

Is the U.S. Ready for a Hot War with China?

Part #1: This is the wrong debate.

A wide range of opinions exist inside the Pentagon, the White House, and Congress on two questions relative to the China threat that are becoming *more hotly debated* by the day in open hearings, in classified meetings behind closed doors, and in the press.

Is the U.S. ready for a hot war with China? When, if ever, will this hot war begin?

Is the U.S. ready? – A lot of widely published and discussed data supports the position that the U.S. is *not* ready for a hot war with China.

A significant percentage of U.S. naval vessels is not fully operational. The Army has drastically depleted its supply of munitions by providing support to Ukraine, and refurbishing the U.S. stockpile to pre-Ukraine war levels will take years. The Air Force is cannibalizing parts from older platforms to keep current platforms in the air and battle-ready. The Marine Corps leadership has stated that we don't know what China is going to develop or deploy next. We must just wait and see and hope that we can figure out a way to counter the threat before we must engage it. China has now surpassed the U.S. in terms of the number of fixed and mobile land-based ICBM launchers. To worsen matters, the services are far below their respective recruitment targets for the year.

For all those who say the U.S. is not ready, a significant percentage say we are more than ready. U.S. troops, systems, and equipment are battle tested, while China's are not. China's troops, systems, and equipment, many made of leading-edge untested technologies, have not had the real test of warfare. China may turn out to be a high-tech "paper tiger" just like Russia in the present Ukraine/Russia war.

Others maintain that China's economy is so weak and overextended, or that the CCP's or Xi Jinping's control on the country is so tentative, that China is going to collapse any minute now. We just have to wait.

When will it begin? – An even wider range of opinions exist on when a hot war with China will occur, but the number of decision makers and thought leaders in and outside DC who believe a hot war is inevitable continues to increase. For them, it's just a matter of time.

Now that the powers that be finally acknowledge the threat of a hot war with China, attention has turned to various proposed military deterrence strategies. To execute a deterrence strategy, a country requires three capabilities. The country must:

- #1 Possess the *capability* to do damage to the adversary that the adversary sees as unacceptable to its future.
- #2 Be *willing* and able to fully deploy this capability against the adversary.
- #3 Be able to *convey* to the adversary, in *unequivocal concrete terms* that the country has the capability to cause the adversary unacceptable damage and is willing and able to use this capability against the adversary if the adversary does not comply with the country's *clearly expressed* requirements.

It's the wrong debate. – Although the U.S. leadership and thought leaders appear to believe that correctly answering these two questions is the key to the U.S. effectively addressing the China threat, the reality is that neither of these questions matter. Why? They do not address the *underlying reality* of China's approach to engaging and winning the U.S./China engagement as determined within Reagan's Socrates Project, which subsequent data have continuously confirmed.

The underlying reality is two-fold.

First, China's military, economic, political, etc., strengths relative to the U.S. continue to increase *unabated* with no indication that this will change. The U.S. has identified China as a near-peer threat and has implemented programs to match this level of threat. In addition, the U.S. is on track to execute additional programs to address China that are based upon the same approach as the present programs that have failed to thwart China's growing strengths.

Second, China will not engage in a hot war with the U.S until China has determined, from hard intelligence data, that China possesses the strengths required to fully dominate the U.S. in that war.

China has had decades to establish a mosaic of direct and indirect paths throughout the U.S. and its major public and private organizations for a range of functions including tracking U.S. present and future military capabilities. China has been able to work so successfully at this mosaic because the U.S. saw China as an up-and-coming favored nation – not as an adversary.

So, going back to the military deterrence strategies the U.S. is proposing to prevent a hot war with China, the following is obvious. The U.S. deterrence strategies are *guaranteed* to fail. Why? At some point soon, the U.S. will no longer have the military competitive advantage relative to China to accomplish the first requirement for executing any of the proposed deterrence strategies.

So, the correct answers to the questions are simple:

#1 No, the U.S. is not and will not be ready for a hot war with China.

#2 The hot war will happen when China is highly confident that they will win, which on the present course, is guaranteed to occur and is highly likely to be in the very near-term.

In other words, the U.S. will not be ready for a hot war when it occurs because China will not let it occur until China knows that it will win.

So, what *are* the correct questions to ask? Part #2

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Part #2: This is the correct discussion.

The correct, required discussion – The correct discussion is *why* is it that China's strength in the full range of competitive environments (e.g., military, economic, social) relative to the U.S. continues to increase *unabated*? And what can the U.S. do to *ensure* that China's strength *never* gets to the level at which China will engage in a hot war with the U.S.?

As determined within Reagan's Socrates Project, U.S. economic and military decline is the result of the U.S. transitioning from *technology-based* to *finance-based* planning that began at the end of World War II. China recognized this early and has been fully exploiting this for decades.

This is the "*why*" of no matter what the U.S. does, China's competitive advantage continues to increase unabated.

