

# U.S.-China Relations Since 1949: A Study in Engagement and Containment

## 1. Introduction: 1949 - 2003

*Taiwan, the Nixon-Mao Rapprochement, Human Rights, and China's Rise.*

Since 1949, mainland China has been governed as the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) by the Chinese Communist Party, which won the civil war against the Chinese Nationalist Party led by Chiang Kai-shek, who had ruled China as the Republic of China (ROC) since 1928. American intervention and protection since 1950 helped Chiang and his supporters, who had retreated to the island of Taiwan in 1949, to survive there. The United States started to contain the PRC in 1950 when it put its Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits, preventing the PRC from taking over Taiwan and achieving the unification of China.

On mainland China, the Communist government led by Mao Zedong first endeavored to consolidate its rule domestically. Following Mao's policy of "leaning to one side" in external relations, the PRC allied itself closely with the Soviet Union governed by Joseph Stalin. Economically it followed the Soviet model of a planned economy and prioritized building heavy industries during the first decade of the PRC in the 1950s. (Wested, pp. 310-315?.) War-devastated China, hoping for generous Soviet aid, received instead a limited loan of \$300 million over five years, and Russian technical assistance to build a number of heavy industrial plants. (Ibid. pp. 314-315.?) In 1957, its Soviet partner agreed to help China build nuclear weapons in exchange for uranium. () After the death of

Stalin in 1953, Mao and Stalin's heir Nikita Khrushchev had serious disagreements and disputes on ideology and other matters. (J. A. G. Roberts, pp. 271-272.) As a result, the two countries split apart and slipped into so hostile a mode during the 1960s that their armies, massed along their long common border, carried out skirmishes against each other. () As the Soviet leaders turned against China, they also withdrew their scientists and technologists who had come to help China develop nuclear weapons. (Roberts, p. 272.)

In 1971, the mutual antagonism of China and America towards the Soviet Union led U.S. President Richard Nixon and U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to meet Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai in order to effect a rapprochement between America and China. This was a landmark meeting celebrated in the John Adams opera, "Nixon in China." After the meeting the two countries issued a statement known as the Shanghai Communiqué. In connection with the Soviet threat, there was a statement that neither "side should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony." (Henry Kissinger, *On China*, New York: the Penguin Press, 2011, p. 270.) The passage of lasting importance in the Shanghai Communiqué was on Taiwan.

The U.S. side declared: "The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan." (Ibid., pp. 271-272.)

Following this meeting, the U.S. did withdraw its military forces from Taiwan completely by 1979. The improvement in U.S.-China relations led also to the recognition of the PRC by America in 1979 under President Jimmy Carter, and to the delegates from the PRC taking over the seats of the delegates of the ROC at the United Nations (UN).

After Mao's death in 1976, China's collective leadership guided by Deng Xiaoping followed a policy known as "reform and opening-up" (*gaige kaifang* 改革开放), which enabled China to transform itself into a modern country and join the world economy, starting from the end of 1978. Deng visited the U.S. in 1979 during the Carter administration and made a good impression on the American Public. () Initially, the West looked favorably upon China's political reform and economic opening up, considering that it might not only create more opportunities for the Western business community, but also lead mainland China onto the path of becoming a liberal democracy as its people became better off.

The Carter administration did, however, take a strongly critical line with China on the issue of human rights. During the early 1970s, U.S. was not in a position to offer itself as a champion of human rights as its conduct in the Vietnam war was not above reproach. However even before the Vietnam war ended, the U.S. Congress, in 1974, wanted the executive branch of the U.S. government to assume a leading role in promoting human rights and democracy around the world. (Statement by: Roberta Cohen, Nonresident Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution, "Integrating Human Rights in US Foreign Policy: The History the Challenges, And the Criteria for an Effective Policy." Foreign Service Institute, 2008.) As a democratic country, the American system of government included the

political and civil rights stipulated in the United Nations (UN) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), such as periodic elections, freedom of speech, assembly, and press, among others. By contrast, the Communist countries denied their peoples many of these democratic rights. This was the time of the Cold War, when Western democracies led by the U.S. were ranged ideologically and militarily against the Communist countries. The American democratic identity enabled it to claim the moral high ground in exposing the human rights violations of the Communist countries to international censure. However, in the early 1970s Henry Kissinger was putting into effect a policy of rapprochement with China and détente with the Soviet bloc. Regarding human rights as other countries' domestic affairs, he did not want to risk damaging American bilateral relations with allies and friends by introducing extraneous moral considerations. (Ibid.) Furthermore, he believed that "neither the U.S. security interest nor the human rights cause would be served by singling out individual states for public obloquy." (Ibid.) As Congress wanted human rights to play a key role in American foreign policy, the Department of State under Kissinger and Congress were at odds on this issue.

A major change occurred in 1977, two years after the ending of the Vietnam War. A new election put Jimmy Carter in charge of the executive branch of the U.S., and President Carter was more receptive to the Congressional point of view than Henry Kissinger had been. President Carter agreed with Congress that promoting human rights and democracy in the world was a way of asserting U.S. moral leadership as well as buttressing U.S. national security. (Ibid.) To counter the argument that human rights were strictly a country's domestic affairs, President Carter asserted that no UN member state could claim that mistreatment of its own citizens was solely its own business. (Ibid.) Such an assertion seems to have been based on the

position that the existence of UN human rights laws rendered the human rights situation in any UN member country a matter of international concern. The Carter administration took the view that the U.S. had the legal right and responsibility to protect and promote human rights anywhere in the world. (Ibid.) Beginning in 1977, the State Department issued an annual Country Report on Human Rights Practices on all UN member states and all states receiving U.S. assistance. (Council on Foreign Relations, Department of State. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.” Available in <http://www.cfc.org/human-rights/department-state-country-report-human-right-practices/p10115>.) From then on, the U.S. has increasingly assumed the role of an assessor of other countries’ human rights records, reprimanding alleged offenders, and advising them on ways to improve their domestic human rights situations. (Statement by: Roberta Cohen...)

China in particular has been singled out by the U.S. for sustained criticism on human rights issues. Whatever the merits of the U.S. case, there can be little doubt that the U.S. has used the issue as a political tool against China. Further discussion of human rights and U.S. - China relations is contained in Appendix A.

In 2001, George W. Bush was elected the U.S. President, and he was at first inclined to take a tough stance towards China. However, the September 11th terror attack turned Washington’s attention to countries in the Middle East and Afghanistan where the terrorists originated. Terror aside, the Middle East has always been an important area to the United States because of its rich oil resources. In 2001, the U.S. sought China’s agreement to its invasion of Afghanistan. The Chinese government’s acquiescence temporarily softened the Bush administration’s attitude towards China. As the Chinese economy continued its growth trajectory, especially after China entered the World Trade Organization

(WTO) in 2001, and as its military forces became stronger and more modern, the U.S. again hastened to take up the position of treating China as a threat, and expanded its efforts to contain China. Soon after the U.S. ended the war against Iraq in 2003, it progressively shifted more military forces to the Asia-Pacific region. The main purpose for these moves was to contain China.

The foregoing illustrates how U.S. policy towards China has swung between the two approaches often characterized as *engagement* and *containment*. The shift from one to the other is especially clear in the case of the Obama Administration, which moved decisively from initial engagement (see section 3) to later containment (section 4). The latter posture was emphatically sustained under President Trump (section 5). Before turning to these two more recent Administrations, we discuss some general aspects of engagement in the U.S.-China context.

## 2. U.S.-China Engagement: Political, Societal, and Economic Aspects

### 2.1 *The Political Aspect of Engagement*

Containment of China has been a big negative part of U.S.-China relations. There has also been an important and notably positive part, the “engagement” side of their relationship. The political aspect of the engagement could be considered to have begun after the rapprochement between the two countries initiated by the

meeting of Nixon and Mao in 1971. However, active political contacts between the governments and the people of the two countries did not begin until Deng Xiaoping's reform and opening up in the late 1970s. After the U.S. recognized China at the beginning of 1979, the two countries each established an embassy and set up many consular offices in the other's country. The American and Chinese presidents visited each other's country to conduct official business, to carry out high-level dialogue and to build friendly relations. Officials of the two countries at various levels, including military officials, U.S. state governors and Chinese heads of provinces, and mayors of cities, also had exchange visits. Chinese and American Officials continued to meet for dialogues, such as the U.S.- China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, and the Human Rights Dialogue. There have even been rare occasions, in 2013 and 2014, when the Chinese and the American military exercised together in Hawaii. Probably motivated by enhancing their commercial relations, quite a few Chinese and American cities, such as Shanghai and San Francisco, have become twin or sister cities with each other. The Confucius Institute, funded largely by China to teach Chinese language and culture all over the world, similar to the French Alliance Francaise, has been operating in many American universities since its inception in 2004. However, rising political tension and fear of Chinese influence led to the closing of some of them by their American host universities in 2019.

## *2.2 The Societal Aspect of Engagement*

During the last four decades, in addition to official contacts and exchanges between the two governments, the Chinese and American people have interacted in a positive and mutually beneficial way in a large number of areas. After Deng Xiaoping started sending government-funded Chinese students to the U.S. for higher education in the 1980s, those who could afford an expensive American

university education have been sending their children to America, to learn especially modern science and technology, subjects with good job prospects. As many Chinese families have become better off, an increasingly larger number of Chinese students have come to study in the U.S. There were nearly 100,000 Chinese students in America in 2008/09; ten years later in 2018/19 the number increased to nearly 370,000. (*Statista*, available online.) This has been a mutually beneficial situation: in return for acquiring a good education, the young Chinese have contributed to American prosperity through the billions of US dollars they paid to the colleges and spent in America. The traffic has not been entirely one way: some American students have come to China to study Chinese language, history and culture. The two-way tourist traffic has also been another positive development. As Chinese people grew rich enough to travel abroad, an increasing number have been visiting America as tourists.

There are many kinds of Chinese-American cultural exchanges that have contributed to the two peoples' appreciation of each other's culture. Examples include regular showing of Hollywood movies in China, and the exhibition of the Chinese terra-cotta army and ancient bronzes in the United States. The products of American artworks and those produced by Chinese artists have been exhibited in each other's country, and American and Chinese musicians and dancers have also performed in each other's country. Chinese restaurants have flourished in America because of the appeal of the Chinese cuisine. MacDonald's hamburgers, Kentucky Fried Chicken and other American brands such as Starbucks have flourished in China. Personal and the cultural exchanges have been a significant aspect of Sino-American engagement. This tranquil societal engagement of American and Chinese people directly with each other has been a deeply significant part of the overall engagement that seldom captured headlines.



### *2.3 The Economic Aspect of Engagement*

A vital area of U.S.-China engagement is economic: the American direct investment in China and the trade between the two countries. Since the 1980s China's large and inexpensive labor force and its advantages in manufacturing have attracted an increasing number of American companies to invest in China to produce manufactured goods and sell them in America. It has been a very profitable business for these American companies, and the American consumers have also benefited by the cheapness of the goods imported from China. Although Chinese workers' wages have been low, if they were migrant workers their income might well have been higher than what they could eke out from their farms. The export earnings buoyed up the Chinese economy. By 2015 the U.S.- China trade had increased so much that the two countries had become each other's largest trading partner. While the U.S.- China trade benefited both countries, there were problems the two countries needed to tackle: one of these has been the imbalance of imports and exports between them.

Investment by Chinese companies in American ones has also been increasing from the beginning of the 21st century. Chinese companies have been investing several hundred millions of dollars each year in America from then until 2010, when they bought 3.3 billion dollars worth of American assets. (Statista, "Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China in the United States from 2000 to 2018.") Since 2010 their annual direct investment in the U.S. accelerated at an increasing pace to tens of billions from 2016 to the beginning of 2018 when they purchased iconic American companies like the Waldorf Astoria, The Chicago Stock Exchange, GE Appliances, and Smithfield Food. After March 2018, when the U.S. administration under President Donald Trump initiated a "Trade War" against China (see section

5), and made Chinese acquisition of U.S. companies very difficult, Chinese companies' investment dipped to \$1.62 billion in 2019 as a result. (Ibid.; Chris Morris, "10 Iconic American Companies Owned By Chinese Investors", Special to [CNBC.com](http://CNBC.com). Available online.)

### 3. U.S.-China Engagement Under President Barack Obama

#### *3.1 Hu Jintao Holds Out His Hand to Obama*

Hoping to strengthen the engagement side of the bilateral relationship, soon after Obama became President-elect, China's President Hu Jintao held a lengthy conversation over the phone with him on November 8, letting him know that the Chinese government was about to "adopt powerful measures to restore the market as early as possible", in addition to advocating closer U.S. China cooperation and exchanges. ("Chinese President Hu Jintao Holds Telephone Conversation with U.S. President-elect Obama", 2008/11/8 published by the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Ireland.) The very next day, on November 9, the State Council of China announced a massive stimulus package, the prompt implementation of which not only kept the Chinese economy on the path of growth but also helped other countries' economic recovery. (David Barbosa, "China Unveils Sweeping Plan for Economy," *New York Times*, November 9, 2008. Available online. Michael S. Arnold, "China's Rebound Eases Slump Fear," *Wall Street Journal*, August 31, 2010. Available online to subscribers.) The American government recognized this as a positive move by the Chinese. Soon after Obama assumed the U.S. presidency in January 2009, the U.S. Congress also enacted a

massive stimulus package to help the America economy out of the Great Recession. The beginning of Obama’s presidency seemed to bode well for Sino-American engagement.

### *3.2 Obama’s 2009 State Visit to China*

President Obama’s choice to visit China during the first year of his presidency in November 2009 suggested the importance he placed on the bilateral relationship. During Obama’s visit the Hu administration seemed insufficiently yielding to the U.S. demands, and was criticized for placing too many constraints on the American President’s movements and activities. (Helene Cooper, “China Holds Firm on Major Issues in Obama’s Visit,” *New York Times*, November 17, 2009. Kerry Brown, *Hu Jintao: China’s Silent Ruler*, Singapore, New Jersey, London: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2012, p. 113.) Despite his displeasure, Obama nevertheless agreed with his Chinese hosts to put out a joint statement that painted so positive a picture of Sino-U.S. relations, based on the remarks made by the two Presidents to each other, as to suggest that the two countries had been and will be long-term allies and partners.

