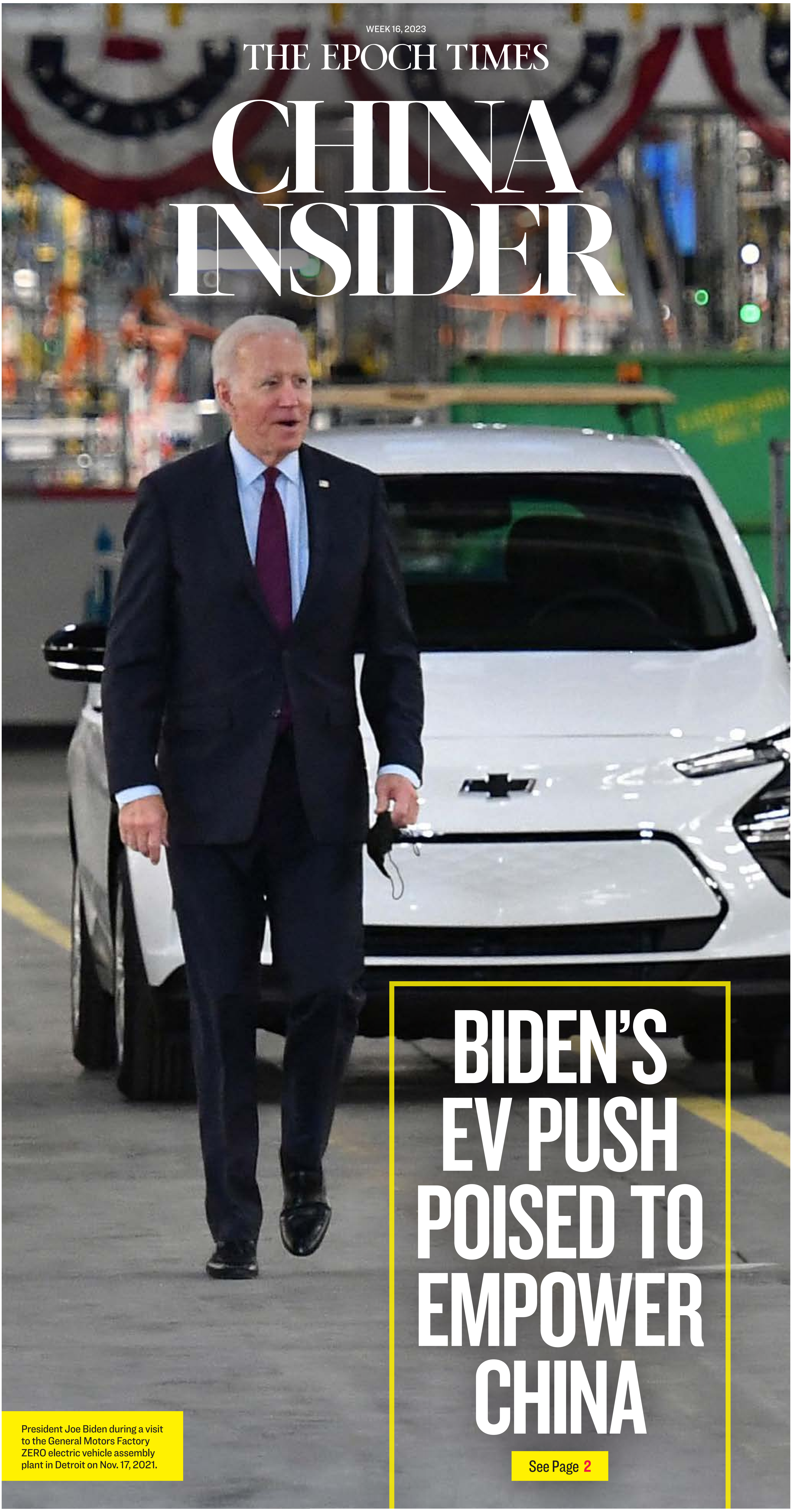
WEEK 16, 2023
THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER



MANDEL NGAN/GETTY IMAGES

President Joe Biden during a visit to the General Motors Factory ZERO electric vehicle assembly plant in Detroit on Nov. 17, 2021.

BIDEN'S EV PUSH POISED TO EMPOWER CHINA

See Page 2

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 16, 2023

KARIM SAHIB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Emirates check a vehicle manufactured by electric carmaker Tesla during a ceremony in Dubai on Feb. 13, 2017.

CLIMATE POLICIES

IN-DEPTH: Biden's EV Plan Could Be Key to China's Global Economic Dominance

NATHAN WORCESTER

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) "strongest-ever" vehicle emissions standards designed to drive mass adoption of electric cars within a decade will increase the United States' dependence on China, experts warn.

"It benefits the Chinese Communist Party because they control the critical minerals supply chain that is going to be necessary to build out the batteries for those electric vehicles," said Mandy Gunasekara, director of the Center for Energy and Conservation at the Independent Women's Forum, a conservative think tank, in an April 17 interview with The Epoch Times.

Gunasekara served as chief of staff in the EPA under former President Donald Trump. She argued that the Trump administration did a better job of integrating environmental, economic, and strategic considerations than the Biden team, including when it came to the critical minerals used in electric vehicles (EVs) and other technologies.

"There was a concerted effort to ensure we weren't setting regulations that shut down industrial activity here in the United States, knowing good and well that productivity doesn't go away—it just materializes somewhere else, and typically a place like China," she said.

The agency anticipates that with the new standards, two-thirds of new light-body vehicles will be electric by the model year 2032, up from less than six percent today.

The proposed rules, which would go into effect with cars from model year 2027 onward, target tailpipe emissions from light-, medium-, and heavy-body vehicles.

The EPA claims the standards would "significantly reduce climate and other harmful air pollution, unlocking significant benefits for public health, especially in communities that have borne the greatest burden of poor air quality."

'Industrial Suicide'

"This is industrial suicide," said James Kennedy, a U.S. mine owner and rare earths expert, in an April 17 interview with The Epoch Times.

"By design, their goal is to wipe out, to destroy, to effectively terminate the massive economic investment that the auto companies have made in the internal combustion engine," he said.

He outlined China's long-range, strategic plan to dominate the mining and refining of rare earths, as well as the production of downstream technologies.

"No one in the West will accept the reality that China has total domain control at every level," he added.

The rare earth metals terbium, holmium, and dysprosium are one key choke point for Chinese control over EV production.

Kennedy explained that the elements enable neodymium magnets to function at the high temperatures found in the motors of electric cars.

"China is the only country in the world, period, exclamation point, that can separate those materials," he said.

