

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

—Exploring a New Framework for the Complex China–US Relations

CICIR

Whether China and the United States can handle their relationship well bears on the future of the world. It is the question of the century to which the two countries must provide a good answer. When China and the United States cooperate, the two countries and the world benefit; when China and the United States are in confrontation, the two countries and the world suffer. Getting the relationship right is not optional, but something we must do and must do well.

— President Xi Jinping (September 10, 2021)

At this time of accelerated global evolution, China–US relations are at a crossroads, with the China–US relationship now a major strategic global concern. From 2017 to 2021, the Trump administration transformed US–China policy by imposing an omnidirectional containment against Beijing, which consequently led to unprecedented difficulties and challenges to China–US relations and resulted in increased anxieties over its future. Against this backdrop, the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and the Brookings Institution, the two respective major think tanks, jointly agreed to strengthen exchanges on the status quo and future of China–US relations with the primary goals being to avoid conflict, promote cooperation, build healthy, stable bilateral relations, and explore a new framework for benign China–US interactions. Toward this end, a two-year “Track II Dialogue” on China–US relations was launched in 2019.

Since this framework was launched, there have been unprecedented global changes and a pandemic, both of which have made the China–US

CICIR

relations' environment more complex. At the same time, domestic changes in China and the United States, with China achieving its First Centennial Goal and progressing toward its Second and the US transitioning from the Trump administration to the Biden administration, have had a profound impact on the bilateral relations. Against this background, the CICIR and the Brookings Institution have conducted five rounds of small closed-door meetings with well-known experts and scholars from both countries for candid, in-depth, and constructive exchanges focused on the sensitive issues, important dynamics, long-term tendencies, and a general framework for China–US relations.

The dialogs have had to deal with the harshest moments in China–US relations, shifting from intense confrontation to incremental *détente*. The first-round dialog, which was originally planned to be held in the United States, had to be relocated to Singapore because the sudden deterioration in the US–China political atmosphere was jeopardizing normal academic exchanges. The subsequent four rounds of dialog were held online due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Even in the darkest hours, the Chinese scholars were consistently stressing that “no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation” had to remain the fundamental principles for China–US relations in the new era, and were advocating for the building of a new model for major-country relations between China and the United States. However, as the scholars from the United States were mostly emphasizing long-term competition between China and the United States, they deliberately avoided offering a response to the new model proposition.

Since the beginning of 2021, the Chinese and US Presidents have had two phone calls and scheduled their first virtual meeting for November 16, 2021. Senior diplomatic and economic officials from both countries have consulted with and sometimes met in person with their counterparts, and communication and coordination in specific areas, such as climate change, have been ongoing. Therefore, there are noticeable signs of improvement. In the latest dialog round, the Chinese and American participants reached a consensus on several issues, such as maintaining stability, avoiding conflict, and enhancing cooperation, with all looking forward to peaceful, stable state-to-state relations. Nevertheless,

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

most American scholars are still insisting on defining US–China relations based on a competition mindset, and have continued to maintain their strong ideological overtones on issues related to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. These divergences between the two think tanks reflect their perceptual differences regarding the current situation. Therefore, in the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving differences, the two organizations agreed to respectively launch their own reports. This report gives preliminary thoughts on China–US relations from the CICIR task force.

In summary, this report proposes that the key feature of China–US relations is its complexity, that is, the relations cannot be simply summarized based on competition. Therefore, to ensure mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence, and a mutual understanding of the nature and positioning of their bilateral ties, China and the United States need to focus on the long-term, consider both their fundamental national interests and global trends, and actively explore a new framework that is conducive to benign interactions between China and the United States.

Complexity

Under the Trump administration, the United States positioned China as its primary strategic competitor, which was actioned by a whole-of-government containment against China. While the Biden administration inherited this positioning, US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, proposed a trichotomous US–China policy perspective, saying that relations should be “competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be,” which was an attempt to comprehensively manage China–US relations. However, as this trichotomous perspective was centered around strategic competition, it could be seen to have negative intent.

