

ICAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Prospects and Challenges for U.S.-China Relations

East Ballroom, Mayflower Hotel, Washington D.C.
July 25, 2017

- 8:15-9:00** **Registration**
- 9:00-9:05** **Introduction by HONG Nong**, Executive Director, Institute for China-America Studies
- 9:05-9:10** **Opening Remark by WU Shicun**, Chairman of Advisory Board, Institute for China-America Studies
- 9:10-9:30** **Keynote Address by CUI Tiankai**, Chinese Ambassador to the United States
- 9:30-11:00** **Panel 1: U.S.-China Strategic Relations**

Donald Trump's ascendance to the American presidency has no precedent in the post-normalization phase of U.S.-China relations. President Trump has framed himself as a non-conformist president who will drive hard bargains on economic priorities with China. In contrast, President Xi Jinping has set out to reshape the sharper edges of U.S.-China competitive tendencies into a non-zero sum equation, which he has dubbed a "new type of major power relations."

At their first meeting, the two presidents were able to establish a warm and productive rapport. Does this indicate that bilateral ties will stabilize? Or will the difficult challenges in the bilateral relationship overwhelm the early bonhomie on display? Further, will Trump's pursuit of a nationalistic "America First" form of governance de-stabilize U.S.-China relations as well as the U.S. alliance system in the Asia-Pacific?

Moderator: **ZHU Feng**, Executive Director, China Center for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea, Nanjing University

Speakers: **Michael Swaine**, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 Carla Freeman, Associate Director, China Studies Program, SAIS
 OUYANG Wei, Professor & Director, Strategy Teaching and Research Department, National Defense University
 Roy D. Kamphausen, Senior Vice President for Research and Director, Washington DC Office, National Bureau of Asian Research

11:00-11:15 Coffee Break

11:15-12:45 Panel 2: U.S.-China Engagement and Cooperation on Flashpoint Issues in the Asia-Pacific

A myriad of converging and diverging interests are represented in the political standoff on the Korean Peninsula. The newly elected center-left president of South Korea, Moon Jae-in, has demonstrated his willingness to reach out to Pyongyang and both China and Russia have laid out parameters for a resumption of the diplomatic track. Will this provide a window of opportunity for a meaningful return to four party or six party talks? In what areas can the parties realistically expect to achieve progress? Which aspects of North Korea's behavior are likely to remain a sticking point?

In announcing his contingent adherence to the "One China" policy, President Trump had raised the hopes of many political observers in Taiwan. Although he has walked back many of his ill-considered statements regarding the U.S.' "One China" policy, elements within and beyond his administration continue to hold strong pro-Taipei views. Will there be a nuanced shift in Washington's political relations with Taiwan within the framework of the "One China" policy? Will there be an increase in sales of high-value weapon systems to Taipei in the future? What are the implications of China's reaction? Or will Washington sacrifice its support for Taipei in exchange for China's cooperation in reining-in North Korea's nuclear program?

Moderator: **Gordon Houlden**, Director, China Institute, University of Alberta

Speakers: **Richard C. Bush**, Director, Center for East Asia Policy Studies, Brookings Institution
LIU Fu-Kuo, Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations, Taiwan Chengchi University
Alan D. Romberg, Distinguished Fellow and Director, East Asia program, Stimson Center
ZHU Feng, Executive Director, China Center for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea, Nanjing University

12:45-13:45 Lunch

13:45-14:00 Luncheon Speech

14:00-15:30 Panel 3: Developments in the South China Sea & Friction in U.S.-China Maritime Ties

Recent developments in the South China Sea have been a veritable paradox. China-Philippines and China-ASEAN maritime relations have improved significantly during the past year, and a framework of the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea appears to be on the horizon. In contrast, U.S.-China maritime interactions in the South China Sea are at a low. U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) remain a significant point of contention between the United States and China. Can this paradox persist? Will the Trump administration's South China Sea

policy differ in any way from the Obama administration's policy, including in the conduct of FONOPs in these waters? Can China and ASEAN sustain the tentative agreements they have reached? Can the U.S. and China manage to coexist in China's near seas, while respecting international rules and norms?

Moderator: **HONG Nong**, Executive Director, Institute for China-America Studies

Speakers: **WU Shicun**, President, National Institute for South China Sea Studies
Michael McDevitt, Rear Admiral, United States Navy (Ret.); Senior Fellow, Center for Naval Analyses
SONG Yann-huei, Research Fellow, Institute of European and American Studies, Taiwan Academia Sinica
Gregory Poling, Director, Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, CSIS

15:30-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45-17:00 Panel 4: Economic and Trade Relations with China

China has been a key target of President Trump's anti-trade views. Three of the seven points in his economic plan to "Make America Great Again" were mercantilist or protectionist initiatives that targeted China. In the U.S. Trade Representative's 2017 Trade Policy Agenda report, the Trump administration appeared to downgrade the standing of the WTO's dispute settlement authority.

The Chinese government pushed back, stating in its 2017 government work report that while China will honor its international trade commitments, it will also defend its due rights and interests. At Mar-a-Lago, the two sides were able to skillfully strike up a 100-Day Action Plan of early-harvest market access deliverables. With talks on another set of prioritizations underway, have Beijing and Washington been able to provide sufficient ballast to their trading relationship? Or are China and the U.S. destined to clash on over trade and economics, especially as the numerous domestic trade policy investigations under way end up targeting China, fairly or unfairly? Will Chinese SOE or SOE-linked investment acquisitions encounter automatic denials by CFIUS? How might China respond?

Moderator: **Sourabh Gupta**, Senior Fellow, Institute for China-America Studies

Speakers: **Claude Barfield**, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute
HUANG Yukon, Senior Fellow, Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
LIU Yawei, Director, China Program, Carter Center
William Reinsch, Distinguished Fellow, Stimson Center

17:00-17:10 Concluding Remarks

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