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Keywords: novel coronavirus; sino-US relations; balanced thinking; global governance.

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How to Deal with the Increasing Risk of Sino-US Cold War

Zou Lixing

Abstract- With the increasingly complicated, sensitive and perilous Sino-US relations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it requires a historical, comprehensive and systematic thinking to deal with the increasing risk of Sino-US cold war. This paper conducted some preliminary and systematic analysis into the crux and the approaches to resolve the tensions. At such a critical juncture of the Sino-US relations, the crux of problems is manifested in the following aspects: coronavirus-related stigma; all-round trade disputes; politicization of trade; complication of politics; directly targeted strategy; deteriorating corporate and social base; ideological radicalization. The principal contradictions are those incurred by different national strategic interests. The US is worried about being replaced by China and the impact of China's "nationwide system" on the current international system. On the other hand, China is worried about the US' interference into its internal affairs, system building and national reunification, as well as the US' efforts to contain China's development. Among the main reasons is the lack of strategic mutual trust, a healthy mentality; a timely policy-adjustment mechanism, far-sighted vision, in-depth research and exchanges. At the same time, we shall not lose sight of the favorable conditions and foundations for Sino-US relations. The key to improve Sino-US relations lies in innovation. First, innovation of thinking. A balanced and practical thinking is conducive to seek a fulcrum to balance the core interests of both parties, enhance understanding of each other's traditions and feelings, and actively explore the relationship of China and US as the responsible "systematic stakeholders" in global affairs. Second, innovation of mechanisms with the aim of actively exploring the establishment of a notification mechanism for important international agenda and a consultation mechanism for issues arising from normal exchanges. Third, innovation of models. Start with economy and trade, make active efforts to seek the broadest common interests in cooperation, and set up the Sino-US common market and zones for close industrial cooperation between the two countries. Respect science, apply scientific, technical and legal means to deal with possible legal disputes in the pandemic, and actively build a normalized epidemic prevention mechanism together with international organizations, countries and regions. Where there is a will, there is a way. We need to actively open up channels to rebuild understanding, strike a new balance and create a new beginning of the Sino-US relations. It is a periodical achievement of "Research on Aligning the Development of China and the Belt and Road Initiative to the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development" (18VDL006), a major research program of the National Social Science Fund of China.

Keywords: *novel coronavirus; sino-US relations; balanced thinking; global governance.*

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I. The Crux and Manifestation of Sino-us Relations

Currently, the contradictions in Sino-US relations focus on the following aspects. First, coronavirus-related stigma. Some American politicians wantonly slander China for the sake of the upcoming presidential elections and long-term damage to China's image and core interests.[1] China's countermeasures need to use mass media, as well as relevant technical and legal tools to make preparations for the long term.

Second, long-term trade disputes: Despite the phase-one trade deal between China and the US, many of the imposed tariffs persist. The tariffs imposed by the Trump administration still cover nearly two-thirds of US imports from China, with an average tax rate of 19.3%, compared with the previous rate of 3%. As a countermeasure, China raised tariffs on 57% of US exports to China, with an average tax rate of 20.5%, as against the previous rate of 8%. In contrast, China lowered the average tax rate of its trading partners other than the United States to 6.7%, while working to lowering trade barriers. This shows that Sino-US economic and trade relations are still in a vicious stage. The second-phase and subsequent negotiations may be more difficult, especially when it involves Chinese state-owned enterprise subsidies, market access, foreign investment review, network security, and other matters. The United States will further suppress China's industrial upgrading and innovation capabilities and curb China's long-term development potential.[2] The Sino-US trade dispute will exist for a long term.

Third, politicized trade: In fact, if the two sides treat the trade dispute purely as a trade issue, it would not be difficult. One side earns more this time and the other side earns more next time. Friendship will remain even if a business agreement cannot be reached. However, the problem lies in that the US wants to use trade rules to oppress China on an increasingly larger scale, covering technology decoupling, intellectual property rights, 5G technology, investment, and even people-to-people ties between the two countries. For example, at the Munich Security Conference, the US House Speaker Pelosi

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coined a new vocabulary,[3] emphasizing Huawei's damage to national security and democratic political systems in a bid to prevent the use of Huawei equipment in the construction of 5G networks by its Western allies such as the United Kingdom.

Fourth, complicated politics: Politics, military affairs and security were entangled with each other, involving issues relating to Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the South China Sea, and human rights, which made the politics increasingly complicated. On the Tibet issue, the US passed the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2019 to blatantly interfere in China's domestic affairs and instigated the disregard of the Chinese government's opinions, allowing the Tibetans themselves decide the succession rights of the 15th Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism. On the Hong Kong issue, the US signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act into law at the end of 2019, in an attempt to intervene in Hong Kong and disrupt the stable development of Hong Kong. On the South China Sea issue, the US strengthened the Indo-Pacific strategy and encouraged countries such as Vietnam that have disputes with China to apply new pressure on China. A series of measures from the US side led to a deadlock in bilateral relations.