Most American scholars believe that the competition perspective between US and China is a fact. However, the key lies in the management of this competition. American strategists have offered various propositions under this perceived competition framework, such as stable competition, competition without catastrophe, constructive competition, and managed competition, with the Brookings Report adding a persistent competition factor. Therefore, these

proposals imply that the recognition of the competition perspective must be the premise for the future development of US–China relations. However, Chinese scholars believe that this definition of competition reveals that the US sees China as a “strategic competitor,” which theoretically is a clichéd and reckless generalization.

Even though there is competition between China and the United States, which can be extremely fierce at times, we argue that this perspective is not a logical starting point for discussions on current and future China–US relations. Yang Jiechi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, stated his opposition to this competition definition for China–US relations at a meeting with the United States National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, in Zurich. This report also opposes this simplistic definition for the following reasons.

First, the word “competition” is one-sided and fails to objectively or accurately reflect the complexities inherent in China–US relations. Both competition and cooperation obviously exist in the bilateral relations as the two countries face structural contradictions; however, they also share broad common interests, that is, they are deeply interdependent. Therefore, artificially magnifying the competitive side of China–US relations is erroneous and potentially harmful to the healthy and stable development of their bilateral relations.

Second, defining China–US relations by competition can easily lead to confrontation and conflict because of the subjective intentions and strategic implications in shaping the future relationship. In the early days of the G.W. Bush administration, China was also defined as a strategic competitor, which resulted in significant setbacks in China–US relations, such as the collision of the military planes over the South China Sea. Later, in 2005, the United States’ focus changed to regarding China as a responsible stakeholder, which ushered in improvements in bilateral relations. Therefore, if the competitive side of China–US relations is again deliberately emphasized, the public support for friendly cooperative bilateral relations could diminish. As these cooperative initiatives would be affected by domestic pressure, the governments’ policy options would inevitably reduce, which in turn would reduce the China–US

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

cooperative opportunities and expand the competition, with any slight mistake on either side easily resulting in confrontation and conflict.

Third, China–US relations are greater than the bilateral domain as they have global significance. Therefore, defining this relationship as competitive puts greater pressure on other countries to take sides, that is, if relations are only couched within a competition framework, both China and the United States would seek to expand their own international united frontlines, with any approaches to either side by a third party inevitably viewed as a counterbalance by the other. In other words, the greater the pressure on third parties to take sides, the more likely the division of the world into two opposing camps.

Fourth, defining this relationship as competitive could leave China with the impression that this competition is merely a disguise to conceal the hegemonic nature of the US containment and suppression of China, that is, any containment of China under this competition lens could be justified by the United States as reasonable means against competitors, with the hegemonic purpose carefully submerged under the competition rhetoric.

Fifth, China and the United States have fundamental differences in their strategic thinking. Therefore, positioning China–US relations as merely competitive implies win/lose and winner-takes-all thinking. However, rather than focusing on a competitive life-and-death struggle with the United States, China's strategic mindset is to cherish peace and pursue win-win cooperation, with the fundamental goal of China's development being the happiness of its people and the rejuvenation of its nation.

Chinese scholars acknowledge that the complex 40-year history of China–US relations has involved both competition and cooperation and that this complexity is also the reality in current China–US relations. Therefore, recognizing this complexity is the premise for mutual management.

The complexity of China–US relations is reflected in their deeply intertwined economic interests. Despite a powerful impetus to decouple, doing so would be difficult. The Trump administration's attempts to decouple from China by, for example, imposing additional tariffs on Chinese goods and tightening export controls on China, failed to prevent the continued expansion of bilateral trade and increased the cost burdens on American importers and consumers. The General Administration of Customs in China reported that the China/US

bilateral trade was worth USD 586.7 billion in 2020, an 8.3 percent year-on-year increase. In the first seven months of 2021, the bilateral trade increased by another 40 percent. A member Survey in 2021 released by the US–China Business Council reported that 95 percent of surveyed American companies with China-based businesses reported profits, with more than 40 percent of these companies planning further investment in China in the next year. Therefore, facts prove that the financial relations, investments, and industrial chains between China and the United States are too robust to decouple. The recent “re-coupling” proposal by United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, merely reflected the unbreakable economic and trade ties between China and the United States.

