

Reflections on the Construction of New China-US Relations

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ABSTRACT

"New China-US relationship of great powers" is a new concept and new attempt to get along with each other. The proposal of this concept can not only achieve peaceful coexistence between big powers from a practical perspective, but also fill and make up for existing theories of international relations. This article makes an in-depth analysis of the cognitive dilemma of building a new relationship between China and the United States, and conducts an in-depth study on the practical dilemma of building a new relationship between China and the United States. Finally, it analyzes the prospects of the new relationship.

Keywords: *New China-US Relations; Cognitive Dilemma; Practical Dilemma*

1. INTRODUCTION

From a practical point of view, the stability of China-US relations has a decisive role in the peace and stability of the world. Although the prospects of China-US new-type relations between great powers have become an unknown when the US side is cold on China-US, we still need to calmly analyze the difficulties encountered in the exploration of the construction of China-US relations make full use of China-US relations (hereinafter referred to as "C-U relations").

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Connotation of the New C-U Relationship of Great Powers

In 2013, President Xi and Obama met at the Annaberg Manor in three sentences to accurately summarize the core content of the new C-U relationship. The research of domestic scholars is mainly based on the official interpretation, and the connotation is further analyzed from the essence and characteristics of the new C-U relations of great powers. Cui Tiankai, pointed out that building a new C-U relationship is a necessary stage of keeping pace with the times in the benign interaction. The new C-U relationship of big powers does not require two countries to completely eliminate their contradictions and differences. Rather, it requires that two countries be able to control the current state of coexistence of China-US cooperation and competition, and ensure that the cooperation component of C-U relations is greater than the competitive factors. Professor Zhou Fangyin further narrowed and limited the connotative nature of the new

China-US power relations from two aspects of negativity and affirmation. Professor Chen Zhimin pointed out that the possible forms of a new type of great power relations include benign competitive relations, cooperative partnerships and community membership. Professor Yuan Peng analyzed the characteristics of the "new C-U relationship between major powers" from a historical perspective, which mainly contains two meanings: the first is that the "new C-U relationship between major powers" is different from the previous "one of the only superpowers and multiple powers" of two countries.

2.2. Conditions for the Construction of a New Type of Relationship

The construction provides favorable conditions. The situation of multiple power centers and decision centers in the international landscape makes the current international political environment not simply defined as a rising country impacting a defending country. Such an international environment adds stability to the relationship between major powers that determine the direction of international relations. Professor Xia Liping pointed out that in the current international environment, there are favorable conditions for the rising and defending countries to be able to get rid of the "Thucydides trap" iron law.

2.3. Obstacles to the Construction of New China-US Power Relations

Regarding the obstacles to the construction of new C-U relations between major powers, domestic scholars generally believe that the construction of C-U relations between major powers mainly faces obstacles such as conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region, China-US strategic suspicions, economic and trade disputes, and third-party

factors. Professor Jin Canrong believes that as China's strength continues to rise, the US's sense of insecurity, anxiety, and mistrust also increase, and the US is very sensitive to China's military modernization, maritime strategy, industrial upgrading, and development model influence. Professor Tao Wenzhao believes that since 1972, C-U relations have developed steadily under the impetus of common interests. Professor Qian Wenrong believes that in the China-US economic and trade disputes, the US fully blamed China on the cause of the China-US trade deficit, without reflecting on its own economic structural issues, and often implemented trade protectionist policies in the context of China's rise. Next, the US has frequently challenged China on trade issues in an attempt to delay the pace of China's further rise. Chen Jian, former deputy secretary general of the United Nations, believes that the US has increased its military deployment, actively strengthened the US-South Korea, US-Japan, US-Australian military alliances and attracted India, the Philippines and other neighboring countries of China, in an attempt to use third-party factors to contain China and China.

3. COGNITIVE DILEMMA IN BUILDING THE NEW TYPE OF GREAT POWER RELATIONS

3.1. Cognitive Divergence between China and US

3.1.1. US's response to the new type

In the past, the dominance of C-U relations was in the hands of the US, and China had to respond passively to US actions at the tactical level. Now, China wants to shape the future of C-U relations on its own. So, it is also very reasonable that US shows less interests or opposes this proposal. US has different national interests, positioning and demands in C-U relations. Li and Xu from Brookings Institution (2014) concluded that historically [2], the US has no tradition of accepting the new geopolitical framework offered by other countries. During the Obama administration, the US reached consensus with China only on "no conflict" and "not confrontation" (Zhang, 2015) which are the first two of four connotations China added to the New Type [10]. However, in 2017, the Trump administration's first national security strategy report included China in the list of US opponents, using passive titles such as rival and adversary to target China (Guo, 2018) [1].