U.S. Climate Envoy John Kerry has emphasized what he sees as the urgent need to cooperate with China in fighting climate change, recently informing Axios that talks between the powers have stalled due to escalating geostrategic tensions.

In Gunasekara's view, the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded by banking on the Democrats' climate agenda, which generally goes far beyond what Republicans advocate.

"They're the ones who, at the end of the day, get to profit off of our bad policies," she said.

Conflict Within Biden Administration

Nadia Schadlow, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute who served on the National Security Council under Trump, thinks the Biden administration is not entirely off track regarding critical minerals and other materials that go into EVs.

"We should be giving the administration credit for pushing the onshoring of these important and critical inputs," she told The Epoch Times in an April 17 interview.

Along these lines, the Department of Energy on April 4 announced $16 million in funding for a rare earth and critical minerals extraction and separation refinery.

"President Biden's Investing in America agenda is helping reduce our overreliance on adversarial nations and positioning the country as a global manufacturing leader," Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said in an accompanying statement.

Last February, the administration announced $35 million in funding to Nevade-based MP Materials, which operates the country's only rare earths mine in Mountain Pass, California.

Rare earths also figured in Biden's February 2021 executive order on America's supply chains, and in February 2022 remarks at a roundtable on bolstering America's supply chains, when he listed them among the critical materials that are "badly needed for so many American products."

"The problem is, they're in conflict with some of the other parts of the administration that are less concerned about the competition with China and more focused on traditional environmental issues," Schadlow said.

Like others who spoke with The Epoch Times, she drew attention to the slow pace of mine permitting.

"If there is a disconnect with actual capabilities–whether charging stations around the country or minerals sources in the United States or in allied countries–then the timing just does not seem to work," she said.

Gunasekara stressed the need for effective presidential leadership, given China's fundamental challenge to the United States.

"I do think it's going to take a strategic initiative from the top to address this situation, because it hasn't been addressed in past years. There's a lot of small decisions that will have to be made to ensure that the United States isn't shifting reliance on OPEC into reliance on the Chinese Communist Party," she said.

The EPA, in response to a query from The Epoch Times on whether the new rules will aid China, defended the proposed standards, saying that they are "in line with the direction the American auto industry is already going." The industry has made significant investments in zero-emissions vehicles, which the administration is building upon, an EPA spokesperson said.

"In addition, there is enormous investment in zero-emissions vehicle technology and chip manufacturing, for example there has been more than $120 billion of private investments in EVs and batteries in the United States since President Biden has taken office," the spokesperson said.

"With President Biden's investment in accelerating American zero emission vehicles production, the U.S. is positioned to lead the clean vehicles future."

'China Empowerment Plan'

"The Biden EPA plan is the China empowerment plan," said Marc Morano, executive director of ClimateDepot.com, a project of the Washington-based think tank Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, in an April 17 interview with The Epoch Times.

Morano, like other experts who spoke with The Epoch Times, questioned the EPA's ambitious projections of large-scale EV adoption within ten years.

"The plan, if it actually goes forward, will create chaos in the automobile industry," Morano said.

Kennedy agreed, saying "They are so unrealistic."

He pointed out that the mass adoption of EVs and other green technologies would require extraordinarily high quantities of lithium, rare earths, copper, and other minerals.

"There's just not enough of these materials to go around," he said.

Kennedy also voiced skepticism about claims that China's hold on rare earths has relaxed, now that their production has fallen to as low as 60 percent of the global total.

"China raised the margins available to resource producers to the point where they would go out, develop projects, and start shipping to China. China didn't want to pollute its country anymore or exhaust its resources, so it created a margin opportunity for producers–and that is where we're at at this exact moment," he said.

He provided The Epoch Times with a prereleased paper that he wrote with other experts from around the planet, including rare earth industry insiders who chose to remain anonymous out of concern over the professional consequences of highlighting China's dominance in that sector.

In it, Kennedy and his colleagues argued that China is positioned to "disrupt the production of close to 100 percent of the world's REE [rare earth element]-dependent technologies and products, including U.S. weapon systems."

"Rare earths are critical to many military systems. You're going to see the same set of problems of needing to loosen permitting requirements in that domain as well," Schadlow, of the Hudson Institute, told The Epoch Times.

Yet, even just when it comes to commercial vehicles, China's monopolistic power over critical minerals gives them leverage–and not just over the United States and its domestic automakers.

"At the end of the day, they control the density of the economy of the adversarial country. They quit shipping this material to General Motors or Tesla or Lexus–they're literally holding a threat over all of these countries," Kennedy, the mine owner, told The Epoch Times.

The Bigger Picture

Morano said that the EPA's proposed rules are just the latest effort to boost EVs and end gas-powered cars, not just in the United States, but around the world.

Notably, the EPA rolled them out one year after British climate economist Baron Nicholas Stern told the World Bank that the planet needs "clarity on timescales" for banning the sale of such vehicles.

Oxford, England, has led the way in the "15-minute city" concept, which restricts free markets and free movement in the name of going green.

Meanwhile, various localities in the United States are banning or otherwise heavily restricting the construction of new gas stations.

Morano thinks the rules will raise the demand for used cars, as Americans struggle to buy expensive new electric vehicles, all as the cost of charging increases too.

"You can look to Cuba to find out what it's like to have a raging used car market because that's what we're looking at here," he said.

Kennedy said, "It's all for an idea that Mother Nature can't sustain."

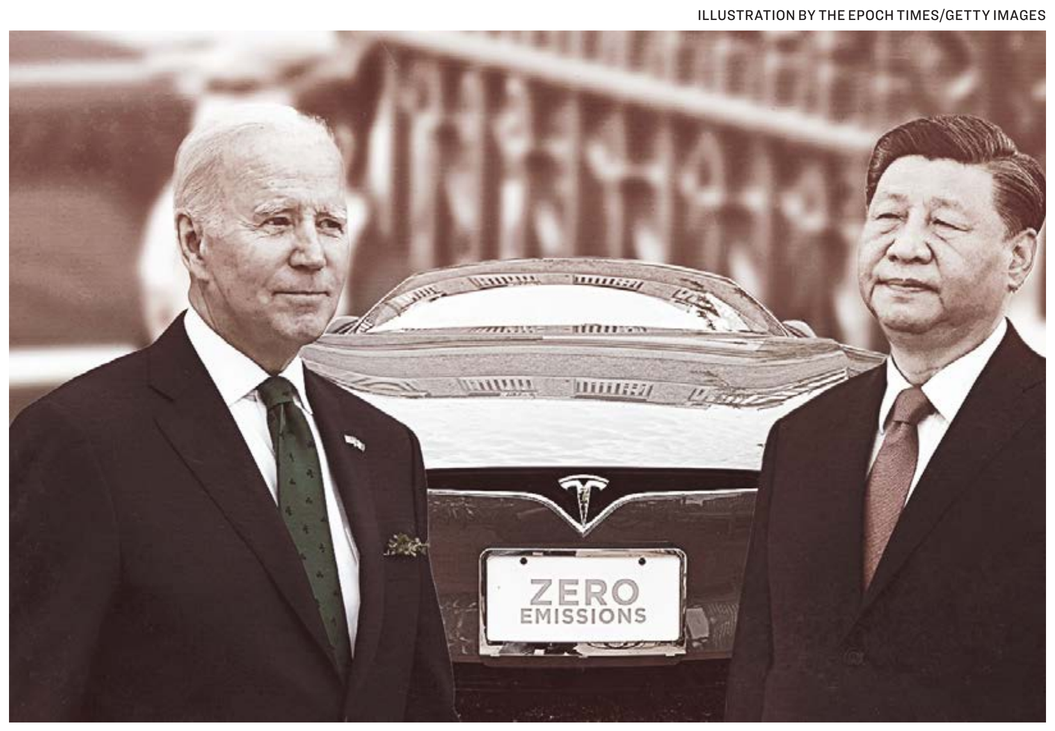
The White House did not return a request for comment.