The complex China–US relations are also reflected in their highly intertwined domestic and foreign affairs, their practical interests, and their value differences. This has been highlighted in sensitive issues related to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. Any partial conflict over these sensitive issues risks escalation into a full-scale conflict. In particular, the possibility of a clash between China and the United States on the Taiwan question cannot be underestimated.

The complex China–US relations are also reflected in their deeply intertwined associations with global change. Change without certainty has become a feature of the dramatic transformations around the world, with China and the United States being two important variables in these changes, which is why China–US relations have become significantly more complicated than other major-country relations. In the phone call with President Biden last September, President Xi Jinping pointed out that, “Whether China and the United States can handle their relationship well bears on the future of the world. It is the question of the century to which the two countries must provide a good answer.”

Finally, the complex China–US relations are interwoven into the current stage of their bilateral relations. When American strategists regard China–US relations as a long-term game of persistent competition, their Chinese counterparts believe the bilateral relationship is in a strategic stalemate position, the important features of which are alternations between the offensive and the defensive without any definite winner or loser.

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

This complexity opens the door to multiple possibilities for the future of China–US relations as they have reached a critical crossroad, with one road leading to a more intense strategic confrontation, and the other leading to a more strategic stability. In the past few years, the risk of strategic confrontation between China and the United States has risen, with various notions, such as the “new Cold War,” “Cold War 1.5,” “Cold War 2.0,” and even “a China–US war is inevitable” being thrown around and popularized. Therefore, it could be said that fatalism is the force pushing China and the US toward strategic confrontation. In his speech before the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, President Biden said “we are not seeking a new Cold War,” which sent out a glimmer of positivity about China–US relations; however, when it comes to the future of the China–US relationship, neither fatalism nor optimism is justified.

Given the potential risks and challenges to themselves and the world from a confrontation between China and the United States, it is obvious that these two countries need to logically resolve their differences and work to better manage their relations. However, agreeing on strategic, resilient stability is not easy and requires both countries to overcome their difficulties and be politically courageous in their efforts.

New Framework

China–US relations are complex; however, the future development of this relationship requires a practical and objective definition and a positive, subjective future-focused position. The continued US focus on competition to define China–US relations is only a partial interpretation of the relationship and has caused confusion when seeking to definitively define the relationship and its future positioning.

Positioning the China–US relationship has always been an important strategic issue. After the end of the Cold War, the United States began to use several terms such as “constructive and cooperative relationship,” “responsible stakeholder” and “strategic competitor,” and China was using expressions such as “constructive strategic partnership oriented toward the 21st century,” “positive, cooperative, and comprehensive China–US relationship,” “partnership

through mutual respect and win-win cooperation,” and “a new model of major-country relations featuring non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation.” Therefore, building a new model for the relationship between China and the United States remains China’s goal. In the CICIR-Brookings Track II Dialogue, the scholars from both sides all agreed that it was necessary to explore and build a new China–US relationship framework that recognized the new reality, could shape the future and highlighted the benign interactions between the two countries. Chinese scholars believe that no single word or expression can accurately define the China–US relationship given the shared understanding of this complex bilateral relationship. Therefore, a new China–US relations framework for the new era needs to be defined by mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, with mutual respect being the precondition, equality and mutual benefit being the means, and peaceful coexistence being the goal. In short, China and the United States need to strive for win-win cooperation when building this new relationship model.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is an attitude and a spirit that should not be narrowly understood. As the relationship between China and the United States is entering a long-term strategic gaming stage, the two countries must retain their respect for each other and refrain from discarding their morality and integrity for the sake of containment or suppression. As the gap of strength between China and the United States has been narrowing, their disputes have attracted greater global attention; therefore, continued mutual respect for each other’s core interests and major concerns should be the foundation for the sound and steady development of bilateral relations, rather than a hindrance to any consensus.

