

# US 'othering' of Chinese a risky prelude

By Franz Gayl

**M**erriam Webster dictionary defines the word "othering" as an act wherein a race or culture is made to appear as "a large, uniform mass, rather than a diverse group of individuals... treating people from another group as less human than one's own group." Historically, "othering" has served as a conditioning mechanism to dehumanize US adversaries, preparing normally empathetic men and women to act with less discrimination and greater brutality in war.

Othering of the Chinese people is evident in recent US news media in the form of a mix of unverified rumors, disinformation and selective exclusion of contradictory facts. Meanwhile, the island of Taiwan's secession champions in the US Congress have nurtured the absurd public perception that the US-emulating people aboard the island of Taiwan are "non-Chinese" in ethnic identity.

The apparent sophistication and coordination of Chinese othering are indications that some in the US are working to desensitize Americans to the certain horrors of a war with China over Taiwan. Its effects are already being witnessed in American society. Despite a presidential-level denouncement, racially motivated assaults on Chinese and Asians generally are sharply increasing. The dehumanization of our future foe is in full swing to the delight of China-averse special interests.

Some argue that a US war with China over Taiwan would be a just war, claiming the "non-Chinese" island citizenry deserves our protection, not

just ideological support. Others will go further and assert that the US nuclear umbrella needs to be extended to encompass the island. They try to make the desperate case that the island of Taiwan is the last bastion of American values in Southeast Asia, and the final barricade that contains China.

The nuclear weapons theme deserves a closer look. Senior US military leaders at different times in the 20th century glibly suggested the employment of nuclear weapons to regain initiative in conventional conflicts with non-nuclear Asian nations. In addition to the island of Taiwan, these included conflicts in and with Vietnam, Korea, and China. Similarly, the employment of firebombing and nuclear weapons against a densely populated Japan was rationalized without significant opposition.

Today hawkish members of Congress, most of whom have not served their country in uniform, casually resurrect such options as it pertains to supporting the island of Taiwan's split from China. It is easy for them to talk tough on the matter as most don't know the sacrifices of Service, and perhaps because of lacking ethnic identification with Chinese and other Asian races and cultures. This thoughtless devaluation of Asian casualties to mere nuclear attrition statistics results from the same sort of American othering seen in the 20th century.

In a war, the small island of Taiwan would erupt into a battleground with an intensity

unknown since the world wars.

All parties have known that the island's citizenry would be devastated far beyond the value of attempting to secede from China. Since this is known by the US Congress in advance, it illuminates the reality that the Chinese aboard the island of Taiwan are expendable. The issue of the island province is not and never was about protecting its people. Instead, it is all about the US striving to maintain its hegemonic reach during a period of decline in global influence.

This difference in the US perspectives on Asian and European lives is nothing new to any overseas or indigenous Asian citizen. To contort the present American devaluation and othering into a dubious justification for violating China's internal affairs and sovereignty is futile and transparent. It also portends that a fight over the island of Taiwan will rapidly devolve into a primitive, brutal, unrestricted war that

has every appearance of, and is at its core an imperial US expedition.

As an American, my priority is US national interest. Attempting to support the renegade island of Taiwan's secession is directly contrary to the US national interest as we know in advance we will lose. Even in defeat many politicians, conservative ideologues, financially incentivized journalists, and special interests such as the US defense industry would benefit, just as a similar cabal did after Vietnam. But Taiwan secession is a transparently shallow cause with no path to victory. In fact, historical precedent shows that the US will lose primarily because the American public will see through the fraudulent deadly farce, but only after the unspeakable tragedy unfolds.

In the end, China's Province of Taiwan will always mean more to the physically proximate, ethnically identical, and nationalistically fueled China of over 1.4 billion, than it will to the distant, over-extended, and above all falsely incentivized US of 350 million. The heaviest burden of the tragedy of war will fall on the young, patriotic men and women who volunteered to serve in the US military in the faith that an assigned cause is legitimate and worthy of their sacrifice. Unfortunately, a war between the US and China over the island of Taiwan would be a complete betrayal of their good faith.