Fifth, the overall deterioration of the US policies toward China: In its recently released reports of the National Security Strategy and the Summary of the National Defense Strategy, the US described China as a "strategic competitor" and a "revisionist power," accusing China of intending to revise the current international order. US President Trump signed the Executive Order on Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain, indicating targeted actions against China. Both the Republican and Democratic parties of the US have reached a consensus to make China the main strategic opponent and leverage the power of the whole country and engage the whole society to launch an all-round and long-term strategic competition with China. In February 2020, U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo announced at the National Governors Association that competition with China is not just a federal issue, but it is happening in your states, calling on states to take concerted action with the Federal government.[4] In May 2020, the United States announced to revoke Hong Kong's preferential trade status and stop all cooperation between the world-leading research institutions and universities in the US and the Chinese universities and research institutes. As such, the Sino-US relations have deteriorated in all respects.

Sixth, the deteriorating corporate and social foundation: The support and expectations of some US companies for China are waning, and their views on China have worsened. Some businessmen in the US believe that China pursues national capitalism, featuring rapidly growing state-owned assets and unfair competitions. They are dissatisfied with the conditions of market access, technology transfer, intellectual property rights, regulatory obstacles, foreign trade policies, and export restrictions of resources (like rare earth) in China. They are anxious about the use of big data in China. American companies feel that China has failed to live up to their expectations. Instead of adjusting its economic and investment policies, China even systematically implemented measures that are detrimental to American and foreign companies operating in China. What's worse is that quite a few Americans have a relatively serious misunderstanding of China, worrying that China will dominate the future of science and technology and thereby losing confidence in globalization and multilateralism. Some Americans are now openly talking about how to contain China's rise, just as they did with all-round containment measures against the Soviet Union in history. They hope to act as soon as possible, lest it be too late. This explains the social foundation for the deteriorating Sino-US relations,[5] as the public opinion of both sides is developing in a negative direction.

Seventh, ideological radicalization: Since China's reform and opening up, the US government and various circles have welcomed and supported China's accession to the international system designed and dominated by the US. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Chinese leaders and the hard-working Chinese people, China, though poor and backward, made outstanding achievements in modernization within a short time. China drew lessons from many market economy rules and regulations in the US and other developed countries, but China did not follow the American path in terms of political system and ideology, which has disappointed the United States. American neo-conservatives and their radicals have always insisted on ideological leadership. In recent years in particular, they have strengthened the strategy to export the US ideologies based on values, missions and interests.[6] Furthermore, they constantly described the Sino-US game as "a struggle between different civilizations and ideologies." Amid the political polarization in the US, both the Democratic and the Republican parties are trying to highlight their identities through some extreme policies. On the other hand, China keeps emphasizing the unified leadership of the Communist Party of China, with the ideology and network control even stricter than in the past. In this way, the Sino-US contradictions in social systems, values and national interests have become increasingly prominent. Therefore, some people think that there is no way for further cooperation between the two countries. However, as pragmatism has always been the mainstream spirit of American society, interests always rise above ideology. Therefore, the ideological contradiction is not the main contradiction between the two sides.

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The principal contradiction between China and the US is caused by differences in their strategic interests. The US is worried about being replaced by China, the impact of China's "nationwide system" on the current international system, as well as the global economy's high dependence on China. Therefore, the US wants to contain China's rapid development, lest that it would be overtaken by China. On the other hand, China wants to maintain the rapid development to become the world's largest economy. This gives rise to the principal contradiction: There is no use trying to explain it. The fundamental problems lie in China's overly rapid development and the US' desperate efforts to contain China. The radical populism that emerged recently has further intensified this contradiction. Every move of China and the US is regarded as provocation and invites counterattack by the other side, which has severely damaged the broad relations between the two countries. Such fights cover almost all areas ranging from economic and trade, science and technology, humanities, geopolitics, military, human rights, Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South China Sea, to the current battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States has vigorously publicized to wage an "all-round war" against China with resources and means in economy, military, diplomatic, information, paramilitary law enforcement, and civil affairs.[7] It now appears that the Sino-US conflict is indeed increasing and both sides are taking a harder attitude towards each other, placing the world in a more uneasy situation.

While Sino-US relations have become increasingly complicated, sensitive and unstable, some other countries have also put forward some new requirements and worries about China that could be summarized as follows.

Some countries disagree with the treatment that China has enjoyed since its accession to the WTO: When it joined the WTO in 2002, China's merchandise trade made up less than 4% of global trade, which had almost tripled to 11.8% by 2019. Therefore, some countries like the US cannot accept for China to continue to enjoy the trade arrangements and preferential treatment since its accession to WTO, calling for timely adjustments to the current arrangements. They are also dissatisfied with China in terms of technology transfer, intellectual property rights protection, regulatory system reform, and trade subsidies. These issues can be discussed in depth and in detail to identify which preferential measures are inappropriate. However, it is an undeniable fact that China is still a developing country. China's intention to improve its position in the value chain should not come as a surprise. China has been deepening the reform of the economic and trade system in a targeted manner, while working with the international community to improve the international economic and trade order, maintain the global trade architecture, enhance the mutually beneficial and equal relations between China and its trading partners, further strengthen intellectual property protection measures, and avoid the collapse of the international trade system. Such moves meet the expectations of the international community and serve China's own interests.