Due to a misunderstanding of the term “mutual respect” and a deep-rooted hegemonic mentality during the Obama administration, the US strategic community shelved this concept, which significantly affected the strategic trust between China and the US at the time. Former President Trump and his Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, have on different occasions expressed the idea that China and the US should respect each other. However, with the notion of America First taking the front seat, this “mutual respect” concept was seen

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

as a tactical tool rather than a strategic direction by the Trump administration. After the Biden administration took office, both President Biden and Secretary of State, Blinken, have used this expression when seeking strategic stability and the expansion of cooperation between China and the US, which demonstrates that mutual respect is becoming an important point of consensus between China and the US. What is needed now is a further clarification of its meaning and its application to more practical approaches.

China has always respected the US social system and its vital interests, has never interfered in its internal affairs and the American people's way of life, and has no intention to challenge the US's position in the world or its presence in the Asia Pacific, let alone take America's hegemonic role. Accordingly, we expect the United States to respect the Chinese people's choice of its own political and social systems and its own development path. The US must not deliberately attempt to change China or maliciously attack the CPC. On the contrary, it should respect the 1.4 billion Chinese people's rights to pursue a better life and China's right to develop and progress in its own way.

Therefore, the United States should put itself in China's shoes. Once it correctly understands China's major strategic goals, ideas, and plans, such as the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, its new development patterns, and the 14th Five-Year Plan and Vision for 2035, it should cease all ideological attacks and avoid the development of a new Cold War mentality. The US should also stop arbitrarily interfering in issues related to Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet in the name of its so-called democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. There is no room for China to make concessions in these areas. The US's provocative and open interference in China's internal affairs and its attempts to undermine China's core interests will only result in dissatisfaction and firm countermeasures from the Chinese government.

Equality and Mutual Benefit

Equality is the basic principle embodied in the United Nations Charter that regulates international relations. All countries, regardless of their size, strength, or wealth are equal members of the international community and have the equal right to participate in international affairs. The internal affairs of a country

should be decided on by its own people, and international affairs should be decided equally by all countries through consultation.

The Chinese nation, which has suffered from colonization and aggression ever since the Opium War, has always been striving for equality. After the founding of the Peoples' Republic of China, equality and mutual benefit have gradually become one of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence upheld by the Chinese leadership. Today, China's "pingshi diplomacy," or "heads-up diplomacy" seeks a more egalitarian foreign relations position, and it is from this perspective that China opposes coercive diplomacy that takes "a position of strength." Equality also means reciprocity, and China seeks to approach the China-US relationship from a reciprocal stance.

Mutual benefit not only reflects the deeply interwoven China-US interests but has been the basis for their bilateral relationship since it was normalized 50 years ago, that is, the bilateral relations have always been based on common interests. The developments in the two countries have always been complementary, proportional, and mutually beneficial. During the Cold War, China and the United States jointly responded to the threat of the Soviet Union, and after the end of the Cold War, China-US economic and trade cooperation became the new engine for global growth. Since it acceded to the World Trade Organization, China has achieved rapid economic growth, and the United States has not only benefited from their investments in China but has also had continued economic prosperity and social stability thanks to high-quality but inexpensive Made in China products. Immediately after the September 11 Attacks(WTO), China cooperated with the US and the international community to counter-terrorism, and during the financial crisis in 2008, China worked with the United States to promote better global economic governance. When the former US President, Barack Obama, was seeking agreement on international climate change governance, it was because China had endured some domestic development difficulties and was actively supporting the US belief that the Paris Agreement could be reached. In the face of the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, China and the United States should have once again joined hands to tackle this non-traditional global security challenge. However, Trump's great power competition logic and China-bashing rhetoric resulted in a missed cooperative opportunity and a sharp decline in China-US relations.

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

These drastic global governance setbacks during the Trump presidency highlighted the need for mutual respect and the continuance of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

Peaceful Coexistence

If win-win cooperation is a long-term goal that requires commitment from both China and the US, peaceful coexistence is an achievable goal.