> I do think it's going to take a strategic initiative from the top to address this situation, because it hasn't been addressed in past years.
>
> Mandy Gunasekara, director, Center for Energy and Conservation at the Independent Women's Forum

> The Biden EPA plan is the China empowerment plan.
>
> Marc Morano, executive director,ClimateDepot.com

> No one in the West will accept the reality that China has total domain control at every level.
>
> James Kennedy, a U.S. mine owner

ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES/GETTY IMAGES



President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A rare-earth refinery near the inner Mongolian city of Baotou on the edge of the Gobi Desert. Most of China's rare earths come from mineral-rich Baotou.

MARTIN BERNETTI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

An aerial view of brine ponds and processing areas of the lithium mine of the Chilean company SQM (Sociedad Quimica Minera) in the Atacama Desert, Calama, Chile, on Sept. 12, 2022.

BILL BRADEN/VITAL METALS

Jeremy Catholique, a member of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation and shift supervisor at Vital Metals' Nechalacho rare earth elements mine in the Northwest Territories, overlooks bags of concentrated ore ready to be shipped to the plant in Saskatoon.

COURTESY OF ALEXA POSA

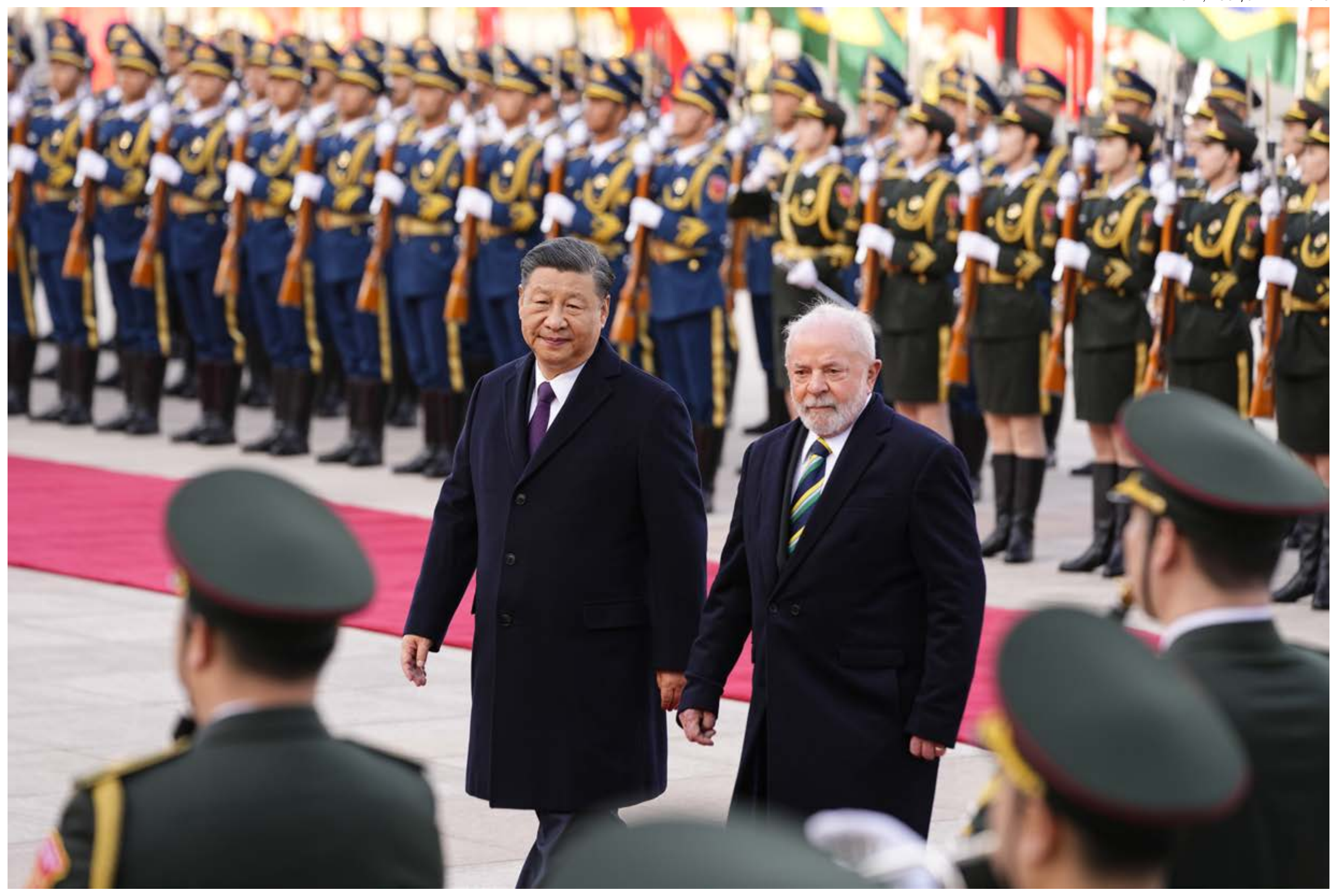
An advocate speaks at a protest against 15-minute cities on Whyte Avenue in Edmonton on Feb. 10, 2023.

GLOBAL EXPANSION

Brazil's Lula, China's Xi Solidify Anti-West Bloc Aimed at Displacing US

AUTUMN SPREDEMANN

KENISHII/POOL/GETTY IMAGES



Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (R) inspects an honor guard with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during a welcome ceremony held outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on April 14, 2023.

