



## China Can't Lose for Winning 3/21/23

China is in the catbird seat, at least for the moment. It altered the playing field in the Middle East and further undermined the influence that the U.S. had with Saudi Arabia. It accomplished this by bringing about an Iranian/Saudi understanding. This made it more difficult for the U.S. strategy (which seemed to be working) of bringing the Saudis and Israel closer together. It weakened the U.S.'s ability to unify the region against Iran. Score one for Iran.

Now Iran and Russia are meeting to see if Iran can broker some deal between the Russians and Ukraine. It seems far-fetched, but they have nothing to lose. Coming off their success with the Saudis, they will be given credit in some circles even if they fail. I don't think they mind failing here. Because they win whatever the outcome with the Ukraine.

There are no treaties between the Russians and Iranians that matter, and no hard commitments here, just commonalities of interest. The Chinese win if they accomplish something in Ukraine, but they also win if they don't. I believe they prefer the latter.

In the long run, China sees itself alone sitting on top. What better way than to sit back and let their long-term **adversaries** weaken each other's economics and military arsenal. It's in their interest to prolong this war.

We have to make it clear to China that their continued support for the Russians will come at a steep price and **mean it**.