Referring to China’s rise, President Obama said that “the United States welcomes China’s efforts in playing a greater role on the world stage — a role in which a growing economy is joined by growing responsibilities.” (“Hu Jintao And Barack Obama, Remarks On their Meetings and Joint Statement, Nov. 17, 2009.” put out by the USC University of Southern California. china.usc.edu. Available on line.) He mentioned that China’s partnership has proved “critical in our effort to pull ourselves out of the worst recession in generations.” (Ibid.) The two Presidents expressed their willingness to act on the basis of mutual benefit and reciprocity to deepen their cooperation on counterterrorism, climate change, law enforcement,

science, technology, outer space, civil aviation, agriculture, health, and other fields. They would continue to act in the spirit of equality, mutual respect, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and engage in dialogue on such issues as human rights and religion in order to enhance understanding, reduce differences and broaden common grounds. (Ibid.) They reaffirmed the principle of respecting each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Ibid.) The two sides reiterated that they would continue to have consultations on an equal footing to properly resolve and address the economic and trade frictions in a joint effort to uphold the sound and steady growth of their business ties and trade. (Ibid.) They admitted that the United States and China are more prosperous and secure because of their cooperation, and agreed to continue to adopt a long-term perspective, and work together to build a positive, cooperative and comprehensive China-U.S. relationship for the 21st century.

### *3.3 Hu Jintao's 2011 State Visit to the U.S.*

In January 2011, China's President Hu Jintao was invited to visit the United States. The U.S. accorded Hu the full-honors of a state visit, everything went smoothly including the news conference, and the Chinese official press considered the visit a success. (Ian Johnston, "For China, Relief After a Successful Trip," *New York Times*, January 21, 2011. Available online.) The White House Office of the Press Secretary released a forty-one point U.S. - China Joint Statement on January 19, 2011 on Hu's visit. This joint statement was as positive as the one produced in 2009 on Obama's visit to China, reiterating or reaffirming most of the good things said in the earlier statement. ("U.S.-China Joint Statement," released by the White House Office of the Press Secretary on January 19, 2011.) As it contained more details on specific issues, it was a good deal longer than the 2009 one. (Ibid.)

### 3.4 *The 2011 U.S. - China Joint Statement*

The 2011 U.S - China Joint Statement told the world that the two Presidents reviewed the progress made in the relationship since President Obama's November 2009 State Visit to China and reaffirmed their commitment to building a positive, cooperative and comprehensive U.S. - China relationship for the 21st century, which would serve the interests of the American and Chinese peoples and of the global community. With regard to Taiwan they reaffirmed the three Joint Communiqués issued by the U.S. and China that acknowledged Taiwan as a part of China. In order to reassure China that the U.S. was not encouraging Taiwan to become independent, they included the point of "respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity." As if to push back against the theory of "clash of civilizations" popularized in the West by Samuel P. Huntington, the Joint Statement pointed out that the United States and China have set an example of positive cooperation between countries with different political systems, historical and culture backgrounds, and levels of economic development. (Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*, India: Penguin Random House India, 2016.) Addressing the perceived lack of trust between the U.S. and China, the Joint Statement maintained that two sides agreed to nurture their bilateral strategic trust so as to enhance their relationship. The United States reiterated that it welcomed a strong, prosperous and successful China that plays a greater role in world affairs. Addressing Chinese sensitivity to U.S. criticism of the path of its development, the Joint Statement affirmed that the United States and China understood that each country and its people have the right to choose their own path, and all countries should respect each other's choice of a development model. On the military front, both sides recognized that a healthy, stable, and reliable military-to-military relationship is an essential part of their cooperative comprehensive relationship. They agreed that there is a need for

enhanced dialogue and communications on all levels to reduce misunderstanding, miscalculation and misperception. In addition to reaffirming their commitment to the large areas of cooperation mentioned in the 2009 Joint Statement, they agreed to: counter violent extremism; prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery; strengthen nuclear security, address cyber security; deepen dialogue and exchanges in the field of space; eliminate infectious diseases and hunger; end extreme poverty; respond effectively to the challenge of climate change; counter piracy; prevent and mitigate disasters; fight transnational crime; and combat human trafficking.

In the area of Sino-U.S. economic relationships, both countries recognized the vital importance of working together to build a cooperative economic partnership of mutual respect and mutual benefit to both countries and to the global economy. Both countries opposed trade and investment protectionism. The two countries agreed to work proactively to resolve bilateral trade and investment disputes in a constructive, cooperative, and mutually beneficial way. On the issue of insufficient protection for U.S. companies' intellectual property, China promised to continue to strengthen its efforts to protect IPR, including by conducting audits to ensure that government agencies at all levels use legitimate software, and by publishing the auditing results as required by Chinese law. The two Presidents concurred on the importance of balanced trade. They acknowledged the importance of fostering open, fair, and transparent investment environments to their domestic economies and to the global economy, and reaffirmed their commitment to the ongoing bilateral investment treaty (BIT) negotiations. They recognized that a successfully negotiated BIT would support an open global economy by facilitating and protecting investment, and by enhancing transparency and predictability for investors of both countries. Responding to the criticisms that China has been

underrepresented in international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the Presidents of the two countries pledged to work together to strengthen the global financial system and to reform the international financial architecture. In spite of the problems, they acknowledged the deep and robust nature of their commercial relationship, and welcomed the mutual benefits resulting from the relationship. They agreed to continue working to make concrete progress on the bilateral economic relationship through the established mechanisms, such as the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, and the Strategic and Economic Dialogue. Internationally, both sides undertook to jointly promote efforts to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Among these goals were the eradication of poverty and hunger, promotion of gender equality, universal primary education, reducing child mortality, and combating diseases.

On regional and global security challenges, both agreed to enhance communication and coordination so as to address pressing regional and global challenges to advance global security and peace. The two countries appeared to see eye-to-eye on Iran, North Korea, the Sudan (which had a civil war then), and on the subject of international nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Referring to the disputes over islands in the South and East China Seas between China and its neighbors, the Joint Statement maintained that the two sides agreed to enhance communications and coordination in the Asia-Pacific region in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, and to work together with other Asia-Pacific countries, including through multilateral institutions, to promote peace, stability, and prosperity.

The two countries have been supporting a number of cooperative projects. Several were addressing the challenges of climate change, energy security, and environmental protection. The U.S.-China Clean Energy Research Center, and the U.S.-China Ten Year Framework on Energy and Environmental Cooperation were examples. Another example was the U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange that aimed to enhance and strengthen ties between the citizens of the two countries in a wide range of areas that included culture, education, science and technology, sports, health, and women's issues. (For further information, see "Facts on U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange," put out by U.S. Embassy & Consulate in China, July 10, 2014. Available on line.) This project was a concrete step between the U.S. and China to expand people-to-people exchanges. The 2011 Joint Statement declared that the United States and China have long supported deeper and broader people-to-people ties as part of a larger effort to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit.

The U.S.-China Joint Statement showed that the U.S. and China have been maintaining diplomatic exchanges from the highest level downwards in as amicable a way as both sides could manage. They have also been carrying on dialogues to address issues that have been troubling them, or trying to improve certain areas of their relationship. The Statement confirms that the two countries have been working cooperatively and engaging with one another successfully in many different areas on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. The two countries acknowledged that they have many areas of common interest which they agreed to cooperate on, such as climate change, prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, violent extremism, elimination of hunger, extreme poverty, and certain infectious diseases, and combating



international crime. While admitting to problems in their commercial relations, they acknowledged that it had been “deep and robust” and they “welcomed the mutual benefit.” The two countries agreed to work together and make efforts to improve virtually all areas of their relationship, in a comprehensive way. Had they done so, they would have developed a real partnership in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity not only bilaterally but globally. Looking back, the engagement side of the U.S.-China relationship appears to have reached the high point around the time near the end of Hu Jintao’s Presidency in China and the beginning of Barack Obama’s Presidency in America. The words ‘cooperation’ and ‘cooperative’ appeared thirty-one times in this document.

#### 4. Obama’s ‘Rebalancing’ and ‘Pivot to Asia’: Return to Containment.

When Obama first took over the American presidency in January 2009, he appeared to put good U.S.-China relations at the center of his Asian strategy. But this was soon to change. During the same year, the Obama administration signaled an important foreign policy ‘pivot’ from the costly intervention in the Middle East to Asia, the world’s most populous and the fastest growing economic zone. (Mark E. Manyin, *et al.* coordinator, “Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration’s ‘Rebalancing’ toward Asia”, *CRS Report for Congress*, brought out on March 28, 2012, by the Congressional Research Service. p.6.) This foreign policy initiative, repackaged in 2011 as ‘rebalancing into the Asia-Pacific’, was a move associated with projecting U.S. power, especially military power, and enhancing U.S. influence, and “to provide a balance to China’s rising influence” in the region that has become the center of gravity for U.S. foreign policy, national security, and economic interest. (Ibid., Summary and pp. 1-6.) Another goal underpinning the

shift was to promote U.S. interests by increasing the U.S. role in shaping the norms and rules of this region, particularly as China has emerged, in the U.S. view, “as an ever more influential regional power.” (Ibid., Summary.) Making U.S. power and presence felt in Asia-Pacific was a move to reinforce U.S. dominance in the area where China’s rapidly growing economy and expanding military capacities might pose a challenge to the U.S. (Ibid., pp. 1- 2. 4 and 7.) However, the move was strangely at odds with the U.S.-China Joint Statement in 2011. (See page 10 above.)

#### 4.1 *The Military Component of Rebalancing and the South China Sea issue*

The ‘Rebalancing’ had three components: economic, diplomatic and military. The military component turned out to be the most high-profile with the most concrete expressions of ‘rebalancing’. (Ibid., p.10., Lyle J. Goldstein, “*Meeting China Halfway: How to Defuse the Emerging U.S.-China Rivalry*”: Georgetown University Press, 2015, p. 354.) While shifting U.S. forces from the Middle East to the Far East had already been started by George W. Bush after the end of the Iraq war, “rebalancing” entailed the deployment of 60% of America’s naval and air-force capacities in the Asia-Pacific Region by 2020. (The China Daily “Reporting on the Growing U.S. Military Presence in the Asia-Pacific Region,” updated 2016-11-07.) Among the 60% were advanced reconnaissance aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and electronic surveillance ships. (Ibid; Fu Ying, p. 22.) Apparently, China’s military expansion and modernization provided the driving force behind the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DOD) “Pacific Pivot.” (Ibid., pp.12, 15-16.) It also emerged as the “key issue in the U.S. defense planning.” (Ibid., pp. 15-16.) As the U.S turned its attention to the Asia-Pacific region, tension rose in the South China Sea (SCS) where China had territorial disputes with a number of countries located around the coast of the SCS, Vietnam and the

Philippines in particular. (Fu Ying and Wu Shicun, pp. ?) The relatively low-key disputes between China and other nations on islands in the South China Sea suddenly flared up after the U.S. “pivot,” making this area into a hot spot of potential conflict between the United States and China.

Starting in 2010 during Obama’s presidency, the Chinese noticed an important change in the U.S. position on the SCS territorial dispute. While the U.S. had previously been adhering to a neutral stance among the claimants for islands in the SCS, from 2010 onwards the U.S. showed an inclination to take sides. (Fu Ying and Wu Shicun, *The National Interest*, “South China Sea: How We Got to This Stage”, May 9, 2016, pp. 13 and 15.) Alarmed by the fact that the U.S. was ready to support China’s rival claimants in the SCS territorial dispute, Beijing tried to demonstrate its resolve to defend China’s position by letting it be known that SCS was China’s “core interest.” (Goldstein, pp. 275-277.) The U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, ready to challenge China’s assertion, declared at the ASEAN regional forum held in Hanoi, Vietnam in July 2010, that the U.S. “has a national interest” in the resolution of the SCS dispute and in freedom of navigation. (Ibid., p. 277.) She also encouraged the other claimants to pursue their territorial claims by invoking the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to which, however, the U.S. is not a signatory. (Fu Ying and Wu Shicun, pp. 15-17.)

A stated aim of the 2011 U.S. ‘rebalancing’ was to provide confidence to other Asia-Pacific countries that wanted to resist pressure from Beijing then and in the future. (Many et al., p. 8.) Chinese observers noticed that the U.S. move “obviously contributed to the confidence of the other claimants in the South China Sea to challenge China, especially Vietnam and the Philippines”. (Fu Ying and Wu Shicun, p.15.) In Beijing’s view, the hand of the U.S. was behind the rising tension

between China and the Southeast Asian countries, which were emboldened by the U.S. support to act more assertively towards China in pursuit of their claims. (Ibid., pp. 15-17.) American support for the other claimants heightened Beijing's fear of failing to safeguard China's territorial integrity, as its Qing dynasty predecessor had done during the 19th century. (Fu Ying and Wu Shicun, pp. 21-23.) It strengthened China's determination to defend its claims.

#### *4.2 The Economic Component of Rebalancing*

Although officials of the Obama administration claimed that the 'rebalancing' was not aimed at any one country, it was difficult for Beijing not to see it as a major move aimed at containing China even more strenuously, extending it to the entire region where China was located, as well as in a more comprehensive way. (Cui Lirue, "Managing Strategic Competition Between China and the U.S.", *China-U.S. Focus Digest*, Vol., 11, August 2016, pp. 39-41. Lyle J. Goldstein...p. 354-355.) The 'rebalancing' to the Asia-Pacific drew the U.S. government's attention to the regional economic integration movement under discussion between the 10 members of ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan and South Korea), or the even larger group of ASEAN + 6, which includes in addition Australia, New Zealand and India forming a free trade area (FTA). When China was negotiating the sixteen nation (ASEAN + 6) Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the U.S., not wanting to miss out on the rising prosperity of this region, led the negotiation of an alternative arrangement called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) which included twelve Pacific-rim nations, but excluded China, the country whose economic vitality and growth played a major part in the economic expansion and dynamism of this region. (Manyin et al., pp. 20-23.) Calling for the TPP's swift ratification, Obama told the world that "rules of trade in the Asia-Pacific must be written by America, not China." (Reuters report, 'Our rules, not China's': Obama

invokes Beijing threat in defense of TPP trade deal, 3 May, 2016. Updated 4 years ago. Available online.) Obama reportedly wrote in the Washington Post that “America should write the rules. America should call the shots. Other countries should play by the rules that America and our partners set, and not the other way around.” (Ibid.) But could the Chinese trust an American President whose words were contradicted by his actions, and who excluded China from a free trade deal in China’s own region?