Amid the buzz surrounding Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's China visit, which began on April 12, the leaders of both countries have signed more than 20 new bilateral agreements.

On the surface, the trip was a run-of-the-mill diplomatic visit. However, some say it underscores an ongoing deprioritization of relations with the United States.

China is Brazil's largest trade partner, and both nations operate as cornerstone members of the trade bloc known as BRICS. This alliance also includes Russia, India, and South Africa. Members of the trade bloc openly share a desire to displace the U.S. dollar in trade and as a global reserve currency.

Since the return of left-wing Lula to Brazil's helm, U.S. officials and analysts have raised concerns over the South American country's policy shift in favor of Beijing and other authoritarian regimes.

It started with Lula's welcoming of Iranian warships on Feb. 26. This was promptly followed by the March 29 announcement that Brazil would begin using the Chinese yuan instead of the U.S. dollar in trade transactions.

During a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing last month, Sen. James Risch (R-Idaho) expressed alarm over Brazil's overarching cooperation with what he called "maligned foreign influences," including China.

Brian Nichols, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere Affairs in the U.S. State Department, said in the same hearing that he's "absolutely concerned" about China's heavy investment.

Part of the Brazil–China arrangement includes using the Beijing-backed New Development Bank (NDB) as a yuan clearing facility. The goal is to boost the volume and strength of China's yuan in the Americas.

While in Shanghai, Lula oversaw the inauguration of Dilma Rousseff—his former chief of staff and a 1960s Marxist guerilla fighter—as the new head of the NDB. Rousseff served as Brazil's president after Lula starting in 2011 but was impeached by the National Congress in 2016 for budget mismanagement.

The NDB was created under Rousseff's watch, so her appointment as head of the NDB on April 13 was the cherry on top of policy decisions that have left Western officials spinning in recent months.

Analysts say Brazil moving away from the U.S. dollar and courting authoritarian regimes demonstrates the country's prioritization of BRICS, particularly China, ahead of its relationship with the United States.

Writing on the Wall

Some Brazilians say Lula's deepening of ties with China and pushing BRICS into the spotlight has been a long time coming.

"They [BRICS] basically want to annul the United States as a world power," Brazil's former minister of foreign affairs, Ernesto Araújo, told The Epoch Times.

Araújo said Lula was focused on strengthening ties with anti-American governments well before his return to office in January.

But Araújo in't surprised. Lula is a founding member of UNASUR, a South American trade bloc created in 2008 with former Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. At the time, Chaváz said UNASUR was designed to usurp the influence of the United States in the region.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has signed more than 20 new bilateral agreements with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during his China visit, which began on April 12. These agreements aim to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Araújo noted that while working as the minister of foreign affairs under former President Jair Bolsonaro, the BRICS agenda took a backseat. However, with Lula in charge, China and BRICS have been bumped to the top of Brazil's political priority list.

"Now it's clear that Lula wants to go full speed with BRICS," Araújo said.

During Lula's visit, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on April 14 saying that Chinese leader Xi Jinping declared China and Brazil as the "two biggest developing countries and emerging markets in the Eastern and Western hemispheres."

The brief noted that the two countries have "extensive common interests."

For some security analysts, therein lies the danger to the United States.

"Brazil already has a long-standing relationship with China, but the current turn is particularly precarious," Irina Tsukerman, regional security analyst and founder of Scarab Rising, told The Epoch Times.

Tsukerman noted that China pumping massive amounts of cash into Brazil's economy has essentially purchased loyalty, making Beijing's anti-Western influence difficult to counteract.

"Brazil, like Venezuela, is about to become a central point for strong networks across Latin America. Intelligence networks, drug cartels, assisting China with its fentanyl trafficking operations ... and political influence favorable to Beijing's interests and concerning to U.S. security interests," she said.

Weaker Sanctions

Among the potential U.S. security impacts is the threat a weaker dollar poses to the strength of its sanctions.

The United States has led a heavy sanctions package against Russia amid its ongoing attack on Ukraine. Concurrently, nations affected by the economic fallout of the Russia–Ukraine war have been searching for an alternative to dwindling greenback reserves. This is especially true in Latin American countries such as Brazil and Argentina.

The result has been a general readiness to abandon the dollar and build infrastructure for a new global reserve currency. This is chief among the list of goals for BRICS.

On a large enough scale, "de-dollarisation" will weaken the power of U.S. sanctions abroad, essentially diminishing one of the most powerful nonmilitary weapons at its disposal.

Almost half of all global trade is conducted in dollars. Greenbacks also make up 60 percent of total foreign currency reserves.

But as commodity inflation crippled countries in 2022, the debate for alternative currencies was reignited.

"While yuan as an exchange currency in the immediate future will not fully replace the U.S. dollar in Latin America, even adopting it ... creates a risk to weaken U.S. financial influence and facilitates sanctions circumvention. Not only for China and Russia but also for all their regional allies," Tsukerman said.

Nichols said the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden aims to demonstrate that the United States is still the best country to align its opportunities and future with.

"We see around the hemisphere the promises the PRC [People's Republic of China] makes about the quality of its investments, about the debt associated with its investments, are false," he said.

ALEXEY MAISHEV/SPUTNIK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and Chinese leader Xi Jinping enter a hall during a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on March 21, 2023.

OPINION

How China Made Russia Its Junior Partner

RICHARD A. BITZINGER

When Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin met in March, it was to firm up a new Sino–Russian strategic partnership crafted last year. Yet there is always a hierarchy in every alliance, and it is increasingly apparent that Russia is the junior partner in this relationship.

It wasn't always so. From the founding of communist China (People's Republic of China) in 1949 and up to the early 1960s, Beijing was definitely subordinate to the Soviet Union. Particularly in the beginning, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) looked to the USSR as an ideological brother-in-arms and an economic and administrative model to be emulated.

Just as important, China depended heavily on Soviet aid to underwrite industrialization and national economic development. During the 1950s, Moscow sent thousands of Soviet advisers, engineers, and workers to China, while also educating thousands of Chinese inside Russia. The Soviet Union built thousands of modern industrial plants across China, using Russian machinery, tools, and plans.

Moscow's largesse wasn't free. Most Soviet aid to China came in the form of loans, to be paid off by exports of food and raw materials back to the USSR. (These grain exports, by the way, worsened China's great famine of the late 1950s.)

The USSR also supplied considerable amounts of military assistance to the People's Liberation Army (PLA), both in the form of arms transfers and, more importantly, through the construction of turnkey facilities that allowed the Chinese to manufacture a wide variety of Soviet arms. In fact, the vast majority of Chinese arms produced during the 1950s and 1960s were mostly copies of Soviet-designed weaponry, many of them among the most modern armaments then available.

