoked with the People's Republic.

China released its latest trade data in early October showing that trade surged 35.4% from January to September compared to the same period last year to reach $543 billion. This should be celebrated by both sides despite the administration of former US President Donald Trump and his successor Joe Biden regarding it as a sensitive issue. The reason for this is that such data is a sign of mutually beneficial relations considering the economic and geopolitical context.

Regarding the first, this proves that China is playing a major role in helping American retailers refill bare shelves, according to unnamed economists quoted by the Associated Press. The US' ongoing supply chain crunch is beyond China's control to fix because it's due to domestic issues related to the American labor market and other such factors, but it nevertheless shows that Chinese imports are beneficial for that country's consumers. Without them, their economic crisis would be much more challenging.

Concerning the geopolitical context, the latest trade data shows that the American business community doesn't agree with continuing former US President Trump's counterproductive trade war, nor are they boycotting Chinese products due to the tensions that incumbent US President Biden has provoked with the People's Republic. This community is the epitome of pragmatism and their reasonable interests should be listened to in Washington. Policymakers must realize that trade can de-escalate tensions, not exacerbate them.

These two observations combine to inspire a new path forward for Chinese-American relations. Quite clearly, the US government's anti-Chinese hostility has had no negative affect on bilateral trade. To the contrary, as the latest data confirms, trade remains surprisingly strong. The latest trade data demonstrates the complex economic

interdependence between China and the US, which has been made all the more important as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Imagining for a moment that former US President Trump had succeeded in "decoupling" their economies or that the business community boycotted Chinese products out of solidarity with incumbent US President Biden, the economic situation for ordinary Americans would have been much worse than it presently is. It's precisely because those two leaders' anti-Chinese policies have failed in the economic sense that American living standards haven't plummeted even more. China is therefore responsible for helping the American people.

Some might deny this "politically incorrect" claim for self-interested ideological reasons, but it's undeniable considering the two contexts that were earlier examined. Although American policymakers might be loath to admit it, they nevertheless acknowledge the positive role that China is playing in helping their people, even if they hadn't ever intended for it to do so. This gives cautious optimism that they might not further escalate the hitherto static trade war between them for pragmatism's sake, at least not in the near future, hopefully.

Of course, the influential military-industrial complex's congressional lobbies and the neoconservative ideologues in the US government have selfish reasons to hope that relations comprehensively worsen between China and the US, but policymakers must realize how counterproductive this would be. The ruling Democrats cannot afford for the American economy to suffer any more than it already is by curtailing trade ties with China if they hope to retain control of Congress during next year's midterm elections.

The ideal scenario would be for the Biden Administration to seriously consider a meaningful rapprochement with China. The continuance of former US President Trump's anti-Chinese policies has failed to "decouple" their economies, which are more intertwined than ever before and at such a crucial moment in world history at that. Trade should form the basis upon which bilateral ties can improve. Selfish forces mustn't be allowed to sabotage this promising possibility. Hopefully common sense, pragmatism, and mutual interests will prevail.

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***Andrew Korybko** is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

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