#### *4.3 The Diplomatic Component of Rebalancing*

The diplomatic component of this initiative, which called for the U.S. to build new partnerships and reinvigorate old alliances with nations in this region, appeared to be a move to encourage countries in the Asia-Pacific to join the U.S. in curbing China’s rise. (Manyin et al., pp. 1-6, 11-12.) One of the first steps was to station U.S. Marines for the first time in Australia. (Manyin et al, p. 5; Lyle J Goldstein, p. 278.) The deployment was seen as an act to counter China’s growing influence. (BBC News, “Obama visit: Australia agrees to U.S. Marine deployment plan,” 16 November 2011.) The U.S. also planned to station warships in Singapore for the first time. (Lyle J. Goldstein, p. ?; Manyin et al., p. 5.) Singapore is located in the Straits of Malacca, through which a huge volume of the world’s shipping, including a high percentage of China’s oil supply from the Middle East, passes before reaching SCS. (MAP?) A U.S. naval presence there could act as a stranglehold on China’s oil supply in case of conflict between them. Another move involved developing a strategic partnership with Communist Vietnam, a former U.S. enemy and among China’s most active rival claimants for islands in the SCS. In July 2011, the U.S. held a new round of joint exercises with the Vietnamese navy in the SCS. (Lyle J Goldstein, p. 277.) During the same year, America revived the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty that enabled American forces

to use a number of bases in that country. (Jack Smith, “Policy Bait and Switch,” Global Research, June 13, 2014.) Subsequently the U.S. transferred warships to the Philippines, which was another party in the SCS dispute with China. (Lyle J. Goldstein, pp. 277- 278.) The U.S. also carried out joint exercises with the Philippines navy in the SCS which included specific items such as taking over islands and oil-rig defenses that were obviously related to that country’s dispute with China. (Fu Ying, p. 22 of 43.) Even more alarming to the Chinese was an announcement by Admiral Johnathan Greenert in February 2014 that the U.S. would support the Philippines in the event of a China-Philippines conflict. (Fu Ying, p. 20 of 43.)

Besides the disputes between China and some of its coastal neighbors, China also had been having a dispute with Japan, a U.S. ally, over some tiny islands in the East China Sea. These islands were called Diaoyu by the Chinese, but Senkaku by the Japanese. Here the Chinese noticed a change in the U.S. policy starting in October 2010 from “ambiguous neutrality” to “small-scale intervention” and finally to “emphatic support” for the Japanese claim. In December 2010, the U.S. and Japan held their largest ever military exercise in the East China Sea directed obviously at China. (Lyle J. Goldstein, *Meeting China Halfway, How to Defuse the Emerging US-China Rivalry*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University press, 2015, p. 239.) If Japan and China went to war over these tiny specks of land, the U.S. would be committed to fight on Japan’s side because of their long-standing security ties. (David Brunnstrom, “Update 1 U.S. Stresses Commitment to Defend Japan in Washington Talks”, Reuters, February 14, 2014.)

#### 4.4 China’s Response Under President Xi Jinping

In 2013, in view of the changing situation, Beijing turned from its previous practice of self-restraint so as to maintain friendly relations with these neighboring countries, to a policy of pushing back against the more assertive claimants among them. (Ibid, pp. 15-21.) Since all of the larger Spratly islands were already occupied by other claimants, especially Vietnam and the Philippines, China decided to do what other claimants had been doing for some time, namely to undertake land reclamation, build aircraft runways, and place military facilities on a small number of maritime features, such as the sandbanks and minor reefs it controlled. (Ibid., p. 19.) Although the U.S. media had been silent while China's rivals were carrying out such activities for many years in the past, they were quick to denounce the Chinese reclamations as aggressive acts that infringed upon freedom of navigation by militarizing islands in the SCS. (find sources?) The U.S. military, in addition to intimidating China with warships, including aircraft carriers, and planes patrolling what China considered its territorial waters and airspace, stepped up its surveillance and reconnaissance activities in the SCS. (Fu Ying, pp. 20-21 of 43.) The number of sorties flown by U.S. planes to conduct "close-in" reconnaissance at the South China Sea islands has increased from 260 in 2009 to 1200 in 2014. (Ibid., p. 21 of 43.) The Chinese authorities frequently objected to such U.S. reconnaissance operations, pointing out that they threatened China's national security, damaged China's maritime rights and interests, and undermined Sino-U.S. strategic trust, but to no avail. (China Daily, Report on Growing US Military Presence in the Asia-Pacific Region, Updated 2016-11-25. Available online.)

Starting from 2015, the U.S. began to assert "freedom of navigation" by sending warships sailing within 12 nautical miles of China's reclaimed reefs in the South China Sea. (Fu Ying, p. 21 of 43.) The U.S. also tried to persuade its allies to do

likewise, and some did. Since 12 nautical miles are the internationally recognized territorial waters around islands belonging to a given country, the U.S. action in sending ships into China's territorial waters was demonstrably ignoring, or denying, China's claim of ownership of these islands. Besides protesting against these U.S. activities, the Chinese sometimes sent fighter jets to shadow what they saw as the U.S. offending planes, a situation that carried the risk of collision. () To counter hostile foreign speculation on China's purpose in arming the reclaimed reefs, Beijing explained that the military installations were "mainly for self-defense." ("China Installs Weapons on Contested South China Sea Island, Report Says"—[CNN.com](http://www.cnn.com).)

Despite strong criticism and condemnation by the U.S. government and media, and the unprecedented amount of U.S. military muscle-flexing in the SCS against these fortified reefs, Beijing would not give up these reclaimed islands. ("U.S. Flexes Its Military Muscle Off China"—NBC News, February 24, 2016. "How America and Japan are Pushing Back Against China in the South China Sea" in the National Interest, May 2, 2017. "China Mounts Detailed Defense of South China Sea Reclamation," in Reuters, April 9, 2015.) Beijing defended its reclamation efforts by saying that the area was China's sovereign territory, and that China had the right to do that in its own territory. China did not target any country in these activities, and since all of these islands are far away from the international navigational routes, there was no question that these projects were having any impact on freedom of navigation. (Fu Ying, p. 19 of 43.) China claimed to have launched the project in order to safeguard territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, as well as to better perform many of China's international responsibilities in the SCS, such as maritime search and rescue, disaster prevention and mitigation, maritime science research, navigation safety, meteorological



observation, environmental protection, and provision of public services such as lighthouses. (Fu Ying, p. 19 of 43.)

#### *4.5 The U.S. Preparing for War with China*

Towards the end of President Obama's second term (2012-2016), the intensification of U.S.-China rivalry associated with the U.S. "Pivot" to the Asia-Pacific continued unabated. An authoritative American think-tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense to conduct an assessment of the U.S. rebalance to Asia and to make recommendations to Washington and the U.S. Congress for sustaining the rebalance. (Michael Green et al., *Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025, Capability, Presence, and Partnerships*, Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 19, January 2016. *An Independent Review of U.S. Defense Strategy in the Asia-Pacific*.) The document produced by the CSIS reinforced Washington's assumption that China intended to push America out of the Asia-Pacific region. (Ibid., under *Assessment of the Rebalance to Asia*.) It recommended the American government to continue strengthening its military capability and expanding its military capacity to maintain U.S. military superiority.

In case of war, U.S. Air Force and Navy, equipped with the most advanced weapons, would use the Air-Sea Battle tactic (an operational strategy against the A2/D2 defense China was likely to use) to devastate mainland China with massive strikes to destroy that country's key military assets and bases, and infrastructures, as well as to damage its communications and economy. (Pete Symonds, "A Blueprint for U.S. War with China: Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS) Report," *Globalist Research*, January 25, 2016, available online.) Having in mind the aim of prevailing against China in a potential conflict, the CSIS report

exhorted the U.S. to upgrade existing concepts and accelerate research and the development of new and advanced weapons. (Michael Green et al. sections 4 to 4.7.) With regard to America's allies and partners in the region, the report urged the U.S. to strengthen their military capability in a number of ways, including training their armed forces, enhancing their intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, and conducting joint exercises with their forces in the South and East China Sea, as well as sharing the cost with them. (Ibid., sections 1.4, 2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 3.1.) The report's exhortation to the U.S. Department of Defense to stockpile precision munitions in order to be ready to fight a large-scale high-intensity conflict at a moment's notice surely meant that a war of that kind with China was sufficiently probable that the U.S. should prepare for it. (Ibid. section 3.9.) Further discussion of the possibility of war between the U.S. and China is contained in Appendix B.

#### *4.6 Xi Jinping's New Model of "Major Country Relationship" Between China and the U.S.*

The threat of war together with China's need for peace prompted Xi Jinping to make an effort to bring the engagement side of the U.S.-China relationship to the forefront. He took the opportunity during his 2013 summit with Obama to propose a "new model of major-country relationship" that prioritized peaceful coexistence between the two countries. The major points of his proposal were:

- (1) Avoid confrontation through seeking common ground, shelving differences, and resolving conflicts through dialogue;
- (2) Practice mutual respect, including respect for each other's core interests;
- (3) Strive for win-win cooperation; abandon the zero-sum mentality.

Because of the mistrust between the U.S. and China, Xi's American hosts had misgivings about these fine-sounding proposals and responded to them warily.

From the U.S. point of view, respecting China's core interests could amount to obliging the U.S. to accept China's SCS claims; practicing mutual respect could be taken to mean acknowledging an economically less wealthy and militarily less powerful China as an equal. Xi's attempt to turn the U.S.-China relationship into a more cooperative mode found a lukewarm reception with his American hosts.

## 5. Further Deterioration of the U.S.-China Relationship under President Trump

### 5.1 *The South China Sea, South Korea, and Taiwan*

After President Donald Trump took office in January 2017, his agenda of “putting America first” and increasing military spending seemed consistent with his aim of sustaining the U.S. rebalance to Asia. The new administration's support for a continuation of this policy was demonstrated by an increasingly aggressive display of U.S. military hardware in Chinese waters following the President's inauguration (Robert Windrem and William M. Arkin, “U.S. Flexes Its Muscle Off China,” NBC News, February 24, 2017.) During the same month, the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson with war planes, and a destroyer, patrolled SCS as a “routine operation.” More attack submarines were sent to the West Pacific including SCS. (Ibid.) During the same month, a dozen U.S. fighters were sent to an American military base in Australia that was closest to China, for coalition training and exercises. (Ibid.)

The Trump administration resumed the U.S. Navy's freedom of navigation operations in May 24, 2017. (Idles Ali and Phil Stewart, “The First Under Trump, U.S. Warship Challenging Beijing's Claims in South China Sea”. Reuters, May 24,

2017.) Prior to that date, Trump had put these operations on hold for a few months in order to encourage China to help the U.S. rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. During the same month, the U.S. and Japanese navies conducted a joint show of force in the contested area in the SCS, a type of operation the CSIS report favored (Kris Osborn, "How America and Japan are Pushing Back Against China in the South China Sea.", the National Interest, May 24, 2017.) China continued to react to these "provocations" by protesting against them and shadowing the offending vessels. (?) Also in 2017, the U.S. installed a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile interceptor system in South Korea as recommended by CSIS. (Bill Chappell, "THAAD Missile system in South Korea is Now Operational, U.S. Says" The Two-Way: NPR, May 2, 2017. Available online.)

China considered the THAAD in South Korea as a game changer, with the implication that it could be extended to Japan and elsewhere. This development was perceived as undermining China's own nuclear deterrent which relied on a relatively small nuclear arsenal of some 400 nuclear warheads, as compared to more than 7,000 possessed by the U.S. For these reasons Beijing vehemently opposed this U.S. move, and warned that "the THAAD will bring an arms race in the region." (Gerry Mulling and Chris Buckley, "China Warns of Arms Race After U.S. Deploys Missile Defense in South Korea," the New York times, March 7, 2017.)

Unlike the Obama administration, which reaffirmed the three communiqués (the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972 followed by two others in 1979 and 1982) between the U.S. and China that acknowledged "there is but one China and Taiwan is a part of China," the Trump administration and the U.S. Congress chipped away at this

foundation of U.S.-China relation on Taiwan. Coincidentally, the Taiwanese government, run by the pro-independence Democratic Progress Party under President Tsai Ing-wen, was also behaving in a more challenging way towards Beijing.