Concerns about military threats from China: In terms of international security, China has become one of the world's largest powers, with the second highest defense budget in the world. As such, its words and deeds have received more attention from the international community. In particular, regarding the issue of sovereignty over the South China Sea, the disputes and frictions between China and other countries from time to time have given rise to worries and concerns of some countries who believe that China's diplomatic and security policies have strayed away from the principle of "hiding your strength, biding your time" proposed by Deng Xiaoping. Such concerns are understandable and can be settled. china has always pursued consultations with relevant countries through diplomatic channels and adhered to the principle of "shelving differences and seeking joint development" to solve problems. Instead of resorting to force or the threat of force, China takes seriously the core interests and rights of other countries. As Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at Shangri-La Dialogue 2019, "To protect its territories and trade routes, it is natural that China would want to develop modern and capable armed forces, and aspire to become not just a continental power but also a maritime power."

II. Negative Conditions and Factors of Sino-us Relations

Due to the aforementioned contradictions and international sentiment, Sino-US relations have been increasingly complicated, tense and sensitive. At such a time in particular need of global cooperation to battle COVID-19, the Chinese and American presidents held friendly telephone conversations regarding the response and cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. After that, however, the opportunity to restore friendly relations and conduct bilateral cooperation in the anti-epidemic fight was missed. Although Chinese leader once said that "we have 1,000 reasons to make China-US relationship right, not a single reason to make it wrong," the Sino-US relations are still going downhill. It is generally believed that it is impossible to restore Sino-US relations to the situations between the 1970s and the 2010s. Kissinger believes that the COVID-19 pandemic will change the world order forever.[8] The current Sino-US relations are neither out of the intention of the leaders nor that of the peoples of the two countries. Both sides aspire good relations and a peaceful international environment. So, what led to the current situation of the bilateral relations? What are the factors

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behind the tense and sensitive relations and the confrontations? Comprehensive reflections point to the following reasons.

1. *Lack of strategic mutual trust.* The US is worried that China will replace it and undermine its vested interests in the current international pattern. The US believes that China proposed the "community with shared future for mankind," the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the New Development Bank with the purpose of competing with it in the world and excluding it from Asian economic and security affairs. In the meanwhile, China is concerned that the US interferes in China's domestic affairs, system building, and national reunification. Each move of the US aims at containing China and excluding China from the international community. Each move of China is regarded by some Americans as wrong, fake and out of ulterior motives. The lack of mutual trust increased political sentiment and confrontations, which is difficult to be addressed in the traditional way. The US pays more attention to the use and display of overwhelming military, technological and modern cultural advantages, while China attaches more importance to the self-confidence and decisive psychological effects of public opinion. Why?

In fact, there are deeper forces at work. First, cultural dispute. China and the US are more continent-based cultural unities than nation states. One is a unity of oriental cultures, while the other is a unity of western cultures. Based on economic and political achievements and the vigorous energy and self-confidence of the people, both countries were once elevated to a superior international status. Both consider themselves universal. The governments of both countries often believe their national policies are entirely consistent with the interests of all mankind. Therefore, when such two entities meet in the centre of the world stage, tensions will inevitably arise. Second, zero-sum game. International affairs are often interpreted as inevitable competition for strategic superiority. Both sides are basked in triumphalism. In the 21st century, a country that fails to be the world's number one or a top power is bound to fall behind and get consigned to the dust heap of history. To ignore the existence of strategic compromises is to deny the possibility of win-win and all-win results. In fact, the forest of advanced countries is not a tall tree, but a group of tall trees, and each one in this group is great. Third, the Sino-US relations are intertwined with global issues. The important international issues are global in essence and it is objectively difficult to reach consensus. Seeking common ground while shelving differences is easier said than done. The failure to reach a consensus often leads to contradictions. Fourth, domestic challenges have an impact on its international strategy. The "deep state" theory and deepening tribalism [9] advocated by the US, as well as the wealth gap and divergence of values behind profound social and political conflicts, have important implications for its international strategies. Both the left-wing populists that advocate reforms and the right-wing conservative populists often end up with nationalism, trade protectionism and antagonism. It must be said that the Sino-US relations do have a chance of going toward the abyss of polarization and populism.

2. *Lack of a healthy mentality.* Some people in the US and the West believe that China's rapid development and large size will definitely break the existing global interest pattern. Coupled with a historical and deep-rooted prejudice against the Communist Party, they are even *green with envy.* In China, there emerged *upstart mentality* after seeing that China became the world's second largest economy and developed world-leading industries. They got carried away and lost their heads in a moment of excitement, and put behind the principle of "hiding your strength, biding your time" proposed by Deng Xiaoping.[10] Having not adapted to the changes in the world and China's development, they failed to adjust their mentality timely, which is understandable. Some people may feel unaccustomed to or even hard to believe China's changes and development since the reform and opening-up. It takes time to accept these facts.