During this period, for example, China produced T-54 and T-55 tanks; MiG-15, MiG-17, and MiG-19 fighter jets; the SS-N-2 Styx antiship missile (designated the HY-2 Silkworm by the PLA); the AA-2 air-to-air missile; and the Romeo-class diesel-electric submarine. In most cases, the USSR made these systems available for licensed manufacture by China within only a few years of deploying the weapons with the Soviet armed forces.

Today it is a weak Russia that desperately needs a strong China.

In particular, Moscow made its then most-potent fighter jet available to the PLA, the MiG-21. Despite the Sino-Soviet split of 1960, which partly derailed this program, the Chinese received enough MiG-21 airframes, kits, and technical documents to successfully reverse-engineer the aircraft as the Chinese J-7 fighter. The J-7, in turn, was subsequently produced in the thousands and exported around the world.

The second phase of Russian military-technical assistance occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the warming of diplomatic and economic ties between Moscow and Beijing. At the time, the CCP was desperate for advanced foreign military technology in order to modernize its armed forces, and the West had recently cut the country off over its massacre of peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators during the Tiananmen protests.

Moscow gladly stepped in, and the 1990s and early 2000s saw another wave of Russian arms sales to China. In 1992, Beijing signed a contract for 24 Su-27 fighter jets, its first purchase of Russian military equipment in over 30 years. This was followed up by subsequent buys of additional Su-27 and Su-30 fighters and, later on, an agreement to license-produce 200 Su-27s at the Shenyang Aircraft Corporation in Liaoning Province.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China received more than $28 billion worth of arms between 1992 and 2010. In addition to Sukhoi fighters, Beijing bought four Sovremenny-class destroyers (armed with the Moskit/SS-S-22 supersonic antiship cruise missile [ASCM]), 12 Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines, and several dozen Mi-8/-17 Hip helicopters, along with Tor-M1 and S-300 surface-to-air missile systems, AA-11 air-to-air missiles, Il-76 transport aircraft, Kh-31 antiradiation missiles, and 3M-54 missiles. As a result, Russian arms soon constituted the most potent weaponry in China's arsenal.

What a difference a few years make. Today, China's economy is light-years ahead of Russia's. China's per capita GDP has skyrocketed since the early 2000s and now equals Russia's. China has built thousands of miles of high-speed railways and dominates manufacturing spheres like shipbuilding and consumer electronics, while Russia is basically a third-world extractive economy based on oil, gas, and minerals.

Beijing also outstrips Moscow when it comes to next-generation research and development (R&D) in such areas as cyber, space, and robotics. In the field of artificial intelligence (AI), for example, Russian spending on AI R&D is estimated at around $360 million for the period 2020–2024. In comparison, Chinese investment in AI is expected to reach $26.7 billion in 2026. Russia will likely never be able to compete head-to-head in any "AI arms race" with China (or the United States).

Additionally, China's military hardly needs Moscow any longer. China spends three times more on its national defense than Russia ($225 billion versus $85 billion), and the difference is glaringly apparent. Over the past decade, the PLA has deployed hundreds of fifth-generation fighter jets, nuclear submarines, and advanced warships, while Russia's backward forces remain bogged down in Ukraine.

As a result, Chinese purchases of Russian arms have dropped dramatically, from over $2.5 billion annually in the early 2000s to less than $750 million in 2022. The bulk of these recent purchases were for Russian jet engines, which were subsequently integrated into Chinese combat aircraft, given China's longstanding problems with building effective turbofan engines. Even in this regard, however, China is becoming increasingly self-reliant.

Today it is a weak Russia that desperately needs a strong China. Putin is now looking to Xi to supply Russia with the weapons it urgently requires to continue its war on Ukraine. As a result, the power dynamic between Moscow and Beijing has clearly shifted in favor of the latter. As David Ignatius of The Washington Post has put it, "The paradox of the Ukraine war is that Putin's bid for greater power in Europe has made him weaker." This, in turn, has made him more dependent than ever on China and Xi.

Little wonder, then, that Putin is increasingly the junior partner in the Sino–Russian "alliance." It will not shift back any time soon.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Richard A. Bitzinger is an independent international security analyst. He was previously a senior fellow with the Military Transformations Program at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore, and he has held jobs in the U.S. government and at various think tanks. His research focuses on security and defense issues relating to the Asia-Pacific region, including the rise of China as a military power, and military modernization and arms proliferation in the region.

A Russian MiG-21 fighter prepares to take off at the Dubai air show, in the United Arab Emirates, on Nov. 17, 1999.

RABIH MOGHRABI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

Winner Takes All: The US–China Race to AI Mastery

AI competition may prove to be the last technology race in the world

JAMES GORRIE

The AI-powered ChatGPT is intensifying the competition between the United States and China for artificial intelligence dominance.

The stakes couldn't be higher.

For the sake of clarity, ChatGPT is the AI-driven tool that can create documents, reports, and other content with just a question or a few key words. It was created by OpenAI, a Bay Area technology firm started by tech standouts such as Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, and other tech luminaries.

The good news is how ChatGPT has brought the race for AI dominance back into the national conversation. The potential for AI technology to alter our world is difficult to overstate, even though ChatGPT technology itself barely scratches the surface of what AI technology can really do.

AI Will Transform Everything

Both the United States and China are fully engaged in efforts to master AI technology in its most powerful applications, which includes creating so-called "deep fakes" that put words into people's mouths and put people in places they never were. Even those capabilities are mere shadows of what is to come.

In a few short years at most, the way we do even the most common tasks, from manufacturing goods, transporting them, and marketing them will be radically changed. Medicines, machines, and methodologies of inquiry will all be fundamentally different under AI. AI will change every activity or industry to which it is applied, and that includes rapid advancements in biotechnology and its transformational impact on warfare.

The AI Race Will Be the Last Race

The race for AI mastery isn't the first time that nations have raced to achieve technological dominance in the world. The race to reach the moon comes to mind, but it was ideological almost as much as it was technological in its impact. The race to develop the first atomic bomb during the Second World War is a better comparison. Many observers believe that AI represents nothing less than a paradigm shift for the entire world and across the spectrum of industries and scientific applications.

That's what makes AI a qualitatively different technology than all others. It will forever alter the relationship between humanity and machines. Humanity's great innovation was the replication and transformation of the natural world into the mechanization and manipulation of it. It was only just over a century ago that mankind transitioned from horse to automobile, then on to flight, and then to space flight.