In 2018, the U.S. Congress passed a new legislation called the Taiwan Travel Act which allows exchanges between high-ranking U.S. and Taiwan officials. (Samantha Raphelson, “The Taiwan Travel Act Threatens to Further Complicate U.S. - China Relations,” National Public Radio (NPR), April 10, 2018. Available online.) Since the 1979 joint communiqué relating to the establishment of U.S.-China diplomatic relations limited the U.S. official contacts to the People’s Republic of China only, this act could be view as contravening the U.S.-China communiqué. (Taiwan Document Project (TDP): “The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations,” 1 January, 1979.) The Chinese government criticized this new law, describing it as a mistake and a violation of the One-China Policy. (Paul Smith, “How the Taiwan Travel Act Could start a U.S.-China War,” *The National Interest*, March 29 2018. Available online.) Continuing to play the Taiwan card, the U.S. Congress enacted the Taipei Act in 2020 with the stated aim of enhancing Taiwan’s international profile in general, and in particular of stopping the few countries in the world that still recognize Taiwan from switching to mainland China. (See Cory Gardner’s press release under the title of “Gardner, Markey, Rubio, Menendez Introduce Legislation to Defend Taiwan,” on September 5, 2018.) In reality, Taiwan has *de facto* independence as it is completely self-governing, but it is not independent *de jure*, meaning it is not a legally independent entity entitled to international recognition. The Taipei Act would help Taiwan to edge towards *de jure* independence, creating two Chinas or one China, one Taiwan, contradicting the Third U.S.-China Communiqué, in which

the United States government reiterated that the U.S. has no intention of pursuing a policy of “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan.” The Chinese top legislature, the National People’s Congress, expressed strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this act, denouncing it as a serious violation of the one-China principle and the three China-U.S. communiqués. (Xinhuanet editorial, “China’s Top Legislature Firmly Opposes U.S. signing Taiwan-related Act into Law,” 2020-030-27.) They predicted that the act will seriously disrupt China-U.S. relations and cooperation in major fields and will eventually hurt the interests of the United States. (Ibid.) The Trump government has been trying to sell more arms and advanced arms to Taiwan. (Ellen Nakashima and Anne Gearan, “Trump Administration Plans \$8 Billion Fighter Jet Sale to Taiwan, Angering China,” The Washington Post, August 16, 2019. Available online.) The Third Communiqué issued in August 1982 states that the U.S. intends to gradually reduce arms sales to Taiwan; the Trump administration has been doing the opposite. (See Henry Kissinger, *On China*...pp. 381-385.) On top of these provocative U.S. actions, the PRC government was unhappy that the Tsai Ing-wen administration would not recognize the 1992 consensus reached between Taiwan and China, which was that both sides accept the one-China principle. In addition to protestations, the Chinese Navy has been holding live-fire exercises in the Taiwan Strait. (Steven Stashwick, “Chinese Navy to Hold Live-Fire Exercise in Taiwan Strait,” in *The Diplomat*, April 18, 2018.)

As long as the U.S. observes the three U.S.-China communiqués related to Taiwan, and as long as the government of Taiwan takes no action towards independence, China would be willing to allow Taiwan to go on as a *de facto* independent state indefinitely without interfering in Taiwan’s affairs or trying to unite it with China by force. For two decades, from the middle of 1996 to 2016, the three parties have

maintained a stable relationship by keeping to the status quo regarding Taiwan, without conflict or confrontation. While U.S.-China relations deteriorated rapidly after the Obama “pivot” to Asia in 2009, the Obama administration nevertheless observed the triangular U.S.-China-Taiwan relationship as defined by the three communiqués between the U.S. and China since 1971. The more recent U.S. assertive actions relating to the South China Sea and Taiwan, and China’s reaction to the U.S., foreshadows military conflict between these two nuclear-armed countries.

### *5.2 Trump’s Trade War Against China*

As if the heightened tension between the U.S. and China was not sufficiently worrying, Trump opened another front: a trade war against China. His government’s anti-China propaganda machine focused on the negative aspects of the U.S.-China trade and investment relations, stating that trading with China had taken jobs from American workers and hurt U.S. economic growth. Trump was bothered about the large trade imbalance between the two countries, which is partly due to the fact that Chinese tend to save a lot while Americans tend to spend, even sometimes spending on borrowed cash. Being the world’s richest major country, the U.S. has a trade imbalance with most of the countries it trades with, without harming its economy. Trump started to impose tariffs on imports from China to punish that country, beginning around the middle of 2018. China retaliated by imposing tariffs on American imports into China, while the two sides started to negotiate a deal to end the trade war. Delighted with so much money pouring into the U.S. Treasury by taxing the Chinese, Trump did not seem to realize that the tariffs he imposed were paid primarily by American importers, who might or might not be able to pass the charges to Chinese exporters, or increase

prices to U.S. consumers. Modern economists tend to see tariffs as a relic of the past and harmful to the countries resorting to them.

An impartial study of U.S.-China Trade by Oxford Economics commissioned by the US-China Business Council shows how beneficial this trade has been to the U.S. economy and people. (Understanding the US-China Trade Relationship, Prepared for the US-China Business Council by Oxford Economics, January 2017.) Oxford Economics reports that although some U.S. manufacturing jobs have been lost to China and other countries due to the trade deficit, U.S.-China trade “actually supports roughly 2.6 million jobs in the United State across a range of industries, including jobs that Chinese companies have created in America.” (Ibid.) China purchased \$165 billion in goods and services from America in 2015, representing 7.3% of US exports. With a growing Chinese middle class, U.S. exports to China are expected to reach \$520 billion. Since China has become a part of the global supply chain, much of its exports includes parts produced by other countries shipped to China for final assembly. The report continues by asserting that “If the value of these components is subtracted from China’s exports, the US trade deficit with China would be reduced by half - about the same as the US trade deficit with the European Union.” Chinese manufacturers lowered the prices in the U.S. for consumer goods, saving up to \$850 in 2015 for an average American family with an annual income of \$56,500.

Since the U.S.-China trade benefitted both countries economically, and previous U.S. administrations used WTO and bilateral negotiations to tackle trade disputes, why did the Trump administration resort to a tariff war with China? Domestic U.S. politics, and Trump’s appointment of prominent anti-China hawks such as Steven Bannon (of the extreme right-wing Breitbart News) as Presidential Strategist, and



Peter Navarro (the co-author of a book with the title “Death by China”) as the White House Trade Adviser, were important reasons for adopting the hostile approach of using tariffs to coerce China into submitting to U.S. demands, one of which was that China should halt or reverse the “Made in China 2025” plan to upgrade China’s industry to escape the “middle income trap.” But China could not possibly give up a plan which the Chinese leaders considered vital to their long-term economic survival and national security. They did not placate the U.S. by dropping this plan, but they avoided mentioning it. After the negotiations dragged on to the beginning of 2020, the year of the American Presidential election, the Trump administration decided to conclude, on January 15, 2020 a “Phase One” agreement with China, which made a range of concessions to the U.S., including allowing the U.S. to continue to impose 25% tariffs on approximately \$250 billion of Chinese imports, along with 7.5% tariffs on approximately \$120 billion of Chinese imports. (“United States and China Reach Phase One Trade Agreement,” issued by the Office of the United States Trade Representative. The information is available online with a “fact sheet.”) To narrow the trade imbalances, China agreed to purchase an additional \$200 billion of American goods and services above the 2017 level over a two year-period. (Ibid; Peter Eavis, Alan Rappaport and Ana Swanson, “What’s in (and Not in) the U.S.-China Trade Deal,” [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/15/us/politics/us-china-trade-deal.html), January 15, 2020. This article is available online.) The additional Chinese imports included a lot of American farm products such as soybeans, a feature aimed at helping Trump to win the votes of American farmers in the coming election. The American financial services industry stood to gain from China’s commitment to removing barriers to certain branches of American financial services from entering the Chinese market. The conclusion of this trade deal raised hopes for some lowering of tension in U.S. - China. relations.

## 6. Conclusion

President Obama's 2009 "pivot" to Asia-Pacific started the shift of U.S.-China relationship from a dynamic and delicate balance between containment and engagement to one that brought the U.S. military to the forefront of this relationship in a containment role. During Obama's eight years in power, the U.S. seems to have moved towards a heightening of containment of China, and the increase in tension between the two countries, especially in the South China Sea region, reached a level that made war between them seem likely. After President Trump came to power in 2017, he not only continued his predecessor's more strenuous China containment policy; he and the U.S. Congress stopped observing the terms of the Three Communiqués between U.S. and China concerning Taiwan, which had kept the triangular Taiwan-China-U.S. relationship more or less on an even keel for several decades. While the U.S. assisted Taiwan to edge towards *de jure* independence, an exasperated China stepped up military drills, conducted "island encirclement" exercises and sent warships around Taiwan. (Aljazeera: "China holds military drills after U.S. approves arms sale to Taiwan," 14 January, 2019.) Having recruited a number of anti-China hawks, the Trump administration was steered in 2018 into a "Trade War" with China that economists considered damaging to the economy of both countries and the world.

U.S.-China relations plunged to a new low after an unknown coronavirus outbreak that began in China spread worldwide, and U.S. President Trump's slow response to the Covid-19 epidemic in the U.S. led him to use China as a scapegoat for his failure to provide an effective response to this new challenge. The Republican-led Congress joined Trump in blaming China for the viral pandemic. U.S. Senators resorted to creating a U.S. law to undermine China's sovereignty, and pursued

lawsuits in the U.S. courts to seek compensation from China for economic losses from the pandemic by American entities. Further discussion of this is contained in Appendix C.

American President Obama's use of positive words and phrases on Sino-American relations, such as "cooperation," "partnership," and "welcoming a rich and strong China" in the beginning of 2009 gave China's leaders the impression that his administration might accommodate China's rise. But his actions in connection with the "pivot" to Asia-Pacific seemed perplexingly hardline towards China. First, Chinese President Hu Jintao (term 2002-2012) and then his successor Xi Jinping (2012-?) tried to grasp the reality, the international ramifications, and the Obama administration's intentions in connection with the "pivot." Neither of them yielded to the U.S. military intimidation, or to the U.S. attempt to exclude China economically through the TTP and to isolate China diplomatically in its own region, as this rebalancing policy unfolded. Failing to persuade President Obama to form a new major-power relationship with China, President Xi has witnessed a continuous deterioration of the U.S.-China relationship during his presidency.

Perhaps hoping for a return to better relations, prior to the trade war, Chinese journalists have, by and large, refrained from responding in kind to the verbal and written assaults of U.S. politicians and media that denounced and demonized China almost daily. Since the trade war and the coronavirus pandemic, the hostile U.S. narrative on China has taken on a new intensity that so angered and shocked the Chinese as to respond in kind. The relationship between the U.S. and China has reached such a low ebb that economic decoupling and a political Cold War, both of which China hoped to avoid, seem to be in the offing.

This extremely sad and depressing state of affairs between the U.S. and China leaves the world in constant danger of nuclear war and mutually assured destruction from an accidental collision of their military in one of their front-line positions. There is a belief among the Chinese that when China has caught up with the U.S. economically (in terms of per capita income) and militarily, Americans would realize the futility of trying to contain China. When that state is reached, China and the U.S., having avoided war through nuclear deterrence, might find it in the interests of both countries to return to engagement, tone down the hostile rhetoric against each other, and try to accommodate each other's positions through mutual understanding and negotiation based on trust. The two countries might even work together to find solutions for the world's many serious problems.

## Appendix A Human Rights and U.S.- China Relations

### *A.1 U.S. Criticism of China for Human Rights Violations*

The breakup of the Soviet Union into quasi democratic states early in the 1990s, left China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, and Cuba as the only countries under Communist party rule. China's rise as a global power and its leaders' determination to keep the country intact under the rule of the Communist Party of China has rendered it a prime target of the U.S. offensive on human rights violation, if not also on regime change. From that time onwards, the executive branch of the U.S. government, supported by the U.S. media and many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been criticizing the PRC strongly as a regime violating the human rights of various people in China, such as Tibetan and Uyghur separatists, Chinese political dissidents, religious groups, prisoners,

workers, and married couples who wanted more than one child. (See Congressional Research Service report, Thomas Lunn, “Human Rights in China and U.S, Policy: Issues for the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress,” September 17, 2015.) A number of different means have been used, such as giving this subject a prominent place at meetings between U.S. and Chinese leaders, public shaming, trade sanctions, international broadcasting using Voice of American and Radio Free Asia, and repeatedly sponsoring resolutions moving the UN Human Rights Commission to censure China, in addition to the annual Human Rights Country Report that highlighted China’s human rights violations. (Ibid.)

The U.S. Congress had its own activities focusing on China’s human rights shortcomings, such as sponsoring legislations, holding hearings, and authorizing reports that called attention to China’s human rights abuses, as well as writing letters to PRC leaders in support of Chinese prisoners of conscience, and inviting Chinese human rights attorneys and other members of the Chinese civil society to Capitol Hill for staff meetings. (Ibid.) In 2002, the U.S. Congress set up a Congressional-Executive Commission on China that produced an annual report not only on human rights but also on the rule of law in the PRC, covering a large range of subjects such as religious freedom, free flow of information, village elections, labor rights and working conditions, criminal justice, women’s rights, rights of farmers and rural migrants, corporate social responsibilities, freedom of religion, and areas like Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong that had a troubled history of foreign colonial powers trying to wrest them from China during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2002 Annual Report.) After criticizing China’s shortcomings, the U.S. Congress would recommend what to do to make improvements. (Ibid.) The U.S. Congress behaved as if the

government of an independent country like China should submit to U.S. supervision on these matters.

At first the Chinese government's strong desire to maintain good relations with the U.S. overcame their sense of being humiliated by the U.S. on the issue of human rights. They played along to the extent of conducting a U.S.-China human rights dialogue between the officials of the two governments for a number of years. (See Congressional-Executive Commission on China's 2003 Annual Report.) As time went on, the PRC leaders and officials found these and other reports of the U.S. government, scrutinizing China minutely, and criticizing and denouncing its government on human rights, too offensive and demeaning for them to endure. It has given China a bad image in the eyes of the world and diminished China's soft power (non-military power, such as influence and prestige) in the international arena.

Since the Chinese government has valued having a high standing and being respected in the UN, its officials have been particularly vexed by the repeated U.S. attempts to move the UN Commission on Human Rights to censure China on its alleged human rights' violations. (Embassy of the People's Republic of China of the Kingdom of Norway, "China's Statements in UN Human Rights Mechanism," 2004/05/17. The Statements were made by H. E. Ambassador Qiao Zonghuai, Head of the Chinese Delegation, before the vote on the draft resolution entitled "Situation of Human Rights in China," April 23, 1999. Available on line, <http://no.china-embassy.org/eng/wizc/gjzzhy/zgyllhg/rqly/t110863.htm>.) Chinese scholars and officials concerned have devoted a great deal of effort to defending China and to persuading other members in this organ of the UN not to support the U.S. case. (Ibid.) Over the years, the Chinese have been able to rally sufficient

support from members of this UN commission to defeat U.S. motions seven times. (Ibid.)