China's growth has objectively changed the strategic balance and exerted an important impact on the world pattern. Both China and other countries need to adapt to the new situation. China cannot expect other countries to continue to treat it as they did in the early days of reform and opening up, though it may take decades or nearly a century for China to become a truly developed country. Other countries also need to adapt to a growing China and accept the fact that China will continue to grow stronger. Like other countries, China also has reasonable interest appeals and aspirations, including the development of local high-end technologies such as information communication and artificial intelligence. As a main stakeholder of the international system, China hopes to play an appropriate and constructive role in international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. China expects to integrate into existing systems of rules and regulations and participate in the formulation of new rules in trade, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity, and social media. Many existing rules were drawn up earlier without China's participation. China's aspiration for the right of speech is reasonable. Some Americans are worried that China will catch up with the US. In fact, although China has increased its GDP and outperformed the US in some areas, there is still a long way to go for it to realize

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national modernization in an all-round way. Meanwhile, the US is by no means declining as some Chinese people say, nor is it self-enclosed. On the contrary, the United States made it very clear that it would go all out to compete with other countries in different ways. Changes would inevitably bring about different mentalities. The key is to make adjustment towards healthy mentality after identifying the problem. Getting increasingly mature and maintaining a sustained strategic focus fit into the image of a major responsible country. Timely adjustment of mentality is important and may produce two completely different effects. The active adjustment is conducive to occupying the commanding heights in morality, strategy and technology; while passive adjustment may come at a higher cost and deliver more harm than good.

3. *Lack of timely policy adjustment mechanism.* How to adjust relevant policies in time and make necessary policy reserves in line with changing situation and possible development trends? There is also a lot of work to be done in this regard. For example, it is necessary for China to establish a "Belt and Road" debt sustainability analysis framework in time to prevent debt risks. The US needs to arrive at a new consensus in a timely manner to integrate China into existing systems of rules and regulations, which will benefit both countries. Some international rules lag behind the development of the situation and are not conducive to the development of Sino-US and international economic and trade relations, requiring both sides to make joint and constructive efforts to promote adjustments. For instance, WTO rules are mostly designed for the global economy based on agriculture and manufacturing. As the focus of global economy and trade has shifted to service industries, digital technology and intellectual property rights have gradually become more important. It has become an urgent need to update the existing rules and set out more appropriate rules for some industries. Given the strikingly different interests and ideas of WTO members, it is difficult to reach agreements with a complete consensus among 164 members, making global multilateral trade agreements unrealistic.

4. *Lack of far-sighted vision.* Political election and personnel replacement inevitably aim at winning more votes and the support of public opinion, with the final purpose of winning the election. The urgent political purpose or satisfaction of some people's demands may lead to the neglect of long-term strategic cooperation and overall demands, which often lead to strategic conflicts between the two sides. With the approaching presidential election in the US, the American people will definitely adopt a stronger attitude towards China, while the American politicians will make more efforts to hype up China-related issues to please the voters. Neither Republican nor Democratic candidates are not willing to be accused of a softening attitude towards China. No matter whether President Trump can be re-elected or whether the Republican or Democratic Party wins, the American people's sentiment toward China will not change in the short run. The leaders of both China and the US are very sensitive to being considered as "weak." Out of political needs, the United States must make itself slightly superior in any negotiations and take unnecessary provocative actions against China.[11] Having long been bullied by Western countries in modern history, China will never succumb to the West or accept a new unequal treaty upon coercion. Some people in China are not forgiving enough, in a bid to show their patriotism and the power of the country. Those who do not plan for the future will find trouble at their doorstep. If Sino-US relations continue to be tense and uncertain, it will cause great damage to the world even if there is no serious conflict in the end. Many important international hotspot issues, such as the situation on the Korean Peninsula, nuclear non-proliferation and climate change, will be difficult to resolve without the full participation of China, the United States and other countries. The economic loss is not only one to two percentage points of the world's GDP, but also the loss of the global integrated market and production chain, as well as the sharing of knowledge and achievements in various aspects, which will undermine the healthy development of human civilization.

5. *Lack of cultural exchanges.* First, the lifestyle and context are different. During the epidemic, Chinese people wear masks while Americans do not, which only shows the difference in culture and lifestyle, rather than a political issue. The Chinese are hospitable and always show the best to the outside world, which is regarded by Americans as putting on a show and flexing muscles. This is purely a cultural difference. It is inconsiderate and unrealistic to ask all countries to uphold the same cultural values and political system. In fact, a strength of the mankind lies in its diversity. We can draw lessons from differences of values, views, systems and policies. Human beings have made continuous progress by relying on the exchanges of ideas as well as constant learning and adaptation. However, the political culture of the US is rather unfriendly to the concentrated state power. The more China publicizes the "nationwide system," the more fearful and aggressive the United States gets. China's success in a host of international activities, such as the Olympic Games, World Expo and the Belt and Road Initiative, has been met with the claim of the

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US and Westerners that China is not a developing country.

Second, the media plays different roles. American media plays an important role in elections and criticism. For example, the US presidential election is closely associated with media progress. Former president Roosevelt excelled at speaking directly to the people through the cable broadcast network that emerged in the 1920s. Kennedy was elected President in the 1960s by relying on the television network. In 2008, Obama won the presidential election by virtue of the Internet, and President Trump relied on Twitter. The criticism from the American media is ubiquitous and deeply-rooted in American society. In particular, the criticism of the government and politicians has become a social norm, contributing to a critical culture. On the contrary, China is used to positive coverage and often reacts radically to negative voices. Given such disparities between the two countries, the lack of exchanges is highly likely to produce misunderstandings.