A concurrent shift occurred with the communication revolution, effectively compressing time and distance by the speed of light. This not only made the world smaller and events more impactful as they're witnessed in real time, but it also shortened reaction times.

The AI revolution, however, is a quantum leap in technological advancement. AI is the actual dematerialization of machines and the separation of thought from humanity, neither of which has ever happened before. For the first time ever, mankind is threatened not just with destruction from a man-made device, but by our own creations replacing us altogether.

China's Big Data and Surveillance

That's no exaggeration. Philosopher Yuval Harari has warned of AI rendering humans as obsolete and "useless." Harari isn't the only one to see the red flags. Elon Musk has said that AI is "summoning the demon," implying that once released, it will be beyond our control.

That remains to be seen. But both statements are a nod to the power that AI may well yield to those who first acquire the requisite level of skill and technology. Accordingly, Russian President Vladimir Putin observed that whoever masters AI will be master of the world.

He's probably right, and the Chinese Communist Party has every intention of doing both.

Despite ChatGPT's impressive debut, China is ahead of the United States where it really counts: in research. According to their most recent five year plan, Chinese planners have set rigorous goals for 2030 that include investing up to $1.4 trillion in new AI infrastructure such as data centers, 5G, the industrial internet, and other enabling technologies.

Their objective is to attain an unassailable position in AI-driven technologies, and in some key respects, such as access to big data, they're well-positioned to reach their goal. With 1.4 billion people and one of the world's most surveilled populations, Chinese researchers have access to the largest databases in the world with few if any privacy restrictions.

China Rushing to Create Superior AI-Driven Military

The time period of 2025 to 2030 has tremendous defense implications for the United States, since that's when China's global AI leadership is scheduled to be realized. Indeed, China's military advancement plan calls for AI implementation by 2030, with an ambitious and comprehensive application across the entire military asset spectrum.

China's plan includes integrating neural networks with nuclear armed hypersonic glide vehicles, AI-enhanced automatic target recognition, auto-piloting, missile fusion, precision guidance for hypersonic platforms, maneuverability, and more. Beijing is also looking to AI for heretofore unimaginable ways to wage cyberwarfare on its adversaries. The upshot is within a few years, Beijing aims to change the entire calculus of offensive strategic weapons dynamics through deep AI integration.

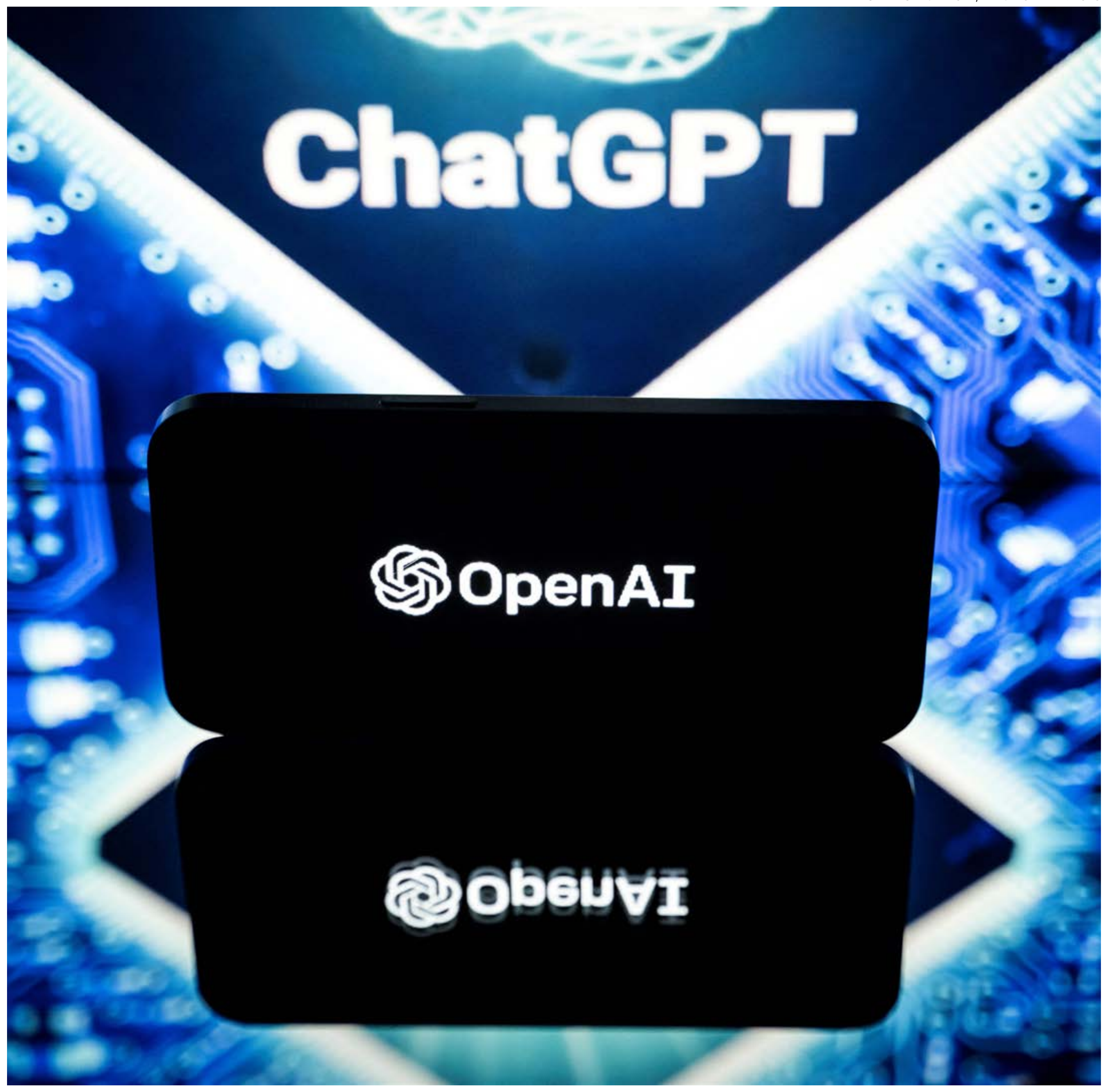
Ultimately, the race for AI dominance between the United States and China may not just come down to committing investment and intellectual resources, but rather, how fast the technology can be put into action.

It may also be a question of keeping technological intellectual property from being sold or stolen, which the U.S. government has shown repeatedly it is unable to prevent.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

James R. Gorrie is the author of "The China Crisis" (Wiley, 2013) and writes on his blog, TheBananaRepublican.com. He is based in Southern California.