Dr. Henry Kissinger once suggested a “co-evolution” concept for China–US relations, which meant that neither party had to fully agree with the other’s goals, nor had to assume that their interests must align. In other words, it intimated that both sides needed to work hard at finding and developing complementary interests, engaging in cooperation wherever possible, and constantly adjusting their relations to reduce conflicts. This connotation of “co-evolution” is in line with the basic political consensus reached by the two sides since the normalization of China–US relations. Dr. Kurt Campbell, Coordinator for Indo–Pacific Affairs at the Biden administration’s National Security Council, and other senior US officials also believe that even though 40 years of American hopes of fundamentally changing China through diplomatic and economic engagement have been proven wrong, a similar risk exists that the Americans will again be proven wrong if they continue to believe that a shift to a competition stance could accomplish what engagement has not, that is, to force China to surrender or collapse. Despite their many differences, both sides need to be willing to treat the other as a major power to achieve “competitive coexistence.” The ideas of “co-evolution” and “competitive coexistence” are, to some extent, positive ideas.

China–US interactions have so far demonstrated that the US goal of changing China and its “whole-of-government” approach to contain China have failed to bring China down or to undermine the leadership of the CPC and its pursuit of a socialist system with Chinese characteristics.

For China, the United States, and the international community, peaceful China–US coexistence is not only necessary but also practical in the current global climate. We live in an era of globalization and both China and the United States are part of this global village. Faced with many non-traditional security

threats, no country can survive alone. The current scientific and technological revolution and the unknown new spaces need China and the United States to engage in joint exploration to ensure human development. China and US can gain from cooperation but will lose from confrontation. In this era of multipolarization, a focus on bipolar confrontation is inconsistent with the interests and well-being of both countries and can only exacerbate the deficits in global governance and the “tragedy of the global commons.” It is difficult to imagine the catastrophe to human society that would occur if these two nuclear powers engaged in conflicts and war. It is equally impossible to foresee the negative global consequences of a “new Cold War” between China and the United States. Both countries need to reexamine their bilateral relationship from a global strategic perspective for the good of all humankind. The achievement of peaceful China–US coexistence is not optional; it is compulsory.

A Road Map for China–US Relations

Since the inauguration of the Biden administration, leaders in both China and the United States have spoken twice by phone to provide some strategic guidance for the current and future development of China–US relations, with the high-level diplomatic, economic, and trade interactions between the two countries gaining ground. China has drawn up its Three Bottom Lines and Two Lists, which are the basis for the construction of a new China–US relations framework.

This report advocates that the three “Threes” should be incorporated into any future framework.

Clarifying the Three Basic Lines

No hot war. A war between China and the United States in the nuclear age is unimaginable. Nevertheless, war speculations are being bandied about in both countries. Some US think tanks have even published China–US war scenario reports. Such pessimistic narratives are dangerous. Although the leaders in both countries have explicitly opposed any escalation from competition to conflict, the United States’ focus on enhancing its integrated deterrence strategy in the

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

Indo-Pacific, strengthening its bilateral alliances, forming the AUKUS pact, substantiating the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (also known as the QUAD), and expanding its military presence in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea has only increased the likelihood of an accidental conflict or even a hot war with China.

- It is imperative that the two countries draw red lines to set boundaries for each side to keep the situation under control.
- The United States should dispense with the notion that mechanisms are worthless and reconsider their importance from a crisis management perspective. Crisis management dialogs and mechanisms should be further strengthened and codes and protocols established for crisis de-escalation in the event of a “technical collision.”
- Mil-to-Mil hotlines and exchanges should be resumed, strategic dialogs strengthened, and dialogs between theaters and commands initiated with the aim of better understanding each other’s strategic intentions and avoiding any miscalculations.
- The US-led regimes such as the QUAD and AUKUS appear to be designed to be China-exclusive and are therefore dangerous. To prevent further strategic misjudgments, we appeal to these organizations to establish notification or dialogic mechanisms with China.

No Cold War. United States officials have repeatedly stated that they have no intention to launch a new Cold War against China, and President Joe Biden has explicitly committed to this as well. Nevertheless, the United States has been advocating for some sort of global division by portraying the China-US competition as a competition between “autocracy” and “democracy,” advocating pseudo-multilateralism, hyping a “democratic alliance,” and convening a “Summit for Democracy.” All such moves will not only drive China-US relations into an antagonistic and estranged stance but also compel other countries to take sides, which could result in the emergence of a de facto “new Cold War.”