6. *Lack of in-depth research.* First, the Chinese and American societies did not conduct studies into each other. They have no profound understanding of each other's society, history and culture, particularly the social, political and economic changes. In response to the theory of "a new model of major country relations" put forward by China, the US has not been positive about it, in the belief that the theory is a mere skeleton and fails to take into account the adverse effects on the US' diplomatic relations. In response to the G2 theory introduced by the US, China was not positive about it either, in the belief that G2 theory did not conform to China's basic national policy of not acting as a leader and failed to factor in the adverse impact on China's entire diplomatic relations. Second, the judgment and expression of the international situation are not accurate enough. The international community has assessed the global trends as "complex and ever-changing" and that "it is nearly impossible to return to the situation of win-win globalization at the beginning of the 21st century."[12] The change in the world pattern is a long-term process, not something that happened overnight. In the past, people often talked about "dramatic change," giving a fake sense of "restoration of reactionary rule," easily leading to misunderstanding and not conducive to creating a social atmosphere featuring "peaceful mind in the face of disasters, more doing than talking, and stable development." Third, discussions within the party are socialized and domestic policies get internationalized. Failure to think deeply about an expression under different circumstances may produce different semantics and interpretations, resulting in unnecessary misunderstandings.

III. Favorable Conditions and Foundations for Sino-us Relations

There is no fundamental conflict of interests between China and the US. Fundamentally speaking, there is no geopolitical conflict of interests between the two sides, neither border issues nor resource disputes. The bilateral relations feature more cooperation than conflicts in history. Shortly after the end of World War II, the two sides had a draw in North Korea, but they already let it go and resumed normal relations. On the contrary, the history of friendly cooperation between the two sides is much longer than that of non-cooperation. Moreover, the cooperation delivered considerable benefits to the people of the two countries and the world.

Core interests of the Chinese and American countries outweigh ideological disputes. There is no ideological difference between China and the US that cannot be resolved. Despite different political and social systems, the US and many other countries still hope that China can achieve "peaceful rise," considering the US is a modern country established by immigrants from various places, boasting a natural tendency towards tolerance and practicality. Quite a few elites in American society support the improvement of Sino-US relations, noting that "the New Cold Warriors cannot contain China given its ties throughout the world; other countries will not join us."[13] China has continued with the reform and opening up in recent decades and has adhered to market economy principles in many respects. The US has always been a relatively pragmatic country and will never put ideology above core national interests. Therefore, with a lot in common, China and the US can seek common ground while shelving differences and handle differences through constructive communication.

Both China and the US play their part in upholding and building the current international order. As a beneficiary of the current global governance and international order, China basically supports and follows the rules framework led by the US and composed of existing multilateral institutions. In the 1990s, China and the United States signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and ceased nuclear test. China joined the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, and abided by the Missile Technology Control Regime. Moreover, China worked with the US to prevent some countries from implementing their nuclear programs and pressure some countries to freeze their nuclear weapons development programs. Between 2000 and 2018, the US actively promoted more than 190 resolutions related to "sanctions against countries that violate international rules" in the UN Security Council. China voted in favour of 182 of them. China is the second largest contributor to the UN and UN peacekeeping operations. China

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currently has more than 2,500 peacekeepers deployed globally, more than the sum of those deployed by other permanent members of the UN Security Council. China is the largest contributor to global economic growth. China has reduced its global current account surplus from 10% of its GDP to a level close to zero, which means that China has boosted global economic growth with its own demand. Following its accession to the WTO, China has fulfilled its promise to reduce trade barriers to levels lower than those of other developing countries such as India and Brazil. China paid off in advance the World Bank International Development Association's loans for the poorest countries and made donations to the Association. For nearly 20 years, China has been the fastest growing export market for the US. During the global financial crisis, China implemented the largest stimulus plan at the fastest speed to prevent the global depression. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, China has not only made proper response within the country, but also launched the largest global humanitarian operation in the history of the People's Republic, offering support and assistance to the world in a timely manner and as its ability permits. China's support and maintenance of the current international order has created favourable external conditions for its own development, opportunities for the world's cooperative development, and benefits to the world. Only cooperation can create an open and stable environment that allows all countries to prosper in peace. Both China and the US have the intention and ability to play a constructive role in the current system. China and the US can not only contribute to each other's development, but also to the world's peaceful development. This is an important condition for improving relations.

The Chinese and American markets are highly complementary. Sino-US relations are the most important bilateral relations in the world today. In 2016, the total trade volume the two countries reached US$519.6 billion and China overtook Canada as the largest trading partner of the US. Meanwhile, the US is China's second largest trading partner and the largest exporter. In general, China's industrialization is in the middle and lower reaches of the global industrial chain, while the US is in the upper reach. Both markets have huge demands for each other. With the continuous development of Sino-US relations, such demands for each other have kept growing, accompanied by increasing impact on and responsibility for the international community. Almost all global challenges need to be coordinated by China and the United States. Any global agreement and institution without the participation of China and the US will be imperfect.