### A.2 *The Chinese Approach to Human Rights*

During the course of China's decades-long struggle against the U.S., which represented the West in the human rights discourse, the Chinese have developed an alternative Eastern approach to this subject both in theory and in practice.

(Lucienne Bamford, "East vs West Concept of Human Rights," *New World Politics*, Final Essay. Available online:

<http://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/com-student-work-luci-bamford.pdf>.

Weatherly, R. *The Discourse of Human Rights in China*, London, Macmillan Press, 1999.) Evidently, China has been approaching the human rights principles as embodied in the UN treaties as lofty ideals that China has aspired to realize in the course of its development from a poor pre-industrial country to an advanced modern one, implying that China's human rights record must be judged with reference to its stage of development. (Sonya Sceats with Shuan Breslin, "*China and the International Human Rights Systems*," published by Chatham House (The Royal Institute of International Affairs), London, 2012.) Looking at the different countries of the world with their different historical experiences, the Chinese have argued for a flexible approach, allowing the different nations of the world to realize such a difficult and complex thing as human rights in a realistic way, taking into account their particular stages of development, and in the light of their culture, philosophy, value system, and tradition. (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Norway...above.) If this approach were followed, it would appear presumptuous for any nation to pass judgement on another's human rights situation, in total disregard of that country's history and national conditions. (Chinese State Council White Paper on Human Rights (excerpt) 1991. Available online.)

It has not been China's intention to establish a different human rights discourse in order to challenge the Western one, which has emphasized individual freedom and civil and political rights. The U.S. publicity on China's shortcomings on human rights has created an image problem for China. The Chinese human rights discourse seems to be an effort to redeem its image in the eyes of the world, and to inform the world about the Chinese government's achievements in transforming China from a poor backward country to a modern moderately prosperous one. ("White Paper - Fifty Years of Progress in China's Human Rights," put out by the Embassy of the People's Republic of New Zealand (Cook Island Niue) 2003/11/20. Available online in <http://www.chinaembassy.org.nz/eng/zxbd/rqwt/t44286.htm>.) It could also be regarded as an appeal for world understanding of the difficulty the PRC has had and the effort it has made to realize human rights in such a large and populous country at its stage of development. (Ibid.)

Taking China's reality into account, the Chinese regime has given priority to the rights of subsistence and development. This emphasis has also been in line with Chinese traditional governance based on Confucianism, which taught that the state had a responsibility for its people's wellbeing. It is possible to see startling similarities between China's traditional Confucian-style of government and its modern Communist one. Both stress ideology and centralization of authority. The following are statements provided by the Chinese government to explain why it has chosen its particular approach to human rights:



“China is a developing country in the East with a long history and a huge population, but with a relative shortage of resources and wealth. To promote human rights in such a country, China cannot copy the mode of human rights developed in Western countries. China can only start from its own reality and explore a road with its own characteristics. China has, on the basis of summing up its historical experiences and drawing lessons from them, found a road...to promote and develop human rights which is in line with its own reality. This means putting the rights to subsistence and development in the first place, under the conditions of reform, development and stability, and promoting human rights development in an overall way.” (Ibid.)

Confucianism had little to say about the rights of an individual. With ethical social relationship as its chief concern, a discussion based on Confucianism would regard an individual as a member of a collective group: starting with the family, then the society, and the country to which the person belonged. Since the individual owed his life, security, and sustenance to his family, society and state, he had an obligation toward these collective entities. The PRC’s stress on social stability and national unity as collective values has deep roots in Chinese traditional culture and history. The PRC has defended its authority to enact and enforce laws that have put a limit on rights of the individual in the interest of the unity and stability of the collective entity, which is the Chinese state.

Having prioritized the rights to subsistence and development, the Chinese government has been able to lay claim to a praiseworthy human rights record based on the enormous amount of progress made in feeding, clothing, housing, transporting, educating, and providing medical care to its people. (“White Paper - Fifty Years of Progress in China’s Human Rights,”...) The harshest critic of the

Chinese regime cannot deny the fact that the standard of living of the people of the world's most populous country has been raised by a significant extent. The human rights China has prioritized were recognized by the International Covenant on Economic, social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) of the United Nations. (*UN Chronicle*, the Magazine of the United Nations. Available online:

[http://unchronicle.un.org/article/international-human-rights-law-short-history/.](http://unchronicle.un.org/article/international-human-rights-law-short-history/))

The 2003 “White Paper - Fifty Years of Progress in China’s Human Rights,” brought out by the Embassy of the PRC also provided details of improvement in the civil and political rights of all peoples in China from the time of China’s reform and opening up in 1978, by comparison with the time when Mao Zedong was at the helm. Chinese people could move freely within the country and go abroad as students, tourists, do business or even work if they have the means to do so. They could speak their mind much more freely among family and friends. Irrespective of censorship, a large number of newspapers and magazines have been published by private citizens and groups. Private ownership of homes and businesses has become widespread. The number of adherents to the world’s major religions - Buddhism, Christianity, and the indigenous Daoism - has grown by leaps and bounds.

Besides defending China’s human rights situation, since 1999 Beijing has been hitting back by issuing annual reports calling attention to human rights abuses in the U.S. (See the annual reports on the human rights record of the United States published online by the Information Office of the State Council of the PRC.) These reports have cited police violence, maltreatment of prisoners, violence against women, homelessness, and racial discrimination against ethnic minorities, especially Blacks and Latino Americans.

Since the U.S. has ignored its domestic and its allies' human rights abuses while singling out China for criticism, it has been accused by the Chinese of hypocrisy and double standards on this matter. (Information Office of the State Council of the PRC, "Human Rights Record of the United States in 2001, pp. 10-11.) The close relationship between this issue and the U.S. geopolitical power politics relating to China has lent support to the Chinese contention that the U.S had "ulterior motives" in pressing China on this issue. (Embassy of the PRC in the Kingdom of Norway, "China's Statements in UN Human Rights Mechanism," 05/17/2004....) The Chinese government claimed that the human rights issue has been used by the U.S. as a political tool for various purposes, including asserting U.S. hegemony and undermining China's stability, as well as lowering China's international standing. (Ibid.)

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## Appendix B The Possibility of War Between the U.S. and China

### B.1 *The Wolfowitz Doctrine*

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 left the U.S. as the sole superpower of the world, or in other words the world's hegemon. From this position, the government of the United States formulated a policy popularly known as the Wolfowitz Doctrine, the drafting of which in 1992 was supervised by Paul D. Wolfowitz, the

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy under the Bush administration. (Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Ensuring No Rivals Develop,” *New York Times*, 8 March, 1992. This article is available on line from the New York Times archive.) The content of the draft of this important American policy document was meant for U.S. government officials only, but it was leaked to the New York Times which published it. (Ibid.) According to the Wolfowitz Doctrine “America’s political mission in the post-cold-war era will be to ensure that no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territory of the former Soviet Union”. (Ibid.) A part of the American mission will be “convincing potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interest.” (Ibid.) This document made the case for perpetuating U.S. domination of the world through “constructive behavior and sufficient military might to deter any nation or group of nations from challenging the American position.” (Ibid.) It revealed to the world that the U.S. favored unilateral actions and rejected collective or multilateral approaches to world leadership. The United Nations was not mentioned in this document. America saw itself as the ultimate upholder of the world’s established political and economic order. In East Asia, the U.S. aimed to remain the foremost military power, and to prevent the emergence of a “regional hegemon.”

## B.2 *China’s Rise and the China Threat Theory*

During the last two decades of the 20th century, China’s GDP increased rapidly, reaching US\$ 1,211 billion in 2000 from a low base of US\$ 306 billion in 1980, growing at 9.8% per year on average. (Wikipedia) The Chinese hoped that the West, especially the United States of America, the dominant world power, would accommodate their country’s rise. For its part, China repeatedly reassured the world that it intended to rise peacefully. (Xi “Jingping, *The Governance of China*”,

Beijing: The Foreign Language Press, 2014, pp. 290-293.) China has not engaged in any war for forty years. With a GDP expanding strongly, one would expect China to spend more on defense, since China's recent history has taught its people that a militarily weak country tended to find itself the victim of aggression by strong foreign military powers. However, Deng Xiaoping decided it was more important to expand the civilian side of the economy than the military side. During the years when Deng was the dominant Chinese leader, China's military expenditure declined from 4.6% of the GNP in 1979, when the reform and opening-up began, to 1.4% of the GNP by 1991. (Ezra F. Vogel, "*Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*", The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2011, pp. 541). After Deng died, China's annual defense budget started to increase during the late 1990s. In 2019, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) compiled a chart of military expenditure by country for all countries of the world in constant (2017) US\$, from 1988-2018. According to this chart, the military expenditure of China in 1990 stood at US\$ 21.0 billion, and in 2000 it was increased to US\$ 41.2 billion; whereas that of the U.S. in 1990 was US\$ 574.3 billion and in 2000 was US\$ 429.4 billion. (This chart is available on line.) We can see that in 2000 the Chinese military expenditure was less than 10% of the United States. Since China had just begun to modernize its military, its armed forces, especially its navy and air force, were far from being able to challenge America's well-trained and battlefield-seasoned fighting forces, which were abundantly equipped with the most up-to-date weapons. Yet in spite of China's modest defense budget and its far less powerful armed forces by comparison to that of America's, people closely associated with the U.S. military and intelligence community had already begun in 1999 and 2000 to propagate a China threat theory, and to exhort the U.S. government to deal with China as a threat to America's security. (Bill Gertz, *The*

*China Threat*, Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000. Edward Timberlake & William C. Triplett II, *Red Dragon Rising, Communist China's Military Threat to America*, Washington DC: Regnery Publishing Inc., 1999.)

China's phenomenal economic expansion since the 1990s made it possible for China to play a more powerful and influential role in world affairs. This development has caused the U.S. to become increasingly concerned with China's growing global reach, and the future challenge it might pose, both ideologically and geopolitically, to the U.S. interests and position in the world. (Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, Derry Dembaugh, "China-U.S. Relations, Current Issues and Implications for the U.S. Policy," Updated March 24, 2005.)

Around the early years of the twenty-first century, members of the Chinese public began to notice that the U.S. media appeared to have been focusing on the negative aspects of their country and felt unhappy about it. Puzzled by the appearance of the China threat theory in the U.S., a group of Chinese scholars wrote a book on this subject. They reasoned that it must be closely connected with China becoming a richer and stronger country, and they tried to understand the thoughts and reactions of these Americans to China's rise, and to suggest China's responses. (Lu Gang 陆钢 and Guo Xuetang 郭学堂 co-authored the book based on the format of Wang Ziqi 王子奇 entitled *Whom Does China Threaten?* and subtitled "*Interpreting China Threat.*" Published in Shanghai, by Xueling Publishing Company 学林出版社 in 2004.) One response they suggested was to let the world know that China had

no intention of becoming a world hegemon. Knowing that China was repeatedly bullied and attacked by Western nations the 19th century, and by Japan from the late 19th to the early 20th century due to military weakness, they also suggested that China should make itself strong militarily to deter foreign military attacks.

### *B.3 The Specter of a U.S.- China War*

China's reclamation activities in the South China Sea (see section 4.4) were probably related to the possibility of a war between the U.S. and China. Such a war, if both sides limited it to conventional weapons, would be expected to be fought on Chinese soil, while the U.S. mainland would be entirely spared, as in the two World Wars in the 20th century. According to Thomas Shugart, a U.S. submarine warfare officer and senior military analyst, the chains of heavily fortified sandbanks would enable the Chinese to deploy an "anti-access/airial denial (A2/AD) force" as a front line against U.S. attacks on their homeland.

(<http://waronrocks.com/2016/09china-artificial-islands-are-bigger-and-a-bigger-deal-than-you-think/>) (The American Center for Strategic and Budgetary

Assessment defines an "anti-access" operation as an enemy action which inhibits military movement into a theater of operation, and "area-denial" operations as activities which seek to deny freedom of action within areas under the enemy's control.) China's rush to reclaim and fortify the sandbanks on the reefs it controlled could be seen as a move to provide some security to China's highly developed coastal provinces at the start of a war.

The thought of war with the world's number one military power must have been extremely daunting and terrifying to the Chinese who knew that the U.S. has been encircling China with devastatingly lethal rings of military fire, from a large

number of U.S. military bases around China to the nuclear-armed submarines, the mammoth aircraft carriers, the warships, bombers, and fighters in dozens of varieties, and the thousands of nuclear weapons that could be loaded onto short-, medium-, and long-range missiles. The closest allies of the U.S. in East Asia, South Korea and Japan, where tens of thousands of U.S. forces have been stationed, would surely to be drawn into a Sino-U.S. war, and so would Taiwan.

China's relative military weakness at this point could be seen as providing the U.S. with a window of opportunity to carry out a pre-emptive war against it that would set back its rise for a long time without doing much damage to the U.S. This tempting prospect probably motivated "Thinking the Unthinkable." (Available online.) According to this study, a severe and prolonged war in 2015 could lead to a 5-10% decline in the U.S. GDP, and a 25-35% decline in China's. Since the war would take place on Chinese soil, there could be widespread hardship and dislocation, and China's development could be stalled. In 2025, the disparity in losses between the U.S. and China would be far less. The study confirmed a widely held view that even a conventional war would be so damaging to both countries that their leaders should place a high priority on avoiding one. If and when China caught up with the U.S. in military strength, this particular temptation to make war on China would no longer exist. This view may incentivize China to make big efforts to catch up with the U.S. militarily

#### *B.4 American Scholarly Voices on War with China*

##### *B.4.1 Against War with China*

The busy military activities of the U.S. and China in the SCS and the sensational press coverage whipping up the specter of war attracted public attention to works



of scholars and journalists that supported or opposed war between the U.S. and China. Professor Amitai Etzioni is one troubled by the prospect of a U.S.-China war. He adds his voice to those who want to prevent such a disastrous event with his book, *Avoiding War with China*. (Amity Etzioni, *Avoiding War with China*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017.) He points out that a major segment of the U.S. military and U.S. corporations do have a vested interest in preparing for war with China, but these interests do not necessarily coincide with what is good for the United States and Americans as whole. In his view, the U.S. and China share many complementary interests and have few substantive reasons to come to blows.