3.1.2. The divergence of expectation of C-U relations

From the US standpoint, first of all, it is unacceptable to treat China with equal respect. The US has so far not recognized China as a great power on par with the US. Due to its historical and cultural background, the US always has a natural sense of superiority and arrogance. Even in the future, China really has the equal power as the US, and it is difficult for the US to accept this fact psychologically. The US has a very complicated mentality about China's rising. This is also the reason why "China Collapse Theory" and "China Threat Theory" coexist. Specifically, in terms of military and regional security, China should not pose a security threat to US military bases and allies. Economically, China must provide the US with cheap raw materials, labor, and a completely open and free market, so that the US can reverse its current trade deficit with China. In the high-tech industry, China cannot challenge the US monopoly and compete with the US. In terms of culture and values, China must recognize the western universal values. Obviously, China cannot accept these conditions.

3.1.3. The divergence of how to develop C-U relations

Establishing mutual strategic trust is a top priority for the development of bilateral relations between two countries. However, due to differences in thinking styles and historical traditions, two countries have different views on specific arrangements for establishing mutual strategic trust and developing relations. Professor Liu Weidong (2016), from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, compared the logic of thinking between two countries. Therefore, the problem is that building mutual trust is considered by China as a prerequisite for discussing specific issues [3]. Without mutual trust, cooperation cannot be carried out; while the US tends to solve specific problems through cooperation first, and believes that mutual trust can be gradually realized in the process of solving problems (Xu, 2010) [7].

3.2. Reasons of Cognitive Dilemma

3.2.1. Strategic misjudgment between two countries

Due to the influence of some subjective and objective factors, there is a certain degree. Analyzing the US, the Cold War Mentality is still profoundly affecting American decision-makers. For example, many American politicians regard Belt and Road Initiative as the Chinese version of the Marshall Plan, and use this historical term with great Cold War characteristics to speculate about China's attempts of B&R Initiative. They believe that China hopes

to transform its economic strength into geopolitical influence and control over Asia and Europe through the B&R Initiative, and to reshape the international order based on China's wishes (Niu & Sun, 2019), which is actually exactly the same as the US Marshall Plan during the Cold War. In analyzing issues related to China, some American policymakers are still deeply influenced by ideology, and they have a great prejudice against China [4], even showing the signs of resurgence of McKinseyism, objecting to everything concerned with China and Communist Party on some issues. Xie (2016) concluded that the fundamental differences in political systems, values, and development paths between two countries give the US a prejudice that is difficult to eliminate [6].

Similarly, China has strategic misjudgments against the US, especially the Trump administration. From a subjective point of view, the "China-US Marriage Theory" has a certain proportion of supporters in China's political and academic circles, because the relationship between two countries was generally positive during the Obama period. At the beginning of Trump's administration in 2016, many Chinese scholars relied on experience and inertial thinking to judge that this political outsider would play a more positive role in the development of C-U relations than Hillary Clinton, who had always been hostile to China. While the US was studying how to conduct a trade war, China was not aware of this danger and prepared for it (Xu, 2017) [8].

In addition, the particularity of the American political system also increases the possibility of China misjudgment of the US, which mainly reflected in the following two aspects. First, the US policy toward China lacks consistency, and different presidents and administrations will implement policies that are not exactly the same or even diametrically opposed. Second, the US political situation lacks unity, and there are different voices towards China between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, between the states, and between the state government and the federal government.

