



ICAS BULLETIN

A Survey of Scholarship on U.S.-China Relations

Twice a month, the ICAS Bulletin updates a global audience on American perspectives regarding the world's most important bilateral relationship. Research papers, journal articles, and other prominent work published in the U.S. are listed here alongside information about events at U.S.-based institutions.

Institute for China-America Studies



Representatives from both China and the U.S. met June 21st for the first Diplomatic and Security Dialogue

In the News

U.S. Pressed to Pursue Deal to Freeze North Korea Missile Tests

David Sanger and Gardiner Harris
The New York Times, June 21, 2017

North Korean security issues were the main focus of the first U.S.-China Diplomatic and Security Dialogue. The U.S. reiterated its stance that China should “exert much greater economic and diplomatic pressure on the regime” while China kept to its preferred policy of advocating for a nuclear and missile testing moratorium. In an official statement, China claimed both sides reiterated their overall goal of denuclearization and peace and stability in the Korean peninsula.

China Pushes Back as U.S. Aluminum Industry Urges Crackdown on Imports

Lesley Wroughton
Reuters, June 22, 2017

The U.S. has launched a Section 232 investigation against aluminium products from China. While it is rare for Chinese officials to attend U.S. hearings, Chinese Commerce Ministry official Li Xie called on the Trump administration to refrain from imposing curbs on Chinese aluminum imports in a U.S. Commerce Department hearing. The Chinese aluminum exports only accounts for only 6% of America’s aluminum products, but the producers in the United States argue the capacity expansion there has prompted a global price crash.

China is Among Worst Human Trafficking Offenders, State Department Says

Gardiner Harris
The New York Times, June 27, 2017

The U.S. State Department released its annual report on state efforts to combat human trafficking, downgrading China to the lowest tier which includes states like North Korea and Russia. The criticism on human rights was linked to Secretary Tillerson’s top priority, security issues in North Korea, as forced North Korean labor in China contributes funds to the North Korean weapons program. Some analysts have interpreted the downgrade as a signal the Trump administration is cooling relations with China after the brief rapprochement at Mar-a-Lago.

China’s Premier Praises Free Trade, in Contrast to Trump

Keith Bradsher
The New York Times, June 27, 2017

While reaffirming his country’s commitment to free trade at the World Economic Forum, Premier Li Keqiang did not offer specifics on trade barriers within China itself. China’s rhetoric provided a clear contrast to the Trump administration’s, which has emphasized protectionism and floated the idea of a trade war. Premier Li also addressed financial risks in China and its slowing economic growth.

Chinese Leader Warns Hong Kong Not to Buck Beijing’s Authority

Scott Neuman
NPR, July 1, 2017

In his first visit since becoming paramount leader of China, President Xi visited Hong Kong to commemorate the 20th anniversary of its handover to China. Using strong language, President Xi urged Hong Kongers not to challenge Beijing's authority, calling such actions "absolutely impermissible." His remarks came after the Chinese Foreign ministry called the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong void.

China Vows to Step Up Air and Sea Patrols After U.S. Warships Sail Near Disputed Islands

Simon Denyer and Thomas Gibbons-Neff

The Washington Post, July 3, 2017

On July 2, 2017, the *USS Stethem* sailed within 12 nautical miles of a small isle in the Paracel Island chain, which is controlled and claimed by China. China's Defense Ministry responded by saying the U.S. had "seriously damaged strategic mutual trust" and dispatched armed forces to warn away the U.S. guided-missile destroyer. This incident came hours after President Xi made a phone call to President Trump, noting that while there has been some progress made since the Mar-a-Lago summit, negative factors had been badly affecting the relationship - a reference to the U.S. selling arms to Taiwan and sanctioning a Chinese bank on North Korea issues.

Articles and Analysis

Trump Would Further Damage U.S. Manufacturing If He Restricts Steel Imports

Daniel Pearson

Cato Institute, June 22, 2017

President Trump has instructed the Commerce Department to investigate whether steel imports are hurting national security and will potentially use the results to justify readjusting trade policy. The author believes that further restrictions on steel imports would be damaging to the U.S. for multiple reasons - namely it would actually harm steel end-users within the U.S. manufacturing sector as well as invite retaliatory action from other states.

Balancing 'One Country' With 'Two Systems': a Look Back at 20 years of an Often Uneasy Relationship Between Hong Kong and Beijing

Jimmy Cheung and Tony Cheung

South China Morning Post, June 26, 2017

The authors review the past 20 years of Hong Kong's history to answer the question of whether the "One Country, Two Systems" policy has been successful for Hong Kong. One turning point in Hong Kong's history occurred during the 2003 SARS crisis, where Hong Kongers protested national security laws and Beijing's handling of the SARS crisis. Since then Beijing has continually tried to take a greater role in Hong Kong's affairs such as its proposed implementation of national education in 2012 and election reform in 2014. Beijing loyalists criticize those who resist closer integration while pan-democrats are wary of Beijing's political system.

U.S.-China Relations: Good Start, But Difficult Challenges Ahead

Robert Wang

The National Law Review, June 28, 2017

The author gives a summary of U.S.-China relations under the first five months of the Trump administration. Apart from the Taiwan's leader Tsai's phone call to President Trump, the relationship has been surprisingly positive with positive developments taking place in the Diplomatic and Security Dialogue and the completion of the 100-day action plan. However critical challenges remain, as these communications only began to address the issues that have yet to be resolved such as the South China Sea disputes, North Korea, and trade issues.

China is Trump's Chump

Thomas Friedman

The New York Times, June 28, 2017

While receiving relatively little news coverage in the U.S. media, the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) was widely interpreted in the Asia Pacific as a huge economic blunder, to China's benefit. TPP was a free trade agreement that included enough countries to be have been the world's largest free trade agreement and notably excluded China. The Peterson Institute for International Economics estimated significant boosts to U.S. national income , but with the deal dying, the focus on the region has turned to China's Regional Comprehensive Economic Plan (RCEP). Unlike TPP, RCEP lacks labor and environmental regulations.

Events, Videos, and Discussion

Policy and Politics: The Impact of China's New Cyber Security Law

Jing de Jong-Chen and Philip Webloom

Wilson Center, June 23, 2017

China's new cyber security law took effect at the beginning of June and had a number of provisions including governing how private companies can collect data on consumers in China. The speakers discuss the implications of the new law on how China is balancing growth with cyber security and on the international standards of cyber security.

The U.S. Taiwan Relationship and People to People Ties

Richard Bush, Yuri Chih and Claire Reede

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 27, 2017

The U.S. and Taiwan enjoy a strong but unofficial relationship. The speakers discussed the importance of people to people relationships and the strength of the Taiwan lobby in the U.S. which has helped cement the bilateral relationship despite lack of official diplomatic recognition. People to people relations on both sides have been fostered in a multitude of ways, including commercial ties, language exchanges, study abroad, and tourism.

China Reality Check Event: Handicapping China's Credit Risk

Elena Duggar and Nicholas Lardy

CSIS, June 28th, 2017

Moody's downgrade of China's credit rating was the first time it had done so since 1989. The participants discuss the rationale for the downgrade and the broader economic health of China. Both participants take a relatively sober view of the downgrade, with Duggar noting that the downgrade only took into account a very narrow section of the Chinese economy while Lardy remarked that Chinese debt and state owned enterprises were facing a much harder time in 2015 - which is when a downgrade would have been more appropriate. Overall, growing concerns on China's rising debt are justified but China recognizes the threat debt poses and has some strengths to deal with it.