

Clash of the Superpowers: America Vs China

Episode 1

Link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002sv0n/clash-of-the-superpowers-america-vs-china-series-1-episode-1>

From the start until 11:00

China and Trump

What happened at The World Economic Forum in Davos 2017?

What was said about Trump and by Xi?

Davos 2017 took place before Trump came to power for the first time.

Xi Jinping attended for the first time- China wanted to make it clear where they stood on the global economic system: that they would protect free trade and open markets.

Trump was turning his back on free trade and open markets.

Xi's speech said that China would protect this. Xi wanted to remind the USA that this was their system- it benefitted them and others, and it should be kept.

What did Xi Jinping call his vision for China when he took power in 2013?

What was this vision?

His vision was The Chinese Dream: to reclaim / restore China's position in the world- as a major power. Not that China will dominate or try to take over the world.

What do the West often mistake this vision to mean?

In the West, the press calls it 'the rise of China' but this is misleading- China argues it's about 'reclaiming', not 'rising' (dominance)

What was Trump's attitude to China when he first took office?

Trump believed that China was 'raping' the USA and taking much more from the country than it gave back- America was helping other countries to become rich whilst losing out themselves.

The answer to this was to 'Make America Great Again' and bring jobs and production back to the USA.

When did China join the WTO?

2001

Why was China's status as a 'developing country' in the WTO significant?

Being defined as a developing country meant that China got some more relaxed rules on trading, but some people argued this was not fair.

Until 11:00

From 16:30 until 20:30

The Belt and Road initiative

What is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?

Huge infrastructure projects aiming at better linking China and the rest of the world.

Over \$1 trillion spent- showing China's ability to deliver world-leading feats of engineering.

What message was Xi giving to America / the world when it hosted the Belt and Road Summit?

That China was still there to help, despite the US turning away from global trade under Trump.

That China wanted to work with countries around the world and there were alternatives to America's leadership.

Why were some people uncomfortable with the BRI?

They thought it was a debt trap- countries had to sign over large amounts of control to China if they couldn't pay the debt for the project back.

Until 20:30

Episode 2

Link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002sv0q/clash-of-the-superpowers-america-vs-china-series-1-episode-2?seriesId=m002sv0l-structural-1-m002sv0k>

From the start until 6:00

Taiwan

What has America's stance on Taiwan historically been?

Since establishing relations with Communist China in 1979, the US has refused to recognise independent Taiwan to avoid antagonising China.

Why were Trump's interactions with Taiwan so controversial?

By speaking to the Taiwanese Prime Minister, it means recognising Taiwan's status as independent.

Until 6:00

From 14:10 until 18:30

TikTok

Why did Silicon Valley tech giants not think the growth of TikTok in the US was fair?

TikTok could compete for US customers alongside Instagram and Meta but US companies couldn't do the same in China.

Why did Trump ban TikTok?

He said it had national security risks- as a platform for data exploitation and for hostile uses such as propaganda by China.

What events did China take as evidence that America is in decline?

The events after Biden won power- the social unrest that resulted in the transition of power e.g. the storming of the Capitol building.

What did China hope for under Biden's leadership?

A more stable presidency- less explosive events.

Until 18:30

From 24:00 until 31:45

Military Power

By which year did China plan to overtake the USA in military power?

2050

According to the US, what is clearly one of their ambitions before then?

To 'take' Taiwan back as part of China

Who has been the dominant naval player in the Pacific since the end of WW2?

The USA

Because of the threat in the Indo-Pacific, which country did the USA want to strengthen the navy of?

Australia

What particular technology did this navy want?

Nuclear submarines

Who else had this technology been shared with previously?

The British / the UK

What was the Chinese reaction to this deal?

China said that America was using its exports as 'tools in geopolitical games' and applying double standards. They said it was highly irresponsible because the only purpose for Australia to have a nuclear submarine was to fight China.

Until 31:45

From 34:30 until 36:15

Taiwan

When asked, what did Joe Biden say about defending Taiwan?

On more than 1 occasion, Joe Biden said that America would defend Taiwan.

What was the USA's longstanding policy on defending Taiwan?

'Strategic ambiguity' - not saying how America would respond to a conflict over Taiwan.

The aim was to keep both sides guessing and deter China from invading and Taiwan from declaring independence.

What happened following Biden's comments?

China increased its military presence around Taiwan.

From 52:36 until the end.

Bi-polar world

What does China have a near-monopoly of?

Rare-earth minerals

Why was America worried about being cut off from the supply of rare-earth minerals by China?

It would stop America being able to manufacture defence products

What 'stunning development' was revealed by China on the first day of Trump's 2nd presidency and what was the significance of this?

DeepSeek- the low-cost AI chatbot

It showed that China could innovate even when the US had blocked their access to the most advanced chips- the Chinese were able to do this high-tech work even without using US technology.

It shows that you can't 'keep China down' - it's not about beating them but about co-existing / rivalry / competition. But, you can't beat them.