3.2.2. Two countries lack commonly recognized measures of values and standards of conduct

The second factors causing cognitive dilemma between two countries is the lack of commonly recognized measures of values and standards of conduct. Apart from conflicts of interest, this is particularly prominent when the two sides deal with specific issues. Both sides use their own principles and standards to measure each other's behaviors, which will inevitably cause natural opposition. For example, the US is accustomed to using its own human rights standards to adjudicate the human rights situation of other countries and take unilateral actions. However, China strictly abides by the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, so on diplomatic occasions, China often criticizes the actions of the US. For another example, in order to control

COVID-19 pandemic, China believes that it is necessary and reasonable to adopt some measures like mandatorily using facial masks, work stoppages, and segregation systems including home segregation and forced segregation, but the US regards it as a violation of human rights and freedoms.

3.2.3. The basis of public opinion for the development of C-U relations is disintegrating

For a long time, the American people's favorability with China has not been high. According to Gallup's statistics, over the past four decades, the proportion of Americans who have a favorable view of China has generally been less than half.

This phenomenon mainly due to three reasons. First, in American public opinion, conservative forces have a certain strong influence and McKinseyism also has a considerable number of audiences among the American people. This has made many Americans have a natural negative impression of communism and red China. At the same time, the US government and media are constantly demonizing China on issues such as human rights, Tibet, Xinjiang and so on, leading to a deepening of ordinary Americans' prejudice and misunderstanding of China. Last, the rapid rising of China has a huge impact on American people. This kind of rising will not only change the balance of power in international community, but also will influence the psychological cognition of other countries towards rising country. Yang (2018) proposed that in recent years, China's economy has grown rapidly and its international influence has been rising, but the US economy has been in a downturn, which has caused a general sense of failure and crisis in the American society from ordinary people to the elite [9].

4. PRACTICAL DILEMMA IN BUILDING THE NEW TYPE

4.1. Security Conflicts

The geographical distance between two countries is far apart, and there is no direct territorial dispute between the two sides. In theory, there is no possibility that one party will invade the other on a large scale. At the same time, the two countries, as great powers with nuclear weapons, have the ability to destroy each other, and the situation of dying together will hardly occur. Since the Vietnam War. From a geographical point, the security conflict between two countries mainly exists within the First Island Chain. The US did not stop deploying Sade regardless Chinese opposition. This incident didn't come to a temporary end until China publicly demonstrated its most advanced ballistic missile DF-17 which can render THAAD in South Korea completely useless and attack US bases in the first and second island chains.

Taiwan Island is the core of the First Island Chain, the forefront of the US' containment of China, and the maritime lifeline of the US' two major allies in East Asia, namely Japan and South Korea. At the same time, Taiwan Island is China's gateway to and from the Pacific Ocean, a key to marine defense, and a channel for north-south shipping. Its strategic position is very important to both parties. If the fulcrum of Taiwan is lost, the US will greatly lose its command of the sea in the Western Pacific. At the same time, its island-chain containment strategy against China will fail, and the military bases of the US military and its allies in the Western Pacific will face serious security threats. Therefore, it is difficult for the US to give up Taiwan easily. The tit-for-tat situation is China's growing strategic determination and military preparations for a non-peaceful reunification with Taiwan. From China's perspective, Taiwan is an inseparable part. The Taiwan issue is not only about China's territorial integrity and national dignity, but also about China's political security. If Taiwan's political status changes completely and mainland China fails to stop it, it will even shake the ruling foundation of the China Communist Party. Therefore, once the mainland China fought for a united war.

After the SCS Arbitration and the extremely dangerous sea confrontation in 2016, the game between two countries in the South China Sea did not end there. Historically, China had effective jurisdiction over the SC Sea. But throughout the twentieth century, due to China's weak national strength and navy, although successive Chinese governments carried out China's claim of China had fought naval battles with Vietnam in the Xisha Islands in the 1970s, China had inability to prevent the occupation of islands and reefs by the countries surrounding the SC sea. It cannot accept that one day China can completely place this important sea area under the control of China, which in its view is almost a Chinese version of Monroe Doctrine. In addition to the ambitious determination of uniting the other sovereignty-claiming countries in the SC sea issue for containment of China, the US has other claimed national interests in the region. Professor Wang (2014) concluded that the US has three specific interests in the SC sea: the first point is to ensure the freedom and safety of navigation of international waterways, the second point is to ensure no disturbance towards economic development activities of American oil and gas companies, and the third point is to ensure no compromise of the US commitment to the safety of its allies in the region [5]. So, Christensen (2012) believes that in Chinese thinking, but in the view of many regional actors and the US, these claims are contested, and any actions to implement these claims by military means are almost regarded as revisionism that unilaterally changes the status quo [12]. He also provides a perspective of political psychology which is each side in the dispute sincerely believe that it is opposing revisionists and defending the status quo, so both sides may firmly believe the other party should back down.

