Washington's predictable answer to Beijing's ongoing efforts to uproot US-funded unrest in its Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has been more sanctions.

The New York Times in its article, "US Imposes Sanctions on Chinese Officials Over Hong Kong Crackdown," would report:

The United States imposed travel bans and other sanctions on 14 high-level Chinese officials over the continuing crackdown on the opposition in Hong Kong, as the police in the Chinese territory arrested more pro-democracy figures on Tuesday.

The US move demonstrates America's unrepentant foreign policy of deliberately destabilizing a targeted nation or regions within a nation, then punishing nations for taking measures to restore order.

Hong Kong had suffered since 2014 on-and-off, and sometimes violent protests that continued until last year.

With the passing of Hong Kong's strict National Security Law those involved in the protests were finally held accountable, including those working with foreign interests (especially with Washington) to foment unrest. Opposition politicians in Hong Kong’s legislation have been removed from their positions, while protest leaders including Joshua Wong have been jailed for protest-related cases.

US Interference in China's Internal Political Affairs

The US move also continues to set a precedent of US interference in China's internal political affairs.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo would be quoted by Reuters as saying:
Beijing’s unrelenting assault against Hong Kong’s democratic processes has gutted its Legislative Council, rendering the body a rubber stamp devoid of meaningful opposition.

Secretary Pompeo’s comments regarding Hong Kong’s internal political affairs, coupled with documented US interference there, is entirely at odds with both international law and norms, including the UN Charter itself which prohibits one nation from infringing on the political independence of another.

The US by doing this, thus undermines its own self-appointed role as underwriter of what it calls a "rules-based international order."

The United States is also undermining the trust of nations around the globe who are left wondering what the US will do, and to what extent it will go, if it decides to interfere in their internal political affairs as well.

Chinese officials facing travel bans and the seizure of any assets within reach of the US government serves as an example and warning to others across Eurasia. But perhaps it is not a warning about not attracting US ire, but instead, of ever being so dependent on the US in the first place so as to risk serious disruption if and when Washington turns its attention toward them in a similar manner.

**The Isolating Effect of America’s Confrontation with China**

US sanctions are unlikely to have any impact on China’s domestic policy and will only spur Beijing to continue pushing out America’s unwarranted influence within its territory. It will also force China to diversify its economic activity away from not only America but also allies of the US who are likely to follow suit with sanctions and other anti-Chinese policies. A good example of this is Canada and their arrest of Huawei’s Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou in 2018 on Washington’s behalf.

Beyond China’s borders includes nations facing similar pressure from the US not only to bend to the interests driving US foreign policy regarding the people and resources within their respective borders but also in regards to Washington’s desire to isolate China.

A prime example of this has been a US-led campaign to push Chinese telecom giant Huawei out of global markets. The US has placed pressure on nations around the globe to exclude Huawei in major infrastructure projects including the rollout of 5G technology.

Nations across Southeast Asia, for example (with the exception of Vietnam) have so far ignored or otherwise sidestepped this pressure. Because of this and many other reasons, virtually every nation in Southeast Asia (and ironically, also Vietnam) have continued to suffer under US "soft-power" in an attempt to coerce regional governments to take a harder line against Beijing. The US also seeks to remove uncooperative governments in the region and replace them with ones that will cooperate in regards to isolating China.

But rather than convince nations in the region to pivot Westward, Washington’s strategy of coercion and even regime change, instead, appears to be having the exact opposite effect. It is driving nations into deeper ties with China, with their respective neighbours in Southeast Asia and across wider Eurasia.

In essence, the US, in its attempt to isolate China and punish all nations continuing to do business with China, the US is increasingly isolating itself instead.

**America’s Deadend Strategy**

The economic fundamentals that convince nations to choose China over the US are not being addressed seriously among US foreign policy circles.

Because of this, America finds itself in a vicious cycle where its coercive and unwelcomed foreign policy, coupled with a lack of economic incentives to tolerate these polices, particularly in Southeast Asia, are increasingly driving away potential allies.

America’s once credible military prowess and soft-power apparatus has dulled in recent years as well.

In other words, the US is waving around a broken stick and has run out of carrots. China on the other hand, waves around a big stick and one not aimed at players in the region, but at America and its retreat across the Pacific. China is also enjoying an abundance of carrots which to offer potential allies.
For all of these reasons, the US, through its own foreign policy, is isolating itself, not China and it is a trend that will only continue into the foreseeable future until the US is able to forego its position above all other nations and accept a constructive position among them instead.

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