In finance-based planning, the foundation of all decision-making is the optimization of the utilization of funds.

In technology-based planning, the foundation of all decision-making is exploiting the technology more effectively than the competition/adversary to excel at satisfy one or more customer needs for a true competitive advantage in the marketplace or on the battlefield. How effectively a country or an organization exploits the technology relative to the competitor/adversary dictates and enables for the full optimization of the *amount* of other resources required (e.g., funds, manpower, natural resources) and how one must deploy them to generate the required competitive advantage.

Finance-based planning is incapable of providing a logical construct of the competitive environment. It only appears to because it measures success after the fact in the same terms that it used as the foundation for the initial decisions – the optimization of funds. What occurs in between – what transpires within the competitive environment – is a "black box," a "secret sauce."

Technology-based planning does provide a logical construct of the competitive environment because it is based upon the effective exploitation of the one resource – technology – which fully dictates how one can exploit all the other resources to accomplish a function. Technology, correctly defined, is *any* application of science to accomplish a function.

Technology-based planning is what Japan used to transform itself into an industrial giant twenty short years after being a burned-out hulk with no resources after WWII. It is what the Soviet Union used to match and, in some cases, surpass the U.S. militarily from an economy that was considerable smaller than the U.S.'s. And it is now what China has used to become a superpower faster than any country in the history of the world.

China's technology-based strategy enables China's economic and military competitiveness ecosystem of public and private organizations to execute what amounts to a highly adroit and coherent game of worldwide offensive and defensive technology exploitation *chess*.

So, no matter how much the U.S. increases or optimizes the *funds* for exploiting the technology (e.g., R&D funding), China will nimbly outmaneuver the U.S. in the technology exploitation to negate the value of those funds – i.e., prevent the U.S. technology exploitation from generating minimal. If any, competitive advantage for the U.S.

As long as the U.S. continues to execute finance-based planning against China's technology-based planning, China will continue to increase the level and the areas in which it has a competitive advantage. The present U.S. finance-based actions will, at best, only delay the hot war with China until China knows it will win the war, or the U.S. capitulates to China without a war because China's competitive advantage throughout the various competitive environments is so overwhelming.

Required solution – The U.S. must transition *back* to technology-based planning, but not to the level executed within the U.S. before WWII. The U.S. must adopt a level that is far beyond what China can execute today and for several generations.

Technology-based planning makes evolutionary leaps forward every so many decades – the Scientific Revolution, the Industrial Revolution – and whatever country generates and leads the evolutionary leap becomes and remains a world superpower for generations.

Within the Socrates Project, the determination was that the next evolutionary leap of technology-based planning was the *Automated Innovation Revolution*. That is where the process for exploiting technology – development, acquisition, and utilization – advances from a low efficiency, high uncertainty trial-and-error *art* (as the world, including China, presently executes) into a high efficiency and certainty reproducible concrete *science*.

The Socrates Project developed the means – the Automated Innovation System – to enable the U.S. to generate and lead the world in the next evolution leap of technology-based planning. It enables a country or an organization to exploit – develop, acquire, and utilize - technology with unprecedented *speed, efficiency, and agility* for an unmatched competitive advantage.

President Reagan's highest priority initiatives (e.g., Star Wars, dismembering the Soviet Union) validated the System, which was to be deployed for use by all U.S. public and private organizations. It was on track to fully contain China when President Bush entered office and abolished the Socrates Project.

The recently passed CHIPS and Science Act is a prime example of a major U.S. *finance-based* planning effort to rebuild U.S. economic health and military might to counter the China threat. The Act was designed to significantly increase funding levels and optimize the distribution of funds throughout the U.S. integrated circuit industry as well as provide funding for R&D and other aspects of technology exploitation for those areas considered critical to America's future.

But as is the case with the other U.S. financed-based initiatives to counter the China threat, China will easily and effortlessly outmaneuver the U.S. in the actual exploitation of the technology that the initiative is funding. As a result, the U.S. will be further in debt with minimum, if any, significant increase in its competitive advantage in the marketplace or on the battlefield.

By deploying the Socrates Automated Innovation System, all US public and private organizations who are either directly or indirectly using CHIPS Act funds would have the ability to execute technology-based planning as the foundation for decision-making. It will enable the U.S. organizations to outmaneuver China and its organizations adroitly offensively and defensively in the exploitation of the technology to generate the maximum competitive advantage from the CHIPS Act funding and all other resources (e.g., manpower, natural resources) for the maximum competitive advantage relative to China and its allies.

Results – Deploying the Socrates System as U.S. national asset will enable the U.S. to consistently outmaneuver China in the exploitation of technology – high-tech to low-tech – to become and remain dominant for generations in the full range of competitive environments for all present and yet to emerge future domains. China will be fully incapable of engaging the U.S. in a hot or cold war, and they will know it.