CICIR

- Both China and the United States need to avoid forming exclusive strategic or security alliances that specifically target each other.
- Both China and the United States should refrain from exploiting multilateral international mechanisms to marginalize each other. Rather than pursuing pseudo-multilateralist divisive circles, they should seek to cooperate to promote UN-centered multilateralism based on international laws.
- Both China and the United States should stop dividing the world by ideology and stop building exclusive alliances based on values and ideologies. The focus should be on respecting each other's values and the engendering of inclusive cooperation and peaceful coexistence.

No decoupling. The China–US economies are deeply interdependent. Therefore, any US decoupling from China would be akin to the dismemberment of a living organism, which would result in both one-way damage and lose-lose outcomes. The recent supply chain crisis and inflation in the United States are a by-product of this US decoupling policy, which have also plagued global supply chains and destabilized the world economy. As the US Trade Representative, Katherine Tai, advocated, instead of decoupling, the world's two largest economies should seek a re-coupling.

- The United States should stop building small exclusive supply chains and consider the international division of industries and global cooperation.
- High-level economic and trade consultations should be resumed as soon as possible so that both sides can logically and calmly discuss issues such as the lifting of US punitive tariffs on Chinese goods and the relaxing of export controls on technology. China should deepen its domestic reforms and expand its opening up to prepare for an upgraded, positive, economic, and trade relationship with the United States.
- Both sides need to enhance their macro-economic policy coordination to promote global economic recovery and ease global

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

inflationary pressures. They should jointly explore global norms and standards in areas such as infrastructure, technology, and the digital world and work together to coordinate on the needed reforms at the WTO.

- China and the United States should explore the possibility of deepening their cooperation under the frameworks of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Upholding the Three Principles

The One China principle. The Taiwan question is the most crucial and the most sensitive in China–US relations. Any careless handling of this could significantly damage the current fragile bilateral ties. The One China principle has been the cornerstone for the stable development of bilateral relations over the past few decades. However, the then-President-elect Donald Trump took a congratulatory phone call from Tsai Ing-wen, the leader of the Taiwan authorities, and later signed several Taiwan-related bills, such as the Taiwan Travel Act, and also upgraded the quality and quantity of US arms sales to Taiwan. All these actions have serious impacts on the One China principle. Both the Trump and Biden administrations have flagrantly claimed the so-called “Six Assurances” as the policy basis for US relations with Taiwan, have continued to elevate their substantive ties with Taiwan, and have rallied their allies to endorse Taiwan. This obvious disregard for the sanctity of the One China principle and the refusal of the Taiwan authorities to recognize the 1992 Consensus could have severe repercussions across the Taiwan Strait.

- The United States should be fully aware that both the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan belong to One China and that Taiwan is an integral part of Chinese territory. Therefore, if Taiwan pro-independence forces provoke China, China has the right to resort to any necessary means. As the Chinese government will always honor its solemn commitment to upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China, there is no room for compromise or concession.

- In an effort to maintain China–US relations and stability across the Taiwan Strait, the United States should abide by the One China

principle and the three China–US Joint Communiqués, deal seriously with any Taiwan-related issues, and restrain from provoking the Taiwan pro-independence forces. To this end, the United States should consider at least taking the following actions: reduce the US warship transits in the Taiwan Strait, cease calling for international support for Taiwan, reduce the scale and frequency of arms sales to Taiwan, stop assisting Taiwan in its pursuit of so-called “international space,” and return to the status where China and the US jointly restrict support to the Taiwan pro-independence forces.

The principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Non-interference in internal affairs is an important principle enshrined in the UN Charter, a basic norm governing international relations, and one of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that China has long adhered to. However, by consistently waving its so-called “democracy” and “human rights” banners, the United States has been persistently interfering in China’s internal affairs by criticizing its ideology and questioning China’s policies in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. The Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, stated that to maintain a stable bilateral relationship, it is necessary to respect each other’s territorial sovereignty, social systems, and development paths, and not impose any will or model on the other. As China has never interfered in the internal affairs of the United States, we expect the US to treat China in the same manner and cease its interference in China’s internal affairs.