#### B.4.2 *An American Scholar's Ideas for Turning Conflicts into Cooperation*

Alarmed by the rapid downturn of Sino-American relations since 2012, Lyle J. Goldstein, a professor at the US Naval War College, published in 2015 *Meeting China Halfway*, which argues strongly for U.S. and China to shift from the vicious circles of escalating conflicts into “benign spirals” of a cooperative relationship. (Lyle J. Goldstein, *Meeting China Halfway*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2015.) His book also suggests a number of concrete steps to achieve this important about-face in the direction of the Sino-American relationship. His belief in the importance of paying attention to the views of the other side in a cooperative relationship is demonstrated by his inclusion of a large quantity of written materials from the Chinese side, in addition to Western publications, in his analysis.

#### B.4.3 *A Theory of Clash of Civilizations*

An extremely influential American political Scientist, Samuel P. Huntington, who wrote *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* propounded a

pessimistic view that countries with such different civilization as the U.S. and China are virtually destined to go to war. Before the Western colonial conquest and subjugation of most parts of the world, different civilizations co-existed in the world peacefully. During the Western European colonial era, non-white peoples in many parts of the world saw their cultures and civilizations erase or wiped out; the Incas of Peru and the Aztecs of Mexico were prime examples. The Chinese civilization, by and large, survived the Western onslaught. Modern Chinese like, appreciate and have voluntarily adopted various aspects of the Western culture/civilization, such as clothing, capitalism, music, sports, art, entertainment, and so on, but they do not want their own civilization erased. Now the U.S., the heir of the European colonial outlook and champion of the West, believes in the universal relevance of Western culture. (Samuel P. Huntington, p. 310.) This belief is based on the assumption that “people throughout the world should embrace Western values, institutions, and culture because they embody the highest, most enlightened, most liberal, most rational, most modern, and most civilized thinking of humankind.” (Ibid.) If they don’t, they might have to brace for war against them by today’s dominant Western power.

The Chinese believe in peaceful coexistence of diverse civilizations. In his book on the *Governance of China*, President Xi Jinping, who succeeded Hu Jintao in 2012, wrote that “civilizations come in different colors, and such diversity has made mutual learning among civilizations relevant and valuable.” (Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Beijing: The Foreign Language Press, 2014, p. 283.) “Exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations must not be built on exclusive praise or belittling of one particular civilization.” (Ibid. pp. 283-284.) The following are among Xi’s assertions on civilization.

“All human civilizations are equal in value, and they all have their respective strengths and weaknesses. No civilization is perfect on the planet. Nor is it devoid of merit. No single civilization can be judged superior to another.”

On the value of interaction and inclusiveness among civilizations, he wrote:

“History proves that only by interacting with and learning from others can a civilization enjoy full vitality. If all civilizations are inclusive, the so-called “clash of civilizations” can be avoided and the harmony of civilizations will become a reality; as a Chinese saying goes, “Radish or cabbage, each to his own delight.” (Ibid., pp 284-285.)

Although Xi did not mention the U.S. by name or refer explicitly to the above-mentioned U.S. belief and attitude toward the Chinese and other civilizations, many things he wrote on this subject seem to bear that in mind. Xi stresses the old Chinese concept of “harmony without uniformity,” together with mutual respect among countries, as a way to peaceful co-existence in a world of nations with diverse cultures and civilizations. (Ibid., p. 287.)

#### B.4.4 *The Thucydides Trap*

In addition to the idea that cultural difference may lead to war between the U.S. and China, Harvard Professor Graham Allison has been calling the world’s attention to the Western historical experiences of wars between an established power and a rising power. He wrote a book called *Destined for War: Can American and China Escape the Thucydides Trap?*, referring to the U.S. as the established power and China as the rising power. A classic case was the Peloponnesian war between the city-states of Sparta and Athens during the fifth century BC as chronicled by the Greek historian Thucydides. (Graham Allison,

*Destined for War: Can America and China Escape the Thucydides Trap?*, Boston, New York: Boughton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, xiv-xvi.) According to Thucydides, what made the war inevitable was the fear inspired in Sparta, the established power, by the rise of Athens, which was perceived by Sparta as challenging its supremacy. (Ibid., xiv.) The relationship between Sparta and Athens seemed to offer a parallel between the U.S. and China. (Ibid., xvi-xx.) Allison's study shows that during the last 500 years, out of sixteen occasions in Europe where a rising power emerged to challenge an existing one, twelve resulted in war. (Ibid., pp. 41-85.) Allison does not believe that war is inevitable; after all there were four cases that did not result in war. One of the four cases was the United States and the Soviet Union, both nuclear-armed countries, during the Cold War. (Ibid., p. 42.) Perhaps the threat of nuclear conflagration deterred war between them? Although China's history since the Qin-Han unification (221-206 BC) has few parallels with that of Europe in the last 500 years, Chinese thinkers are well aware of Allison's argument. In their opinion, if the U.S. "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific were to follow a course of trying preemptively to stop China's rise, their bilateral relations might eventually slide into the "Thucydides Trap." (Cui Lirue, "Managing Strategic Competition Between China and the U.S" ...p. 41.) They do not seem to be aware of the Wolfowitz Doctrine that mandated the U.S. to take action to prevent the emergence of a regional hegemon anywhere. Since both countries are nuclear-armed, again the threat of mutually assured destruction might deter war between them.

#### B.4.5 *Intellectual Support for Washington's Assumptions on China's Rise*

Another influential American political theorist, John J. Mearsheimer, who wrote "*The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*," was sure that China's rise would not be peaceful, and a war between the U.S. and China was a scenario he freely

speculated on. (See John J. Mearsheimer, “Can China Rise Peacefully?” in *National Interest*, October 25, 2014. Peter Navarro, “Mearsheimer Strangling China & the Inevitability of War,” *Huffington Post*, 03/10/2016, updated 03/10/2017.) According to the political theory of “offensive realism”, which he developed out of the theory of “structural realism,” the most secure position for competing world powers was the position of the hegemon, and he was certain that when China became really powerful militarily, it would push the U.S. out of the Western Pacific and then endeavor to become the world’s hegemon, as the U.S. has been since the end of the Cold War. (Ibid.? check) This perception led him to advocate total containment of China, to the point of going to war with China if necessary. (Ibid.? check) Chinese thinkers found Mearsheimer’s theories dangerous, for they provided an intellectual foundation for the U.S. moves to stop China’s rise and to preserve its own hegemony. (Cui Lirue, “Managing Strategic Competition Between China and the U.S.,” *China-U.S. Focus Digest*, Vol. II, August, 2016, p. 41.)

## Appendix C      COVID-19 and U.S. - China Relations

This new challenge to China and the world began on December 27, 2019, when Dr. Zhang Jixian, who directed the respiratory and intensive care department of a hospital in the city of Wuhan, diagnosed three of her patients belonging to the

same family as having a viral pneumonia of an unknown type. (Stephen S. Roach, Weijian Shan, “The Fable of the Chinese Whistleblower,” *Project Syndicate*, May 18, 2020.) Dr. Zhang reported these cases immediately to her hospital, which informed the Wuhan Health Commission about it on December 29. (Ibid.) The local authority, contrary to the Western narrative, did not delay matters: the Wuhan Health Commission sent an urgent warning on December 30 to all medical institutions under its management about the outbreak of a mysterious new pneumonia. (Stephen S. Roach and Weijian Shan...) Within hours, China’s central government sent out a team of experts from National Health Commission, which reached Wuhan on the morning of December 31, to carry out on-site investigations and to organize a potential epidemic response. (Ibid.) By 1 p.m. on December 31, the Wuhan Health Commission made a public announcement about 27 pneumonia cases of unknown origin. The public was also told that there was “so far no discovery of obvious human-to-human transmission or infection of medical workers.” (Ibid.) Since the initial stage of transmission of this type of new viral diseases has usually been from animals to humans before human-to-human transmission, local Chinese officials, suspecting that a certain seafood market in Wuhan which sold wild life might have been the place where humans caught the virus, closed this market on January 1, 2020 temporarily for thorough cleaning. (Ibid.)

### *C.1 An Alarmed Wuhan Doctor*

A Wuhan ophthalmologist Dr. Li Wenliang, who worked in the same hospital as Dr. Zhang, shared his alarm about the new viral infection on the web with his friends. According to Chinese Minister Ma Hui, who was queried about Dr. Li’s treatment at a British news interview, Li, not being a respiratory specialist, “shared incomplete and inaccurate information on his own WeChat group.” (CGTN:

“Chinese embassy official refutes ‘cover-up’ allegations on Covid-19 outbreak,” April 7, 2020. This article is available on [www.cgtn.com](http://www.cgtn.com)) After Li’s message went viral, the local police tracked him down and reprimanded him on January 1st for spreading a rumor, and requested him, on January 3rd, to sign “a paper of admonishment” that silenced him. (Stephen S. Roach and Weijian Shan, *The Fable...*) The action of the police was not as sinister as it might appear to some Westerners. Considering the lack of comprehension of the nature of this new disease at that time, the Chinese police were understandably afraid of rumors, which had already been flying around, that could lead to public panic. Dr. Li was not arrested. Sadly, he died of this new viral infection on February 6, the same day when Dr. Zhang, whose report alerted the local and national health officials to this unknown disease, was honored as the true whistleblower. Distorted and falsified versions of Dr. Li’s story were seized upon by Western media as evidence for the Chinese authorities’ lack of transparency, as well as of their efforts to conceal the outbreak of this new infectious disease from the world. The Chinese government was blamed by some Western governments and media for not having stopped the new disease from spreading to their countries, and for covering up the outbreak that delayed an effective global response for several weeks.

### *C.2 The Chinese Authority’s Promptness in Providing Information to the WHO and the World*

Contrary to the Western narrative about China trying to conceal the appearance of a new disease and delaying to inform World Health Organization (WHO) about it, the Chinese authorities hastened to inform WHO in China about the cases of the unusual pneumonia on December 31, four days after Dr. Zhang reported her findings to her hospital in Wuhan. (Ibid; “Novel Coronavirus — China,” *World Health Organization* Disease outbreak news: updated 1 January 2020.) On that

same day the WHO acknowledged the Chinese report in its Disease Outbreak News, and alerted the world about a new infectious disease of unknown cause. (Stephen S. Roach and Weijian Shan, “The Fable of the Chinese Whistleblower,” *Project Syndicate*, May 18, 2020.) Since January 3, 2020 China has been actively and regularly reporting information about the epidemic to the WHO, the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), and other countries and regions. (“China Rebuts Accusation of Cover-Up, Says it First Notified U.S. of Coronavirus on Jan. 3,” CGTN, 19 March, 2020. This article is available online from [www.cgtn.com](http://www.cgtn.com). *Global Times*: “Information war during the pandemic shows West’s arrogance over China’s system: expert,” by GT staff reporters. Source: [globaltimes.cn](http://globaltimes.cn) Published: 2020/5/17.) There was no reason or incentive for Chinese doctors or local health authorities to conceal the facts and hide the appearance of a new viral disease. They would be blamed if they had. There is also no reason for China’s central government to hide the appearance and the outbreak of a new viral disease in China from the world. They knew they would be blamed if they had. Now they are blamed even though they informed the world promptly. If the cases of the new viral infection had come to their attention earlier, they would have done the same as they did with the cases in late December 2019.

### *C.3 Getting to Know the New Virus*

In early January 2020, since the Chinese knew very little about this new organism and the disease it caused, time was needed to carry out a rigorous scientific process to find out about it. The Wuhan CDC, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission and the National Health Commission (NHC) went to work first on identifying the pathogen. Another team of high-level experts under a respiratory specialist, Zhong Nanshan, was given the task of finding out about human-to-human transmission by doing field research in Wuhan. On January 7, Chinese scientists



informed WHO about having isolated the new virus, and identified it as a member of the coronavirus family, which included the virus that caused Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the common cold. (Aljazeera: “Timeline: How the new coronavirus spread,” 16 May, 2020.) The speed of the Chinese scientists in identifying the new coronavirus was considered by WHO as a “notable achievement.” (Xinhuanet: China publishes...) To sequence the genome, the result of the work by any single scientist had to be checked by scientists of at least two other independent institutions before it could be accepted. (Jon Cohen, “‘The house on fire.’ Top Chinese virologist on how China and U.S. have met the pandemic,” *Science*, May 22, 2020.) On January 11, they published the sequenced genome of the new virus online. (*CNN Opinion*: Jeffrey D. Sachs, “Trump’s Anti-China theory implodes,” updated Wednesday, May 6, 2020.) This was acknowledged by WHO as a rapid timeline. Only with the knowledge of the genome could tests for the infection be made. Soon Chinese virologists developed test kits, and Wuhan tested all relevant cases admitted to its hospitals. On January 20, the provincial government of Guangdong held a press briefing on this new disease, during which Zhong Nanshan confirmed human-to-human transmission of the new virus and recommended strict quarantining of patients and contact tracing as preventive measures. (Xinhuanet: “China publishes timeline on Covid-19 information sharing, International cooperation,” 2020-04-06.) The Chinese government informed the world about it on the same day. Three days later, on January 23, viewing controlling the spread of the virus as serious a challenge as a national emergency, the China’s central government decided to quarantine Wuhan, a city of nearly 11 million people. (Ibid; “Chinese Embassy Official Refutes ‘Cover-Up’ Allegations on COVID-19 Outbreak,” CGTN, 07 April, 2020. [news.cgtn.com](https://news.cgtn.com).) Soon after locking down Wuhan, the Chinese government also locked down other cities in the Hubei province, where about sixty million people lived, during the next few days

in order to isolate the infected people from spreading the virus elsewhere in China, and to other countries. This tough approach did mean asking the people of Wuhan and other cities in Hubei to sacrifice their social life and economic activities in order to make the national strategy of controlling the spread of the virus work.

