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## China's way, or

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THE UNITED STATES has a peculiar relationship with China. It is our political adversary, but as global financial players and trade partners, we are inexorably intertwined--largely to the U.S.'s disadvantage.

Among the things we have that China wants--besides our interest payments--is our technology, and when American companies want to do business in China, they are forced to share U.S. technologies as a prerequisite.

Sen. Jim Webb takes issue with that, and he has introduced legislation to prevent it. As the Virginia Democrat sees it, many of these technologies were developed in the U.S. with American tax dollars through various federal programs, making American taxpayers part owners. And we ought not be giving them away.

The legislation makes sense, especially given the economic relationship between the two countries. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, China is the largest single foreign holder of U.S. debt at 16 percent, or about \$2.25 trillion of the total U.S. debt of \$14.1 trillion. Moreover, China also enjoys a lopsided trade balance with the United States. In July, for example, the U.S. imported nearly \$27 billion more in goods from China than it exported to China.

Given all that, must we give them our technology? The Chinese, of course, will be ticked should Sen. Webb's legislation pass and put various aspects of our trade diplomacy to the test. But the issue needs to be addressed. The senator's office offers three examples of how China has taken advantage of its access to technology funded by U.S. taxpayers:

General Electric has handed over aviation avionics technology to the state-owned Aviation Industry Corp. of China.

Westinghouse Electric has provided some 75,000 documents in an initial technology transfer to gain a share in China's burgeoning nuclear power market.

And Ford Motor Co. is ready to share proprietary technologies for electric vehicles in exchange for selling cars in China.

China enjoys incredible benefits from its economic relationships with the United States. Getting our taxpayer-funded technologies just for the asking from private U.S. companies should not be one of them.

Sen. Webb's bill deserves swift and thorough consideration.

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