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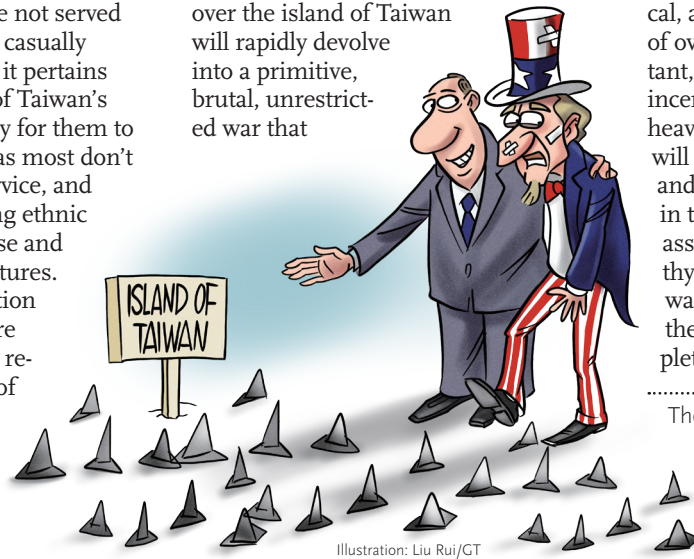


Illustration: Liu Rui/GT

## With no historical or hegemonic burden, China has room to mediate in Mid-East

By Liu Zhongmin

For the past two decades, the US was the dominant power in the Middle East. Since the "Arab Spring", the US has reflected on the possibility that its decline in power might be rooted in the Iraq war. Its commitment to the Middle East has dwindled since then, but it has posed more challenges to Washington – while the US is reluctant to invest more in the Middle East, it still wants to maintain its leadership in the region. Later, the US made profits by selling arms to the Middle East and became increasingly utilitarian.

The Quartet, comprised of the EU, Russia, the UN and the US as the main parties to facilitate the Middle East peace process negotiations, has become almost paralyzed because American unilateralism has made it difficult to resolve the Israel-Palestine issue.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is partly the remaining mess of the Trump era.

Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has almost overturned the basic international consensus on the issue.

It is worth mentioning that the Resolution 242(1967) of the UN, which acknowledges the claim of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the region, is the basis for settling the Israel-Palestine conflict. China also supports the establishment of an independent State of Palestine that enjoys full sovereignty on the basis of this resolution. China has no intention to compete with the US in the Middle East. On many international issues, China is increasingly engaged or willing to play a constructive role, but not to challenge anyone. China's activities in the Middle East are more about economic and trade development.

However, China's involvement in the region is not to fill any voids in the Middle East left by the US. Beijing is fully

aware that if it participates in Middle East affairs with competitive or geopolitical purposes, it will be detrimental to the stability of the region, which will also harm China's interests.

Washington now has little room to mediate a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in the Middle East. And President Joe Biden knows very well that Washington will face pressure from all sides as long as the Middle East issue is included in a multilateral mechanism like the UN. Washington is no longer capable of leading the solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict, nor does it have a solid plan in place. Therefore, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to the region, which started on Tuesday, has only limited effects.

China plays mostly a role of persuasion and peacemaking in solving the issue between Palestine and Israel. It has established friendly relations with many Arab countries, including the establishment

of an "innovative and comprehensive partnership" with Israel, and a long-standing friendship with Palestine. In this way, it is able to speak to both Israel and Palestine. On May 17, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi put forth a four-point proposal for peace with the current Israel-Palestine conflict.

With its ability to deal with all sides, China has a clear advantage in engaging the solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict. Historically it was not involved in any dispute in the Middle East. Nor does it favor Israel as the US does. It does not have the "historical liability" of colonialism and hegemony.

China has a long history of friendship with all parties in the Middle East, which provides a good basis for it to exert its power as a member of the international community. In March, China and Iran signed a 25-year agreement to enhance comprehensive cooperation in a range of fields

including trade. China also has gained some experience in dealing with international issues after its involvement in hotspot issues, such as Sudan and Afghanistan.

Beijing still has room to cooperate with Washington on the Middle East issue, and the core measure to end the conflict is through multilateralism under the UN framework. As Washington engages less and less in Middle East affairs, some Western media outlets are trying to create this narrative: China's involvement in solving the Afghanistan issue and the Palestine-Israel conflict is aimed at competing with the US. This is a trap we should be wary of.

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