#### *C.4 Could China Have Acted Faster?*

With hindsight, if the Chinese government had locked down Wuhan, around the time when the first three cases of unknown viral pneumonia were reported by Dr. Zhang Jixian on December 27, 2019 to her hospital in Wuhan, this new viral disease might not have had much time to spread from the center of infection. But the virus was unknown to the Chinese health authorities in late December 2019. They had no idea what kind of virus it was: its rate of transmission, period of incubation and the death rate from contracting this new disease were all unknown. They did not even have the genome to test for the infection. If the virus had been transmitted from animals to humans only, they might have been able to trace the source of contamination and stop further transmission. Having no test for this new virus, the people sickened by it were regarded as merely suspected cases. Only after the genome of the new coronavirus was sequenced and announced on January 11, was a test developed and performed on people to find out whether their sickness was caused by the new virus. How could the Chinese authorities quarantine a city of eleven million people around the end of December, on the basis of three sick individuals? Without the knowledge of hindsight, there was not enough reason or justification for them to do that.

Suppose the Chinese government had locked down Wuhan on January 12, before human-to human transmission was confirmed. On that date, there had only been one case of death and 41 cases of infection reported in Wuhan. (Aljazeera:

Timeline: How the new coronavirus spread,” 16 May 2020.) If it had turned out that the disease was transmitted from animal to human, the Chinese government would have been blamed for taking such a drastic step in error, for spoiling Wuhan people’s Chinese New Year celebrations, and for the damage done to their economy. How furious and resentful the people of Wuhan would have been with their government. The cost to the government’s credibility with people throughout China would have been incalculable. Even if Wuhan had been quarantined then, it might already have been too late to stop the spread of the new corona virus to other parts of China and the world. As we show below (see page 63), if every infected person transmits this disease to two other persons every three days, starting with just one person with this disease, 60 days later over one million people would be infected if no intervention to slow down the transmission has been made.

When human-to-human transmission was confirmed on January 20, the Chinese government locked down Wuhan on January 23. By that date, cases of this viral infection had spread to other parts of China and a small number of cases were also found in many countries of the world. (Aljazeera: “Timeline: How the new coronavirus spread,” 16 May, 2020.) The fact that the Chinese government implemented a drastic lockdown of almost the whole province of Hubei, starting three days after human-to-human transmission was ascertained, seems a decisive and swift response, though criticized by some Western media as a “cruel and hurtful way to harm human rights” at that time. (“Information war during the pandemic shows West’s arrogance over China’s system: experts,” by GT staff reporters Source: Globaltimes.cn Published: 2020/5/17.) Fair-minded Westerners like Columbia University professor Jeffrey Sachs, and the editor of *The Lancet*, Richard Horton, gave China credit for acting swiftly and effectively to contain outbreaks. (Jeffrey D. Sachs, “Trump’s anti-China theory implodes, CNN Opinion,

May 6, 2020; Stephen Lensman, “Lancet Editor Praises China, Slams Western Mishandling of Covid-19 Outbreaks,” *Global Research*, May 3, 2020.)

Unfortunately, by the time of the Wuhan lockdown or shortly before it, a small number of people with this disease were found in some other countries including the United States, where the first case was confirmed on January 21. () In summary, it is therefore unrealistic to expect the Chinese authorities to have acted more rapidly, so as to stop the spread of the new coronavirus from Wuhan.

### *C.5 China Contained the Covid-19 Epidemic*

Having quarantined the people of Wuhan and many other cities in the Hubei province, the Chinese authorities mobilized the whole country to help to save the lives of infected people, as well as to prevent the further spread of the infection to others. They organized an enormous amount of testing, built new hospitals for people who tested positive at record speed to care for them, shifted thousands of doctors from other provinces into Hubei to make up for the shortage there, and utilized AI in many ways, including tracing the movement of those who had tested positive and the people who had come into contact with them. An intensive education and information campaign through the media and local community organizations was mounted to convince people that temperature checking, hand washing, mask wearing, distancing from each other, and staying inside their homes were lifesaving measures. As a consequence, Chinese people who had experienced lockdown and followed other preventive measures seemed willing to do so.

Between March 18 and 23, about two months after the lockdown, the Hubei province (including Wuhan, its capital) reported zero new confirmed cases and “the transmission of the virus in the country has basically been interrupted. (“China Rebutts Accusation....; Zheng Guichu, “8 reflections from China’s experience in fighting Covid-9,” *Global Times*, 2020/3/27.) Around that time, the published

figures of the total number of people infected was around 80,000 and the total number of deaths was about 4,600 in China. (Wikipedia. ?) Western critics believe this figure was too low. The incentive for reporting a lower figure was balanced by the need to know the true figure, which is necessary to manage the present and future Covid-19 infections. Even if this figure is doubled or tripled, the resultant figures are still a good deal lower than most other nations with far smaller populations. Perhaps the low figure of death and the speed of containment of the Covid-19 outbreak in China reflect the effectiveness of their method in dealing with the outbreak. Apparently, China locked down Hubei just in time. According to its scientists' estimate, if the lockdown had been one week later, there would have been 6 times more cases of infection and 16 times more death. (Jon Cohen, "The house was on fire.' Top Chinese virologist on how China and U.S. have met the Pandemic," *Science*, May 22, 2020.) If the lockdown had been four weeks later, the number of cases would have jumped to over 30 million with over 3 million deaths. (Ibid.) They concluded that the timely lockdown saved many lives. (Ibid.)

#### *C.6 Western Reaction to the Covid-19 Outbreak in China*

From the appearance of this new virus in China to the Wuhan lockdown, a Chinese scholar and researcher on the U.S. in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences named Lu Xiang, who had been analyzing the "attitude" of Western media, the U.S. media in particular, noticed excitement among those which have been focusing regularly on items capable of discrediting the Chinese government. ("Information war during the pandemic show West's arrogance over China's system: expert," by GT staff reporters Source: Globaltimes.cn Published: 2020/5/17.) These media hyped the Covid-19 outbreak as some kind of divine retribution against China's political system. (Ibid.) When cases of the new

coronavirus infection were growing at an accelerated rate in China in February, most Western media and governments were relaxed about the prospect of having to face an outbreak of the epidemic in their own countries. Even in late March, the U.S. media were more concerned about the flu than an invasion of Covid-19 viruses. (Mark Hemingway, “Pandemic Brings Out the Best and the Worst in the Media,” Real Clear Politics, March 26, 2020.) The U.S. President Trump, and other Western leaders like Britain’s Prime Minister Boris Johnson, would not accept the fact that this illness posed a serious threat to public health. They made very little preparation to protect their people after China had quarantined millions of people, and had actively reported the situation in China to the WHO, the United States and countries around the world. (“Information war during the pandemic.”) It was as though the Westerners were not living on the same planet as the people in China, and their system of government would render them immune from the new viral infection. As American and other Western public health experts learned more and more about the seriousness and severity of Covid-19, a disease nearly twice as infectious, with a much higher rate of fatality and far greater need for hospitalization than the seasonal flu, the internal warnings and information they provided to their governments and public media were also ignored. (Brian Resnick and Christina Animashuan, “Why Covid-19 is worse than the flu, in one chart,” VOX, March 18, 2020. David Leonhard, “A complete List of Trump’s Attempts to Play Down Coronavirus, New York Times, March 12, 2020. Stephen Lensman, “Lancet Editor Praises China, Slams Western Mishandling of Covid-19 Outbreak,” Global Research, May 3, 2020.)

### *C.7 The Rate of Spread of the Covid-19 Infection*

If some of the Western political leaders did not grasp the rapid spread of this new viral disease that increases exponentially with time, their scientific advisers surely

did. Let us illustrate the spread of this virus at a transmission rate of doubling every three days if there were no intervention to slow its spread. Let us start with just one person infected by the new coronavirus, and he or she infects two persons in three days. Then the two infected persons would each transmit the disease to two others in three days, making it four cases of infection in six days. The four infected persons would each transmit the disease to two other persons in three days, making a total of eight cases of infection in nine days. By the twelfth day the eight infected persons would each have infected two others, making a total of sixteen cases of infection in twelve days. If this rate of increase goes on for 30 days, the number of people infected will be  $2^{10}$ , which equals 1,024. If this continues for 60 days, the number of people infected will be  $2^{20}$ , which is  $1,024 \times 1,024 = 1,048,576$ . This doubling rate may be on the high side with respect to Covid-19. If the rate of infection can be slowed down to, say, doubling every six days, after 30 days the number of people infected will be  $2^5$ , or 32. After 60 days, the number of people infected will be  $2^{10}$ , or 1,024.

#### *C.8 The Trump Administration's Slowness and Delay in Responding to Covid-19*

Let us look at the situation in the U.S. where the first case of coronavirus infection was confirmed by the CDC on January 21, 2020. (Audry McNamara, CDC Confirms first case of coronavirus in the United States, updated January 21, 2020.) On March 27, the total number of confirmed cases was 82,000. This was more than the total number of cases reached in China when the spread peaked, and the number of cases there continued to decline as a result of the strenuous efforts of the Chinese to contain the viral infection. When infection by this virus appeared in China, the new virus was an unknown entity. China had to find out what it was, and that took about three weeks. While China's situation was one of going from unknown to known, and from known to response, the Trump administration was

dealing with a known virus and the disease it caused. China and WHO had been updating information about the new coronavirus and the infection it caused since January 3, 2020. The American leaders could have been alerted to prepare their health authorities and people to take actions such as testing, contact tracing, temperature-taking, social distancing, mask-wearing, hand-washing, and quarantining the sick to slow down or even to contain the spread of the disease in America when the first case was discovered there.

After the Covid-19 infection had been discovered in America on January 21, 2020 Trump told Americans not to worry about a pandemic, for his administration had it totally under control. (David Leonhard, “A Complete List....”) But his administration did not even make sure to stock up proper test kits for this viral infection by early February. (Ibid.) Trump spent the first weeks of February reassuring the American people that the problem was going away, in particular the warm spring weather could kill the virus, and by April it might go away entirely. (Ibid.) While indifferent to the global statistics on the spread of the virus, he was sensitive to the fall of stock market indices during the last week of February. He started blaming American TV news channels CNN and MSNBC for “panicking the market,” and the Obama administration’s regulations that slowed the production of test kits. (Ibid.) After the WHO declared a world pandemic on March 11, it finally dawned on him that the Covid-19 virus was not going away. As scientists in the United States expected tens of millions of infections and a correspondingly high death toll, Trump needed a scapegoat urgently for his administration’s long delay in preparing the U.S. health care system and its people for the inevitable outbreak of the coronavirus in America.

### *C.9 Making China the Scapegoat*



Since this new virus broke out first in China, it was easy for Trump to make China his scapegoat. In order to stigmatize China, he started calling the new coronavirus the Chinese or Wuhan virus after the WHO had already designated it as SARS-CoV-2, and the disease caused by it as Covid-19. (Lily Kuo in Shanghai, “Trump sparks anger by calling coronavirus the Chinese virus,” *The Guardian*, Tuesday, 17 March, 2020.) Trump’s move angered China, whose Foreign Minister told the U.S. to “stop this despicable practice.” (Ibid.) President Trump’s approach was unprecedented. No one had suggested calling the new influenza virus, which was first detected in the U.S. and quickly spread across the U.S. and the world, causing a flu pandemic in the spring 2009, the American virus. Kansas was actually the place where the first known cases of the deadly 1918 Spanish Flu occurred. New viral epidemics had broken out in various cities and countries of the world, and it has not been the international practice to stigmatize or blame these countries. It seems quite unreasonable to do so for these accidents of nature, and it would certainly be bad for international relations. Trump’s displeasure with the WHO for not joining his China blaming stance, and for resisting naming the novel coronavirus as the Wuhan virus led him to announce, on April 2020, a halt in U.S. funding for this world organization. (Jessica McDonald, Rem Rieder, D’Angelo Gore, Robert Farley, Lori Robertson and Eugene Kiely, “Fact Checking Trump’s Attack on the WHO,” *Fact Check. org*, April 15, 2020.) He also accused the WHO of severe mismanagement and of covering up the spread of the new virus. (Ibid.)

#### *C.10 The West’s Information War Against China with Fake News and Rumors*

As the global pandemic spread rapidly, the Director-General of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, observed that “fake news are spreading more easily and faster.” Apparently, there are no shortage of anti-China media in the West ready to

repeat rumors, fake news and conspiracy theories on the origin of the new coronavirus, on the Chinese government's alleged lack of transparency, concealing the viral outbreak, delaying informing the world about the new deadly disease, and on China manipulating the WHO, among others, all without evidence or any factual basis. (GT staff reporters, "Information war during the pandemic shows the West's arrogance over China's system: expert. Source: [globaltimes.cn](http://globaltimes.cn) Published on 2020/5/17.)

For several months Western media including the Australian Daily Telegraph publicized a groundless claim that Covid-19 originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a virus research lab whose staff collaborated with American scientists. At one point both President Trump and his Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, supported this claim. The head of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Wang Yanyi, said the strains of bat viruses they had been working on were not Covid-19, and the claim was "pure U.S. fabrication." (Lily Kuo in Beijing, "Global Report: Wuhan lab says its bat strains were not Covid-19 as U.S. nears 100,000 deaths," The Guardian, 24 May, 2020.) The Five Eyes intelligence network of English-speaking countries told the Guardian that "there is no evidence that coronavirus leaked from a Chinese laboratory." (Dan Sabbath, Defense and Security editor, "Five Eyes Network Contradicts Theory Covid-19 Leaked from Lab," The Guardian, May 4 2020.) Dr. Antony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said he saw no evidence that the virus was created in a lab. (Fred Guterl, "Dr. Fauci Backed Controversial Wuhan Lab with U.S. Dollars for Risky Coronavirus Research," Newsweek, May 25, 2020.) Other international researchers and a new study on this subject rejected the theory that Covid-19 was man-made. (Jan Wolfe, Covid-19 U.S.: "Missouri sues China over coronavirus

economic losses,” *Reuters*, April 22, 2020; Health24: “New coronavirus is not man-made, new study confirms,” updated March 20, 2020.)