Both sides are psychologically prepared for the improvement of Sino-US relations. The US expects China to open wider and get more liberalized. In the meanwhile, the American politicians are well aware that China would never change its political system or copy the political and economic system of the US. Sino-US relations are vital, but China will not be a core ally of the US. China has expectations for Sino-US relations and puts forward to build a new model of major-country relationship featuring non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. A large number of Chinese students and scholars go to the US for study or visit. In addition, the two sides have been engaged in frequent technical exchanges and economic and trade cooperation. Nonetheless, China believes that Sino-US relations will not be much better or worse. That is to say, both sides have expectations for each other, while psyching themselves up for not very optimistic development. However, both sides need a coordinated, cooperative and stable Sino-US relationship. Such psychological basis is very important, objective and rational. It is an important foundation for maintaining long-term stable relationships and a vital condition to improve relations. China is eager to build the military power necessary for its national security, which is a little disturbing, but not surprising.

Sino-US relations are going through a difficult time recently, due to a severe lack of strategic mutual trust, unprecedented mutual resentment between the peoples, signs of shrinking economic, technological and cultural exchanges, as well as escalating trend of trade, information, public-opinion and diplomatic war.[14] At such a time in particular need of global cooperation to battle the COVID-19, the Chinese and American presidents held friendly telephone conversations regarding the response and cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. However, it is still generally believed that it is impossible to restore Sino-US relations to the situations between the 1970s and the 2010s. *This shows that Sino-US relations are indeed hot-tempered.*[15] *However, we cannot say for sure that such trend is irreversible, nor can we misjudge it as a historical opportunity for China's rise.* Where there is a will, there is a way. Both sides should control their temper, try to understand each other, and change their mindsets. People will change, just as their emotions, thoughts and ideas change with surrounding conditions and environment. The mood of a country can change as well. There will be an end to the pandemic, the difficulties are temporary and the prospects are promising. By working together, the two countries are sure to open up new and constructive interaction spaces. This is because Sino-US cooperation serves not only the fundamental interests of both countries, but also the global interests. In addition, it is a requisite for China to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The practice of continuous Sino-US confrontation is undesirable. We must make active efforts to find a solution.

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IV. The Key to the Development of Sino-us Relations Lies in Innovation

1. *Innovation of thinking.* A balanced and practical thinking is conducive to seek a fulcrum to balance the core interests of both parties, enhance understanding of each other's traditions and feelings, and jointly uphold international order and human values. The two countries shall maintain strategic strength, enhance strategic insight, and insist on constructive exchanges without overstressing temporary gains or losses. Facing an emerging and rapidly developing country, it is natural for a superpower to feel green with envy and even frustrated when its strategy of containment suffers setbacks. China and the US are more strategic competitors than enemies. They cannot defeat each other, and cooperation without competition is not consistent with the laws of development. Competitive cooperation is the norm in Sino-US relations. With the development of such cooperative competition, they will impose higher requirements on each other. Under such circumstance, it is inevitable that they will step on each other's feet and produce discordance, making it highly important to maintain timely, regular and all-round communication. In the ecological environment of the mankind, the balanced thinking and mutual care and support will facilitate sustainable development.[16] The US will be a major power for a long time, but it is still diffcult for the US to alone solve any major problems in the world. China will remain to be a developing country for a long time and will not overtake the US in terms of composite national strength in the 21st century. However, China will surely achieve great progress and get itself into the forest of world's advanced countries. Sino-US relations need not and should not be a zero-sum game. They need each other for their own development. China and the United States should become responsible *"systemic stakeholders"* in the international system. As former president Robert Zoellick of World Bank said, China and the US have their own interests in the common cause of maintaining world peace and development. Their own interests are closely related to the common cause as well as to each other. In this regard, China needs to adhere to the principles of *"modesty and prudence, seeking common ground while shelving differences; healthy competition, managing crisis; co-evolution, and strengthening exchanges."* The principle of "modesty and prudence" is mainly to carry forward the principal of "hiding the strength, biding the time" proposed by Deng Xiaoping. However, the Chinese version of Deng's principle could be easily misinterpreted by foreigners to think that China has a conspiracy. Therefore, we reworded it as "modesty and prudence." China's continuous growth is bound to incur fear and hostility against it in the world. Therefore, we should guard against arrogance and impetuosity, never claim leadership, never seek expansion or hegemony, and remain committed to peaceful development. China has a time-honored history and culture. Since the founding of New China, particularly since the launch of reform and opening up in 1978, China has achieved leapfrog development toward modernization. However, in general, as a latecomer in modern industrial civilization, China still has a lot to learn and should always remain modest and prudent. "Healthy competition" means that competition is inevitable and competition can serve as a driving force for development. As long as the competition is fair and healthy, there is nothing to fear. "Co-evolution" was introduced by Kissinger in his book *On China*.[17] Kissinger used the biological concept of co-evolution to explain the framework of Sino-US relations. In his opinion, the proper label for Sino-US relations should be "co-evolution" rather than partnership. This provides a new perspective that may be of unique significance for improvement of Sino-US relations in the post-pandemic era. It is impossible and unnecessary for either party to fully agree with the other party's goals and practices, but it is entirely possible for both parties to seek and deliver complementary benefits.
2. *Innovation of mechanisms.* To begin with, make active efforts to explore and establish a notification mechanism for important international agenda. In fact, the Chinese government's report on international relations and the US Congress' consultations are public. What's in absence is the awareness for active and targeted notification. Such notification of information is conducive to avoid misunderstandings and provide the other party with cooperation opportunities in certain areas, thereby adjusting relations and reduce conflicts. Secondly, *a consultation mechanism for issues arising from normal exchanges* should be put in place. Based on consultations, both parties could safeguard their common interests in a professional manner, including normal economic and trade relations and diplomatic cooperation. Moreover, the in-depth institutional consultation helps to develop sincere strategic mutual trust and cooperation. Thirdly, make active efforts to explore and establish *a communication mechanism for global hotspot issues*. In this way, the discussions over sudden crises could be upgraded to a more comprehensive institutional arrangement, eliminate the factors behind the tensions and avoid strategic tension, anxiety and misjudgment. Only when China and the US could stand in each other's shoes can they