The differences in social systems and ideologies between two countries have led to conflicts in political security

between the two sides. In this field, the US is in an offensive role, and China is in a defensive role. Since the founding of PRC, the US has never stopped its penetration of China. The US hopes to carry out a successful color revolution in mainland China and overthrow the Communist Party's rule. In addition, the security conflict between two countries is not limited to the traditional security field, but also exists in cyberspace. As the birthplace of the Internet, the US is the world's largest power in the cyber field and the earliest country to study cyber war. It has a professional cyber force. However, the US government has repeatedly publicly accused Chinese hackers of cyber-attacks on the US that have caused some losses to the US, disguised the US as a victim of Chinese cyber-attacks, and tried to place China at a morally low ground. What is certain is that the game between two countries in the cyber field will be as intense as in other fields.

It is worth noting that most of the above-mentioned Sino-US security conflicts have no direct relations with the survival of the two sides and are more closely related to development, prosperity, and hegemony. Therefore, to some extent or under certain circumstances, there is a practical possibility for both parties to resolve conflicts.

4.2. Economic Conflicts

In the past two years, the economic conflicts between two countries have entered an explosive period. In terms of specific areas of conflict, the two sides are fiercely engaged in three major battles, namely, trade war, science and technology war, and financial war. The interaction of these three major battles determines the economic future of the two great powers and the world.

In the trade war, the focus of both parties is on trade surplus and market opening. The US requires China to increase the number of American goods purchased, and the market especially the service industry, is more open to the US, thereby reducing the huge trade surplus between two countries. On the basis that both sides have made concessions to a certain extent, China has made relatively many concessions.

In science and technology war, the two sides engaged in fierce competition around the development of high-tech industries and the control of international standards of new science and technology. The US wants to maintain its monopoly in the high-tech field, while China is struggling to develop its own high-tech industry. Among them, the Chinese company Huawei has become a key position to offense and defense for the two sides. At the same time, two countries also have major differences on the protection of intellectual property rights. Unlike trade war, war on science and technology are more critical to the national destiny and future of both sides, so both sides have invested huge resources in fighting. At present, the Sino-US science and technology war is still in a fierce battle, with no ending.

In the current situation where trade war and science and technical war cannot distinguish winner and loser, the

economic game between two countries has begun to enter the financial battlefield which is also the area most likely to become a battlefield of decisive battle. The risks and benefits of financial warfare are the highest among the three wars. From US perspective, finance is the most powerful asymmetric power for the US. The hegemonic status of the US dollar and the strong strength of the US financial industry have created very favorable conditions for the US to initiate unilateral financial sanctions and financial attacks (China Society of Economic Reform, 2019). In the trade conflict between the US and Japan in the last century, the US was victorious by virtue of its financial strength, and Japan was defeated by the collapse of the economic bubble [11]. However, China's current financial situation is different from that of Japan at that time. China's finance is relatively closed, and its dependence on the outside world is low. It is a type that is easy to defend and difficult to attack. At present, two countries have not launched large-scale wrestling on the financial battlefield. However, they will.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, in addition to the security conflicts and economic conflicts mentioned above, the practical dilemma of developing Sino-US relations also exists in other fields. For example, the conflict between Chinese and American values and doctrine. These conflicts have led to differences between two countries on specific issues. On the issue of human rights, the US pays more attention to people's rights to freedom and political elections, while China values people's rights to survival, health and development. At the same time, these conflicts have led to institutional opposition between two countries, resulting in prejudice and hostility between Western liberal democracy and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. In addition, as current global leader and future global leader, the US and China also have many differences in global governance. Under the guidance of President Trump's "America First" concept and the influence of isolationism within the US, the US is reducing its international obligations and responsibilities, and openly overriding American interests in international and multilateral issues. This is not the style of a global leader. On the contrary, China is increasingly active in the international community and China has already dominated many international organizations. The response to the global issue of COVID-19 pandemic is a stark contrast. The US is handing over its global leadership to China.

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