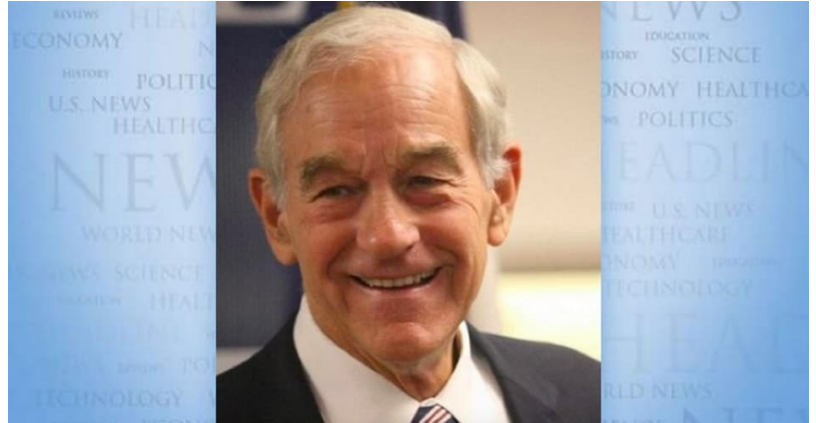




Can Trump Fix Our Broken Foreign Policy?

By the time most of you read this column, we will have a new US President. Donald J. Trump will be inaugurated for his second term today at 11:30 AM, Eastern time, and many Americans are hopeful that the disastrous foreign policy of the past four years under Biden will be improved. There is good news and bad news.

First the good news. It is no surprise that Trump's appointees to foreign policy and national security positions are to the person very hawkish on China. However Trump, as he often does, has defied conventional wisdom on what his China policy might be by not only inviting Chinese leader Xi Jinping to attend the inauguration, but actually picking up the telephone and having a conversation with his Chinese counterpart.



Ron Paul
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According to a read-out of the call, the two discussed “trade, fentanyl, TikTok, and other subjects” and agreed to remain in regular contact. Winston Churchill is often (inaccurately) credited with the phrase “jaw-jaw is better than war-war,” but nonetheless it is an accurate statement. It is much better to engage even with “adversaries” than to refuse contact and add more sanctions. Those who prefer sanctions over communications are the true isolationists.

On TikTok, the popular application has credited Trump with preventing the Congressional ban from taking effect. If true, it is another good Trump move in favor of our Constitutional free speech guarantees.

Likewise with Russia, media reports suggest that holding a conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin will be among the first things Trump does as President. That is great news for all of humanity, as Biden's dangerous proxy war in Ukraine and refusal to communicate with the Russian president has brought us to the very edge of a once-unimaginable nuclear exchange. When the end of life on earth is at stake, it is reckless to ignore the possibility of de-escalation.

In the Middle East, incoming President Trump is being credited with securing a ceasefire in Gaza, an achievement the Biden Administration seemed incapable of or uninterested in seriously attempting for the past year. Does Trump deserve all the credit? We don't know. But we do know that thousands have been needlessly slaughtered while Biden dithered and sent more weapons. The wholesale destruction of Gaza with US bombs and financial support will be Biden's enduring legacy and a stain on everyone involved.

The bad news is that because of President Trump's decision to appoint the most hawkish advisors, he will be surrounded by individuals who will constantly encourage him to confront rather than disengage. For example, his special envoy on the Ukraine war has recently boxed Trump in on Iran by declaring a return to the failed “maximum pressure” campaign of his first Administration. The policy failed to



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achieve the desired results when first implemented and it will fail again if adopted again. Why? Iran has developed far more extensive trade ties outside the influence of the US government, for example among the BRICS countries. It is not possible to isolate Iran as it has been in the past. As with China and others, with Iran it would be far better to jaw-jaw than to war-war. Let's hope President Trump understands that.

We will no doubt see some disappointments in incoming President Trump's foreign policy, but there are solid reasons to be cautiously optimistic. Particularly when measured against his predecessor.

Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This [article](#) originally appeared at the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity and is reprinted here with permission.



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