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know better about how to coordinate their respective interests. Fourth, make active explorations to set up *a lasting mechanism for cultural, economic and trade, scientific and technological exchanges*. Enhance mutual understanding, learn from each other, and jointly make new contributions to human civilization. For example, the establishment of summer camps and social practice bases for elementary and middle school students from the other country will help strengthen the foundation for mutual understanding among young people. Take into account both interests and obligations, engage in sincere cooperation, and view each other's long-term interests in an open and inclusive attitude.

3. *Innovation of models.* Start with economy and trade and make active efforts to seek the broadest common interests in cooperation. This could be promoted from the following two aspects. First, *the two sides could actively explore and set up the Sino-US common market*, with a view to comprehensively reduce trade protection policies that merely consider their own interests and create a level playing field for competition. Second, make *multilateral and active efforts to build the Pacific Community*,[18] with a view toward joint participation in regional development and joint concerns for the economic, political, cultural, and psychological interests of the region. This will help promote the constructive relations between China and the US and with other participating countries, thereby advancing a new type of regional collaboration and cooperation. *From a micro perspective, actively explore the development of co-evolution development zones for industry clusters of China and US. Within a co-evolution development* zone, both sides could apply certain policies to create better conditions for the cluster development of interactive cooperative enterprises, suppliers, service providers, financial institutions, and other related institutions. Build an American town in China and a new Chinatown in the US to promote the in-depth development of Sino-US relations.

4. *Respect science.* It is for sure that science will beat the novel coronavirus that is ravaging the world and damaging people's health. It is for sure that science will overcome the obstacles to Sino-US relations. Currently, the blame-shifting practice around the world in the face of the COVID-19 is in essence for politics, ideologies and votes. In this case, argument is meaningless. What we need is to make good use of science, technology and laws. What's worth mentioning is Francis Fukuyama's views—after the pandemic subsides, perhaps we will have to abandon the simple dichotomy; the key determinant of government performance will shift from the political regime to the national capabilities, particularly the trust in government. Shelving the debate about "superior model" will benefit both China and the United States. The country itself knows best whether its regime is good or suitable. What's suitable for one will not necessarily be good for the other. Therefore, there is no need to argue about it, which in fact is a scientific attitude. In the spring of 2020, a group of 100 Chinese scholars signed an open letter that is published on the website of an American magazine *Diplomat*, calling on the two countries to put aside their differences and work together to fight COVID-19. About 100 American experts on foreign policies, including former senior officials and renowned scholars from both parties, called on the Trump administration and China to strengthen cooperation in battling the epidemic. "Without a certain degree of cooperation between the United States and China, any effort to fight the coronavirus, whether to save American lives at home or fight the disease abroad, will not succeed."[19] Such scientific cognition is worth advocating.

5. *Tactical innovation. First, make good use of contradictions to resolve conflicts.* The West is not a monolithic block. Recently, members of the German ruling coalition brought up the old debate about whether to remain under the protective nuclear umbrella the US has held over the country since the 1950s, demanding the Trump administration to take their nuclear weapons back to the US. This reveals that the contradiction between Germany and the US is both historical and realistic. In addition, Brexit will inevitably aggravate international political turmoil. Neither American politics is a monolithic block. The Democratic and Republican parties have contradictions over the current and long-term interests. Many American elites do not fully agree with their national policies. All these factors could be leveraged to resolve conflicts between China and the US. *Second, analyze the other party's mentality.* We could follow Chairman Mao's suit during the Long March to analyze and leverage the opponent's mentality to carve out a path that is conducive to our own development. Having suffered certain setbacks both in terms of domestic situation and international strategy, the US is certainly experiencing emotional instability. However, as both China and the US are great masters, we need to understand the US' current and long-term intentions amid unstable emotions, so as to make strategic response. *Third, improve publicity methods and strive to create a good environment for communication.* China has a firm resolve to achieve the strategic goal of all-round modernization. An international environment for healthy competition, cooperation and peaceful