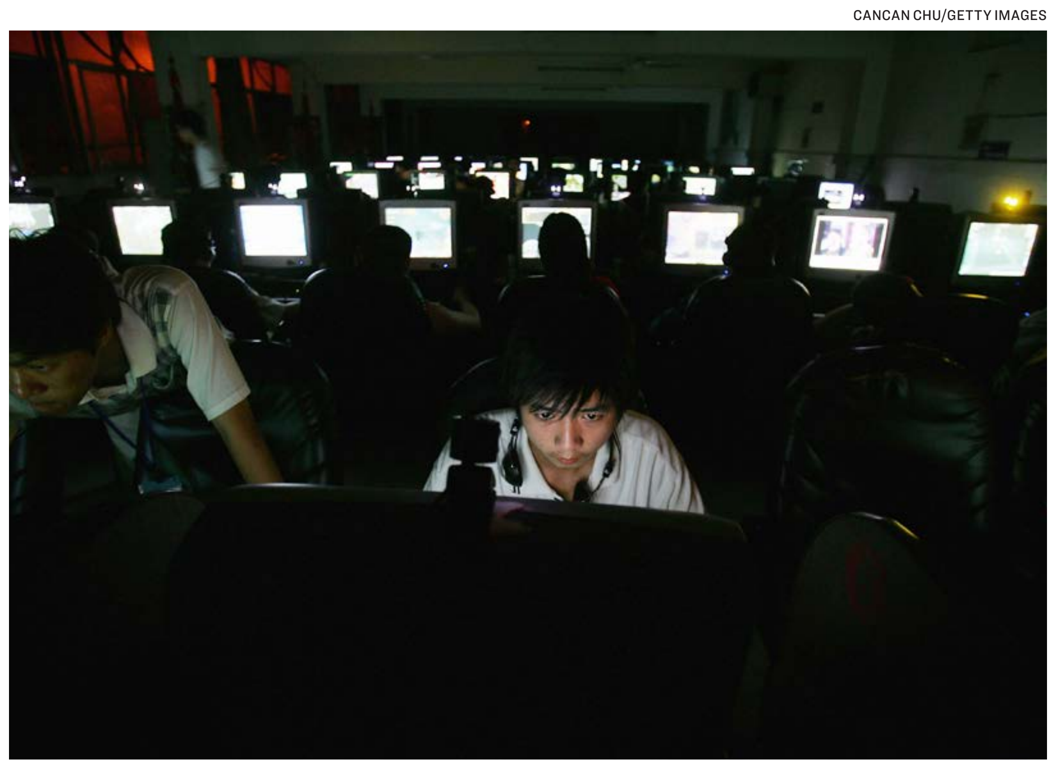
LIONEL BONAVENTURE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Screens display the logos of OpenAI and ChatGPT in Toulouse, France, on Jan. 23, 2023.

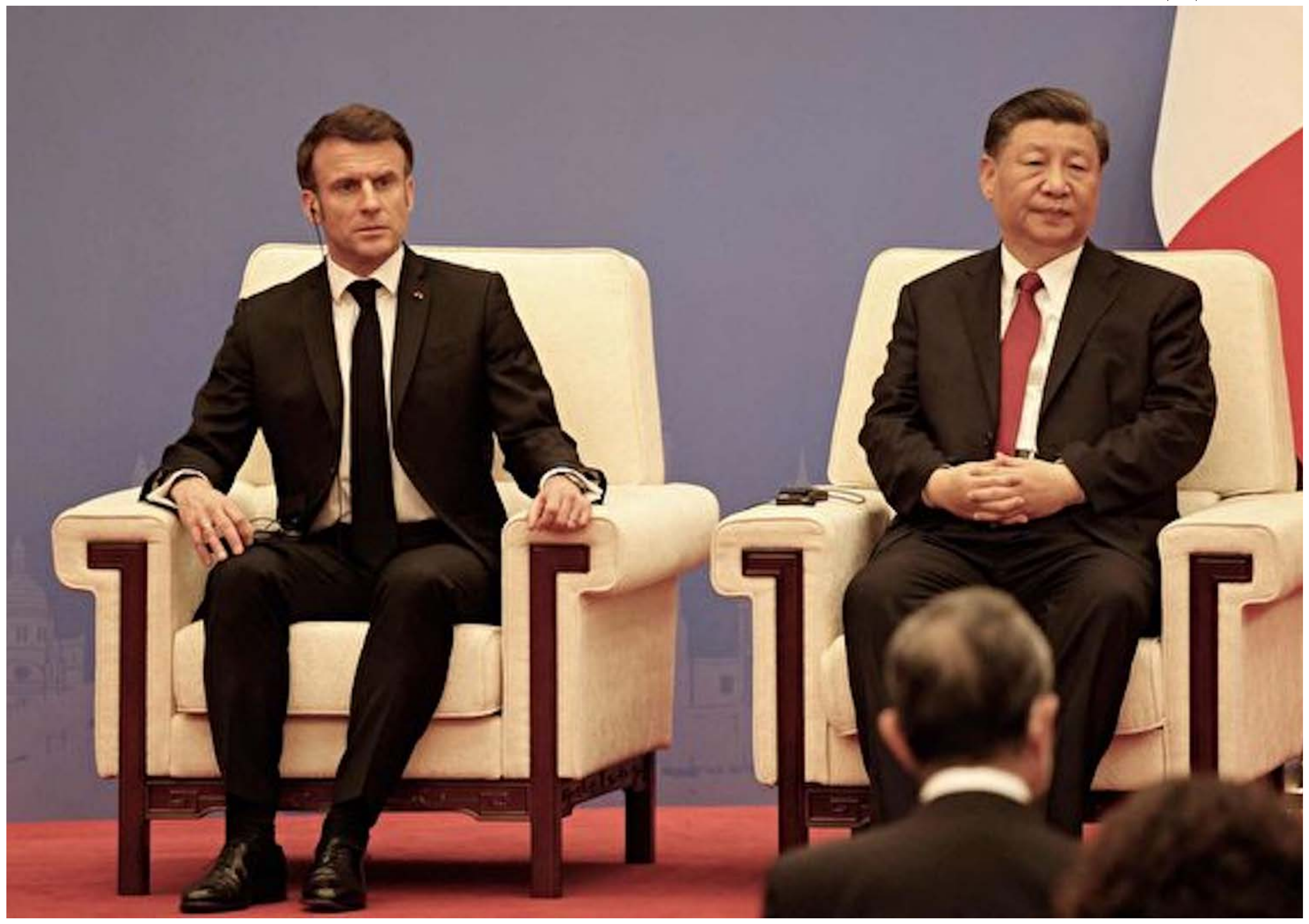
Despite ChatGPT's impressive debut, China is ahead of the United States where it really counts: in research.