The German newspaper, *Der Spiegel*, cited information from the German intelligence service that Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with Tedros on January 21, pressuring the head of the WHO to delay a global warning about the pandemic and hold back information on human-to-human transmission. (Mark Moore, “China pressured WHO to delay global coronavirus warning: report,” *New York Post*, May 10, 2020.) It said, according to German intelligence’s estimate, that China’s action to conceal information resulted in the loss of four to six weeks in the fight against Covid-19. (Ibid.) The WHO responded with a statement telling the world that the allegations were “unfounded and untrue,” and that “Dr. Tedros and President Xi did not speak on January 21 and they have never spoken by phone.” The statement continued to say that such inaccurate reports distract and detract from the WHO’s and the world’s effort to end the Covid-19 pandemic. (Ibid.) The Chinese Foreign Ministry published a long article on its website, refuting *Der Spiegel*’s and other false claims relating to China’s response to the Covid-19 outbreak. (CGTN: “China’s Foreign Ministry: 24 lies coming out of U.S. over Covid-19,” updated 10 May, 2020. The CGTN report is online.) Besides countering falsehoods with facts, the article points out that the outbreak was caused by a new virus, and that time was needed to ascertain the nature of this new coronavirus and the disease it caused. Once the Chinese health scientists found out certain pertinent aspects of this new virus, China “implemented the most restrictive prevention and control measures in the shortest possible time to prevent outbreaks in places other than Wuhan.” The article reiterates that China had provided information to the international community in a “timely, open and transparent” manner. (Ibid.)

China's scholarly observers of Western media, particularly the mainstream U.S. media, noticed that they adopted a politicized emotional framework on the viral outbreak and China's management of it that prevented them from providing their Western readers with factual reports and in-depth investigations to prepare them to cope with the coming epidemic. Instead, these media focused on using the Covid-19 epidemic for "black propaganda" against China as an enemy. (GT staff reporters, "Information war during the pandemic shows West's arrogance over China's system: experts." Source: Gobaltimes.cn. Published: 2020/5/17.)

#### *C.11 A Chinese Copycat Response*

A copy-cat response to the wild U.S. allegation that the new coronavirus was created in a Wuhan lab, was the speculation in Chinese media that Covid-19 was brought to Wuhan by American military personnel who took part in the 7th CISM World Military Games in Wuhan between October 18-27, 2019. (J. Jacobi, "US Army infected Wuhan with Coronavirus during Military Games? China official thinks so," *International Business Time*, updates March 27, 2020. Leng Shumei and Wan Lin, "U.S. urged to release health info of military athletes who came to Wuhan in October 2019." Source: Global Times. Published: 2020/3/25.) An American journalist named George Webb claimed Maatje Benassi, a U.S. military athlete in the cycling competition, could be "patient zero" of the new coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan. Webb linked this new virus to the Fort Detrick laboratory, the US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) that handles high-level disease-causing organisms like Ebola. (Ibid; Huang Lanlan and Li Lei, "The Fort Derrick horror: a closer look at the U.S.'s largest biochemical weapons research center," source Global Times, 2020/5/29.) This lab was mysteriously shut down in July 2019. (Ibid. China Daily: "Secret fort in US must

come clean on its work,” updated 2020-05-29.) There was also an unexplained outbreak of a respiratory disease near it several months before the epidemic in Wuhan. (China Daily: Secret fort in the US...) A Chinese diplomat Zhao Lijian, who had considered the possibility of a U.S. army person bringing the disease to Wuhan during the Military World Games, urged the U.S. to disclose further information and to exercise transparency on coronavirus cases and to provide explanations to the world. (J. Jocoby, “US Army infected Wuhan with coronavirus.... ; Leng Shumei and Wan Lin, “US Urged to release health info of military athletes who came to Wuhan in October 2019.” Source: Global Times. Published 2020/3/25. The article is available online.)

### *C.12 How the U.S. Finally Responded to the Covid-19*

Rather than being so busily absorbed with blaming China, President Trump with the support of the U.S media could have slowed down the spread of the new coronavirus infection and saved a lot of lives in the United States after the viral epidemic reached this country by enforcing measures such as testing, contact tracing, social distancing, hand-washing, temperature-taking, and mask-wearing, even without a massive lockdown. Richard Horton, the editor of the authoritative British medical journal *The Lancet*, noticed that most of the Western countries wasted the whole of February and early March before they acted. (Stephen Lendman, “Lancet Editor Praises China, Slams Western Mishandling of Covid-19 Outbreaks,” *Global Research*, May 3, 2020.) While China took 27 days from Dr, Zhang Jixian’s report on December 27 to the lockdown of Wuhan (including the time its scientists had to find out about this new coronavirus), the United States took over twice the time (55 days) from the first confirmed Covid-19 case in America on January 21 to Trump advising Americans to restrict travel and stay at home on March 16 to avoid infection by a known deadly virus. The West had

squandered the time China's Lockdown had brought them, as pointed out by Ian Johnson, a British writer observing the world from Beijing. (Ian Johnson, "China Brought the West Time, The West Squandered It.") As we have seen above, the U.S. under Trump was no exception. In Richard Horton's opinion, that the world's richest country had failed to protect its people was an act of criminal negligence.

Since President Trump was slow in providing leadership in bringing forward a national policy to combat Covid-19, the governors of each state stepped up to do what they could as cases mounted. Trump did not provide a good example in social distancing and mask-wearing in his public appearances on national television. Finally, on March 16, he urged Americans to limit travel, avoid groups and stay at home from school, but he did not go as far as imposing a national quarantine or a curfew. (Michael Collins, David Jackson, John Fritz, and Courtney Subramanian, "Social distancing through August? Donald Trump suggests it may be needed to help confront Coronavirus," *USA Today*, March 16, 2020.) Bill de Blasio, mayor of New York City, closed the city's schools on March 15. (James Glanz and Campbell Robertson, Lockdown Delays Cost at Least 36,000 Lives, Data Suggest," *New York Times*, May 21, 2020.) Governor Andrew M. Cuomo locked down New York state on March 22. (Ibid.) Governor Gavin Newsom of California introduced, on March 20, a mandatory safer-at-home order that effectively locked down California's forty million people. He did it after scientific modeling estimated that over 56% of Californians could come down with Covid-19 over the next eight weeks if no efforts were made to slow the disease. (Matt Keeley, "California, World's Fifth-Largest Economy, Is in Lockdown as Governor Orders Residents to Stay at Home," *Newsweek*, 3/19/2020.)

Now let us see, if the U.S. had introduced certain preventive measures to slow down the spread of this disease in good time, how many fewer cases and death there would have been. According to estimates made by Columbia University disease modelers, if the United States had imposed social distancing measures one week earlier than it did in March, 36,000 fewer people would have died from Covid-19. (James Glanz and Campbell Robertson, “Lockdown Delays Cost at Least 36,000 Lives, Data Suggest,” New York Times, May 21, 2020.) Researchers estimated that if the U.S had locked down cities and restricted social contact on March 1, two weeks earlier than most people began to stay at home, 83% of the death would have been avoided. (Ibid.) If that were the situation, about 54,000 fewer people would have died in the U.S. (Ibid.) The above figures illustrate the enormous cost in waiting to take action, and how a small difference in timing would have prevented the exponential growth which in April had engulfed major cities like New York and New Orleans. (Ibid.) It was vital to catch the small window of time in March to enforce measures to prevent the spread of the disease.

After Italy and South Korea had begun to act combatively to contain the Covid-19 outbreaks, President Trump remained reluctant to cancel campaign rallies, to tell people to avoid crowds, and to stay home. He continued to insist that the risk of the virus to Americans was very low. On March 9, the 546 confirmed cases of coronavirus infection with 22 deaths from it seemed a less serious disease to President Trump than the seasonal flu. (Ibid.) He tweeted, “Nothing is shut down, life and the economy go on.” (Ibid.) With hindsight, tens of thousands of Americans must have already been infected with Covid-19 by this time, for by April 10, Covid-19 cases in the U.S. reached 480,000 with 18,000 deaths. (“Number of Covid-19 cases in the U.S. surpassing 480,000,” broadcasted and shown in a MSNBC video.) Unlike the common flu which has a two-day

incubation period, the incubation period of Covid-19 is from two to fourteen days. Another unusual feature of this virus was that infected people may have no symptoms for several days. These features might have encouraged inaction. The measures introduced by Washington and the U.S. state governments together with the change in the behavior of the American people must have prevented worse outbreaks, but they were too late to prevent the disastrous increases in cases of sickness and death by Covid-19 that were already in the pipeline. When the world's cases of this viral infection rose to 5.5 million with 346,800 deaths on May 25, 2020, the United States had the highest number of cases and deaths. (Published by John Elfin, "Coronavirus (Covid-19)"). The total number of cases and deaths reported in the U.S. on May 26 was 1,662,414 and 98,261 respectively. (Ibid.) Should China be blamed for the U.S. delay and inaction against the coming viral outbreak, which were failings of the Trump administration and the U.S. media? Fair-minded American scholars and commentators on U.S.-China relations, such as Jeffrey Sachs, a professor and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, and Stephen S. Roach, a faculty member at Yale University and former Chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia, did not think so. They attributed these disastrous results to the Trump administration's failure to act promptly and decisively to prevent the virus spread. (Jeffrey Sachs, Why America has the world's most confirmed Covid-19 cases, *CNN Opinion*, updated March 27, 2020. Stephen S. Roach and Weijian Shan, "The Fable of the Chinese Whistleblower," *Project Syndicate*, May 18, 2020. Both articles are available online.)

### *C.13 The U.S. Congress Introduces Anti-China Legislation*

U.S. leaders in the executive branch of the American government found it politically beneficial to shift the blame to China for their own failure to respond



adequately to the Covid-19 outbreaks in the U.S. Some American politicians in the legislative branch of the U.S government have also been using Covid-19 to put China in the dock for their own political gain. Starting with the familiar accusations which the Trump administration and the American press have made against China relating to the Covid-19 epidemic in the U.S., a number of Republican Senators including Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Thom Tillis of North Carolina, and Rick Scott of Florida, have proposed the Covid-19 Accountability Act that would authorize the U.S. President to impose various sanctions on the PRC, if China fails to cooperate and provide a full account of the events leading to the outbreak. (“Graham, Senators Introduce China Sanctions Legislation,” May 12, 2020 press releases by Lindsey Graham.)

#### *C.14 American State and Business Entities Suing China for Their Losses from Covid-19*

The state of Missouri is the first American state to sue the Chinese government for the devastating economic losses sustained by this state from alleged negligence and other claims, including silencing whistleblowers, doing little to stop the spread of the disease, lying to the world about the dangerous and contagious nature of the disease, and making the pandemic worse by hoarding masks and other personal protective equipment. (Jan Wolfe, “Covid-19 U.S.: Missouri sues China over coronavirus economic losses,” Reuters, April 22, 2020. The civil lawsuit was filed in federal county court by Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt. Ibid.) A spokesman from the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing dismissed the accusations as “nothing short of absurdity” and lacking any factual or legal basis. (Ibid.) Tom Ginsbourg, a professor of international law at the University of Chicago said that there is a legal doctrine called sovereign immunity that offers foreign governments broad protection from being sued in the courts of the United States. (Ibid.) An

American lawyer, Larry Klayman filed a \$20 Trillion Dollar lawsuit against China, Chinese institutions, such as the Wuhan Institute of Virology and persons, such as Shi Zhengli, the director of that institute for “creation and release’ of Covid-19, a biological weapon of war designed by China. (Matt Nathan, “Larry Klayman Files \$20 Trillion Dollar Lawsuit Against China for ‘Creation and Release’ of Covid-19,” *Law and Crime*, March 19, 2020.) Larry Klayman’s allegation about creation and release by the Wuhan laboratory which received U.S. funding and where U.S. virologists have worked, has already been refuted not only by Shi Zhengli who directs the Wuhan lab, but also by Western intelligence and Dr. Antony Fauci as mentioned above.

#### *C.15 The Chinese Response to U.S. Lawsuits*

Chinese law professionals are aware that an outbreak of a major infectious disease is classified as a major public health emergency as well as a *force majeure* in terms of legal theories. (Zhong Sheng, “U.S. falsely accusing China undermines international rule,” *People’s Daily*, May 15, 200.) Considering substantive law, the existing international legal system has not specified in any way that the country where a virus has been first discovered should assume responsibility. (Ibid.) In their opinion, since it is widely known that the virus came into being purely by accident, they believe that it is obviously unfair to falsely accuse a pandemic-hit region and people, causing them further suffering. (Ibid.) In any case, the principle of sovereign equality and immunity shows that the courts in one country have no jurisdiction over action taken by the government of another sovereign state on prevention and control of an epidemic in that country. (Ibid.) China as a sovereign country is therefore exempt from the jurisdiction of U.S. courts, a right protected by international law and stipulated by the UN Charter. (Ibid.) Even though the allegations in connection with the American lawsuits lacked sound evidence, and

China has sovereign immunity to protect it, the U.S. Congress is considering amending the U.S. Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act to encourage U.S. institutions or people to sue China. Peter Hilpold, an Austrian legal expert and professor of international law at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, points out that China could sue the U.S. for damaging China's reputation by unsubstantiated U.S. claims against it, and China could claim compensation from America as well. Radio Free Asia reported that two state-backed Chinese lawyers have brought lawsuits against the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other U.S. departments alleging that they 'covered up' the emergence of the coronavirus. (Radio Free Asia: "Chinese Lawyers Sue U.S. Over 'Coronavirus Cover-up.'" 2020-03-26 The translated article in English is available online.) These lawsuits can be viewed as Chinese tit-for-tat responses to American lawsuits against China.