- The United States should not challenge, slander, or make any attempts to subvert China’s system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which is our core interest and will always be preserved.
- The United States should not attempt to impede or interrupt China’s development and therefore, should remove all unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdictions against China as soon as possible.
- The United States should stop supporting and encouraging the destabilizing behaviors associated with the Hong Kong-based anti-China, anti-government forces, cease its slandering of China’s policies and counter-terrorism efforts in Xinjiang, re-list the East Turkistan

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

Islamic Movement as a terrorist group, and stop attacking China's policies in Tibet and its other ethnic and religious policies.

The principle of expanding common ground while resolving differences. As Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed, as long as both sides uphold mutual respect, expand their common ground while resolving differences, maintain strategic patience, and remain unperturbed by individual incidents or particular comments, positive and progressive China–US relations could be maintained. Expanding the common ground while resolving differences requires the identification of intrinsic commonalities and the finding of appropriate solutions to address any differences. In other words, if both countries seek to expand common ground, be willing to compromise to develop a mutual relationship based on understanding, and cease the proliferation of erroneous ideas, all divergence will be gradually removed and the differences resolved.

- China and the United States have significant differences in their national conditions, histories, cultures, and developmental stages; however, these differences should not shadow the mainstream bilateral relations. As the world's major powers, China and the United States are both responsible for sustaining global strategic stability; therefore, it is essential that they both focus on achieving consensus and promoting bilateral relations based on coordination, cooperation, and stability.

- China and the United States must constructively and sensitively manage their differences to assure the world of a stable and predictable future.

Promoting Cooperation at Three Levels

In the spirit of cooperation and a win-win outcome, both sides need to find the common denominator for their bilateral relations and global and regional responsibilities.

At the Bilateral Level

- People-to-people exchanges should be resumed as soon as possible. Both

CICIR

countries need to consider relaxing the current visa restrictions and encouraging academic and student exchanges. The United States should reconsider its unnecessary visa restrictions on Chinese journalists and certain other visitors and dispense with its so-called “China Initiative” as soon as possible.

- China and the United States should seek to cooperate in areas such as infrastructure, power grids, green transportation, new energy, automobiles, and carbon capture and recycling.

- China and the United States should re-establish effective high-level communication mechanisms that ensure regular leader exchanges and institutional dialogs in the fields of trade and economy, climate change, military security, and law enforcement.

At the Regional Level

- The DPRK nuclear issue. Based on a thorough review of past experiences and lessons in handling the DPRK nuclear issue, China and the United States should strengthen their cooperation to achieve denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

- The Iran nuclear issue. The United States should unconditionally return to the Iran nuclear agreement as early as possible to enable the full implementation of the deal under the “P5+1” framework to defuse potential regional security risks.

- The Afghan issue. China and the United States should cooperate to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, promote economic growth, and ensure regional stability.

At the Global Level

- Climate change. China has been committed to global climate governance for many years and has made a solemn pledge to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, for which a package of domestic measures has already been deployed. The Chinese people believe promises must be kept and actions must be resolute. Therefore, China and the United States should join hands with Europe and other countries to implement the Paris Agreement, promote cooperation and mutual trust between governments, enterprises, and R&D, and boost clean energy investments. To

Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence

regain its global credibility, the United States, in particular, should overcome its domestic contradictions and be consistent in its support for the establishment of a sustainable multilateral cooperative mechanism to deal with climate change.

- COVID-19. The United States should stop politicizing the tracking of the pandemic's origin. Under the World Health Organization framework, China and the United States should strengthen their coordination and cooperation on global vaccine distribution. Both governments should encourage communication and sharing of COVID-19 control and treatment measures between non-government actors, such as universities, research institutes, medical experts, and frontline workers. Companies from both countries should actively cooperate on the production and procurement of anti-epidemic supplies.

- Global norms. China and the United States should focus on strengthening their coordination rather than engaging in vicious competition. To this end, to narrow differences and build common norms, dialogs should be initiated in such areas as cyberspace, outer space, social development, and even the rule of law and human rights. Special attention should be given to consultation and cooperation over major reforms to the UN, WTO, IMF, and other international institutions. In a word, as the two major 21st-century global powers, China and the US must jointly shoulder their responsibilities to ensure world peace and stability.