CANCAN CHU/GETTY IMAGES



A Chinese man plays online games at an internet cafe in Wuhan, China, in this file photo. The Chinese regime's cyberstrategy is not fun and games, however, it is real cyberwar against the United States

LUDOVIC MARIN/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

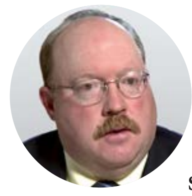


French President Emmanuel Macron (L) and Chinese leader Xi Jinping take part in a Franco-Chinese business council meeting in Beijing on April 6, 2023.

OPINION

France Is Helping China to Invade Taiwan, but So Are We

RICK FISHER



In hopes of advancing his ambitions for "strategic autonomy" of Europe from the United States, during his April 5–7 state visit to China, French President Emmanuel Macron did far more than give Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictator Xi Jinping a propaganda victory by publicly suggesting some kind of weird moral equivalence between U.S. and Chinese policy regarding Taiwan.

In interviews published on March 9 in Les Echos and Politico regarding Taiwan, Macron said, "The worst thing would be to think that we Europeans must be followers and adapt ourselves to the American rhythm and a Chinese overreaction."

For Macron, somehow, U.S. policies that seek to arm Taiwan and deter a Chinese invasion are indistinguishable from the CCP's decades of preparation to invade and destroy Taiwan's democracy, including putting masses of its "democrats" in concentration camps.

But Macron was not content with this outrageous suggestion of moral equivalence in service of Chinese propaganda.

Just as the Chinese regime began on April 8 its three days of large-scale military blockade exercises around Taiwan in preparation for an invasion, it became known that Macron was going to give the regime more "weapons" that it would use to invade Taiwan.

Specifically, during Macron's visit, it was announced that Airbus would sell China 50 of its new H160 helicopters.

A state-of-the-art eight-ton helicopter, the H160 features a composite material fuselage, advanced rotor design, and advanced "glass" cockpit, and can transport 12 passengers on a 530-mile round-trip.

They will be sold to a Shanghai-based leasing company that supports offshore oil platforms but will also add to China's "civilian" fleet of about 1,000 passenger transport helicopters.

A 2013 study by the Asian Sky Group stated that Airbus had built 40 percent of China's civil turbine-powered helicopters.

This relationship dates back to the 1970s sale of the SA 321 Super Frelon, with China having since coproduced several Aerospatiale, now Airbus, helicopter types that also aided the design of indigenous Chinese helicopters; the Super Frelon aided the design of the People's Liberation Army Ground Force's (PLAGF) new 27-troop carrying Change Z-18 helicopter.

Due to the CCP's intensive policies of "military-civil-fusion," these helicopters can all be made available to the PLA and could effectively double the potential helicopter lift of the PLAGF, which has about 1,000 transport and attack helicopters.

So assuming PLAGF Air Assault forces can now access about 1,700 transport helicopters, strike packages of 280 helicopters, perhaps transporting at least 1,500 troops—and light all-terrain fighting vehicles, light artillery, missiles, and small drones—these could be used to attack Taiwan's six largest civilian airports.

Russian failures in Ukraine demonstrate the risks of deploying lightly armed heliborne Airborne forces to capture strategic airports—when defenses are alert and ready.

So the PLA likely will dispatch Special Forces and mobilize Fifth Columns in Taiwan to attack key personnel and forces responsible for airport security to delay a defensive response, seeking an assault with maximum surprise.

Should PLA forces take control of these airfields, PLA troops and supplies will come streaming in on some portion of the 4,000 airliners and cargo liners in China's civilian airlines, almost all made by Europe's Airbus and the U.S. Boeing Company.

Boeing and Airbus airliners and Chinese airlines regularly participate in PLA "mobility" exercises of inter-regional troop movements and along with thousands of civilian roll-on-roll-off (RORO) barges and much larger ferries that would move most of the PLA's invasion forces to Taiwan.

Roughly 90 Boeing B747, B777, and B767 large cargo liners, and 86 medium B737 cargo liners in Chinese airlines offer about three times the aerial power projection capacity of the formal PLA Air Force.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan's six largest airports could process 175,000 passengers daily. Still, with air superiority and the removal of "customs" procedures, the PLA may be able to move well over 200,000 troops a day to Taiwan on about 1,000 airliners.

Clearly, the Biden administration is not conveying strongly enough to the European public that a Chinese invasion and conquest of democratic Taiwan constitutes a direct threat to Europe's security.

Beijing already subsidizes Moscow's invasion of Ukraine by increasing purchases of Russian petroleum and resources and is apparently ready to begin sales of weapons to Russia that could revive its stalled offensive.

Chinese assistance for Russia's bloody invasion of Ukraine would then affirm longstanding Chinese expectations that Russian forces will assist the CCP's invasion of Taiwan, but that will not be the end.

A Russian invasion of Poland or the Baltic states may implicate Russian expectation that Beijing will send full armored units and generous logistic support to invade the European allies, as Russia would then assist Chinese campaigns to take control of the South China Sea, neutralize the Philippines, and take over Japan's Ryukyu Island Chain.

In all these Chinese and Russian war gambits, Airbus and Boeing transport aircraft could play a decisive logistic support role: they may help determine whether Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Europe will be dominated by brutal Chinese and Russian dictatorships.

As U.S. and European sanctions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine have halted new sales of airliners to Russia, stopped the supply of spare parts, and barred the entry of Russian airliners to Europe and the United States, it simply makes no sense to wait for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan to impose the same sanctions on China.

Should the oft-mentioned U.S. intelligence estimate that the Chinese regime will not be ready enough to attempt its invasion until 2027 be realistic, then it may be possible to "starve" Chinese airlines of spare parts, potentially taking them out of the CCP's invasion of Taiwan and its subsequent wars.

To be sure, this move will be severely disruptive to Boeing and Airbus; the latter forecasts that China will need over 8,000 airliners over the next 20 years, so expect myopic leaders like Macron to fight sanctions that block the sale of airliners to China.

But if Europe balks, Washington must make clear that it will begin to restrict the sale of new Airbus airliners to the U.S. market, allowing only the continuation of spare parts and support to sustain safe operations.

It is an understatement to say that a series of Chinese and Russian wars will impose great sacrifices on Americans and Europeans.

There should be no hesitation to continue barring the sales of airliners to Russia and to halt the sale of airliners and helicopters to China to diminish their capacity to make war.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Rick Fisher is a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

During Macron's visit, it was announced that Airbus would sell China 50 of its new H160 helicopters.

Ukrainian service members ride a tank as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, near the front line city of Bakhmut, Ukraine, on April 10, 2023.

OLEKSANDR KLYMENKO/REUTERS