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Aerospace and Foreign Policy

Editor

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The lucrative market for aircraft and aerospace technology in the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to serve as a significant criterion for the United States (US) and the European Union in developing and implementing foreign policy towards the PRC. Some analysts posit that under the guise of variants of constructive engagement, the PRC's human rights violations, trade balance disparities, and violations of weapons and weapons technologies agreements are being discounted for the premium of aerospace contracts. However, recent bilateral initiatives in the US Congress to leave the fight for and against the PRC's most-favored nation (MFN) trade status and instead to press for increased international information activities, e.g., Voice of America, and other initiatives suggest that the aerospace corporations may be on the side of political correctness on this one. (See Clymer, A. (June 25, 1995.) House defeats effort to punish China by curbing trade. The New York Times. (<http://www.nytimes.com>)).

Not so for aerospace corporations, which in order to better sell military aircraft, are supporting NATO expansion into Eastern Europe and changes and waivers in US arms sales policies and legislation towards Pakistan and Latin America. This political support is being effected even though successful sales may help induce political destabilization in these areas, especially in Latin America. The peculiar capitalist belief system and associated behavior hierarchy referred to by Lenin as selling the rope to hang oneself is no longer hemp but a new spaceage material. (See Doherty, C.J. (April 9, 1994.) Bid to sell jets to Pakistan may provoke fight on Hill. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 52, 851; Sims, C. (March 19, 1996.) Weapons industry turns to Latin America. The New York Times, 6.)