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development constitutes an essential external condition for China to accelerate modernization and national rejuvenation. All tactics, approaches, measures, and policies should serve this fundamental goal and help to create favorable external conditions. Just as with human beings, each country has both good and bad sides. In response to complex and sensitive Sino-US relations, we must have a flexible tactical awareness, curb the bad side, explore the good side, and develop negotiating skills to connect with each other. On the bright side, it is conducive to creating a good atmosphere. On the dark side, the more you think about it, the worse it may get, whether it is an event, a person or a country. Of course, the security agencies and defense departments should assume the responsibility to consider the worst scenarios and make preparations accordingly. As for politicians and strategists, they have a responsibility to find solutions that could avoid escalating conflicts and catastrophic consequences. *Fourth, make your red line clear.* You could make clear your countermeasures beforehand, specify your strength, and spell out the worst and ugliest scenarios beforehand to the other party. This will help the other party to measure its stakes, promote rational thinking and social support, and facilitate the settlement of problems through negotiation. In the meanwhile, we should develop a clear understanding about the other party to know how to respond accordingly and consider all possible solutions to process some details. *Fifth, conduct in-depth studies into the negotiating skills.* International activities, particularly international negotiations, require the understanding of different countries' negotiation styles, so as to adjust your regular negotiation methods to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. There must be a flexible compromise plan, since there is no such thing as absolute advantages or disadvantages or absolute wins or losses. The win-win and all-win results are the real biggest win that could sustain. *Sixth, allow some leeway.* Especially when the other party's strategy has suffered a certain setback, we should give due consideration to the other party's psychological burden and avoid further provocation, which may reduce the complexity of the problem. *Seventh, China should step up to establish a special legal expert group to deal with possible legal disputes after the pandemic.*[20]

In the post-pandemic era, the full game between China and the US in politics, economy, culture, military, and international institutions may become more intense. In particular, some people in the US may attempt at solve domestic problems by intensifying international conflicts, moving toward "decoupling" between China and US. Even though the world will certainly survive the "decoupling," we should try our best to avoid it. The recent warning of Australia's former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd makes sense. "A fully 'decoupled world' would be a deeply destabilizing place, undermining the global economic growth assumptions of the last 40 years, heralding the return of an iron curtain between East and West and the beginning of a new conventional and nuclear arms race with all its attendant strategic instability and risk." The rise of great powers in history is mostly accompanied by great blood-shed, but China has been firmly committed to a path of peaceful competition, cooperation and development. Despite countless doubts and challenges, China will advance bravely in all weathers and succeed in the end.[21]

It is said that the US is performing a combination attack to which China should respond with Tai Chi. The essence of Tai Chi could be summarized as "soft," "round," "coherent" and "coordinated." It is advisable for China to analyze both unfavorable and favorable conditions for Sino-US relations, adapt to changes in the situation, adjust the strategy from time to time, make good preparations for lasting cooperation-struggle-cooperation cycle, make good use of the law to fight back reasonably, show mercy when necessary, make small sacrifices for great plans, and seek the "greatest common denominator" with an eye for co-evolution. The prospects for Sino-US relations on the path of healthy competition and cooperation are bright. *As time has changed, it is impossible for the Sino-US relations to remain the same as in the past. However, it is entirely possible to develop new patterns, feelings and characteristics, arouse new hopes* and make new contributions to the well-being of the people in China, the US and the world.

[1] US Secretary of State Pompeo had the opportunity to play an important role at the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in March 2020, but he insisted on the use of the phrase "Wuhan virus" in the joint statement, which was opposed by foreign ministers of other countries.
[2] Li Cheng. 2019. Sino-US Trade Dispute: Short-term Concern and Long-term Consideration. institute of Economic of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, National Institution for Finance & Development. *The Chinese Banker*, (2), 60-62.
[3] Source: WeChat official account "局·很··" (literally meaning "the situation is quite simple"). February 17, 2020.
[4] Wang Jisi. 2020. The Sino-US Relation at its Worst since the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations over 40 Years Ago? School of international Studies, Peking University. *Beijing Cultural Review*, April.
[5] Li Ruogu. 2018. The US' view of China has undergone a fundamental change. *Leadership Digest*, (18), 94.
[6] Jin Jiaxin. 2018. The US' Strategy and Tactics for Ideological Export to Foreign Countries. *Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping Theoretic Research*, (12), 91-92.

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[8] Henry Kissinger. 2020. The Coronavirus Pandemic Will Forever Alter the World Order. *Wall Street Journal*. April 3.
[9] https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/14/politics/andrew-mccabe-donald-trump-department-of-justice/index.html
[10] Henry Kissinger. 2012. *On China*. Beijing: CITIC Press Group, 496-497.
[11] https://www.the-american-interest.com/2020/05/18/...What kind of Regime Does China Have. Francia Fukuyama.
[12] World-renowned thinkers' predictions about the post-pandemic world. http://www.cankaoxiaoxi.com/. March 25, 2020.
[13] https://www.wsj.com/articles/zoellicks-china-isnt-the-one-we-deal-with-11590432043
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[14] Congressional Research Service, "U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress," Updated May 1, 2020, available at: https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42784/104.
[15] Mira Rapp-Hooper. Top Conflicts to Watch in 2020: An Armed Confrontation in the South China Sea. Council on Foreign Relations, available at https://www.cfr.org/blog/top-conflicts-watch-2020-armed-confrontation-south-china-sea.
[16] Zou Lixing. The Great Balance: The Logic of Development. Beijing: People's Publishing House. 2018. P.P. 13-15.
[17] Henry Kissinger. (2012). *On China*. Beijing: CITIC Press Group, 515.
[18] Henry Kissinger. (2012). *On China*. Beijing: CITIC Press Group, 515-518.
[19] Stop the coronavirus stigma now. *Nature*. April 7, 2020.
[20] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/upshot/coronavirus-future-work-america.html
[21] Zou Lixing. 2018. China's Road to Balanced Economic Development, China's Logic: the Balance Development, *World Scientific*.

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