

Restructuring the World Order: China's Perspective

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Abstract

China-U.S. relations have entered a downward spiral. The structural conflict between China and the United States is related to how the two countries view the new world order in the future. This article tries to explore the roots and essence of the United States' perception of China, discuss how China views the future world order, and analyze the risks of U.S. behavior toward China and China's propositions and claims for the future world order.

Keywords: *China-U.S. Relations, World Order, Perception*

China and the U.S. are falling into extreme competition and escalating strategic paranoia. Such uncertain and unstable competition has not only brought great uncertainty to China -U.S. relations but also brought confusion and anxiety to the whole world. Despite communication between the top leaders, the huge structural conflict between the two countries is deepening and the future of the world order is still uncertain.

Farsighted scholars at home and abroad analyze the prospects of competition and conflict between China and the United States. In his *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap*, Harvard Professor Graham Allison points out that history shows “when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power, the resulting structural stress makes a violent clash the rule, not the exception”; and “on the current trajectory, war between the US and China in the decades ahead is not just possible, but much more likely than currently recognized.”¹⁾ His thinking coincides with those of some American strategists who hold that the United States shall make mental preparation for containing China’s rise through war. In their article *How America Can Shore Up Asian Order*, Kurt M. Campbell and Rush Doshi, key makers of the current American diplomacy, point out that America’s global leading role is fading, and the United States can reforge its leadership by solving the challenges brought by the rise of China.²⁾ In his interview on TV, Dan Coats, the Trump-era Director of National Intelligence, says that China undoubtedly has the intention to replace the American global hegemony and reshape the world order; however, there are still many doubts about whether Chinese leadership has developed concrete and plausible strategies to make that happen. Meanwhile, Chinese scholar Wu Xinbo holds that the China-US competition is distinguished from previous great power competitions in terms of the essential economic strength and respective social governance capacity³⁾ This article holds that the current China-US competition is mainly due to America’s anxiety of growing insecurity and failing strength as well as its consequent impulsive behaviors. America’s series of blind actions deviate from the United States’ strategic tradition and the global political morality, undermining the credibility of the United States and stimulating China to respond with tough measures.

The structural conflicts between China and the U.S. do not stem from historical or current conflicts and contradictions but from their different perceptions of the future world. That is, how China and the U.S. view the future new world order, which is at the center of China -U.S. relations. Therefore, to discuss how China views the future world order, it is necessary to first explore the roots and essence

1) Allison G. *Destined for war: Can America and China escape Thucydides' trap?* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

2) Campbell K M, Doshi R. *How America Can Shore Up Asian Order*, *Foreign Affairs*, 2021, 12.

3) Xinbo, Wu. On China-US strategic competition. *World Economics Politics*, 2020, 5: 96-130.

of America's perception of China, analyze the risks of America's behavior toward China, and put forward China's positions and claims, so as to describe China's views on the future world order.

I. The roots of America's perception of China

America's new perception of China emerged as its relative power declined in the face of the rise of China and other countries. The U.S. has never faced such difficulties and disappointments. From China's perspective, the dilemma of the U.S. lies in the following aspects:

First, an unprecedented sense of unease hits the U.S. After World War II, the U.S. stood at the top of the world. Through the end of the Cold War, the U.S. believed that its world hegemony has been very stable, with the dominating position throughout science and technology, humanities, military, economy, and all other domains.⁴⁾ In the 1980s, Japan appeared to overtake the U.S. in the economy for a while, but it was soon wiped out with the Plaza Accord. The collapse of the Soviet Union made the U.S. believe that its place in the world was completely unchangeable and unimaginable. America even developed a sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority that all other races or ethnic groups are bound to serve them.⁵⁾ Based on the assumption that it will hold the first position in the world forever, the U.S. has made arrangements for the global economy, politics, and military and has also adjusted its economy and finance accordingly. The systems of the U.S. at that time were considered to be the "end" of the global systems (such as Fukuyama et al).⁶⁾

However, this kind of cognition also leaves potential dangers for the development of the U.S. , such as financial, racial, and social problems. The development of the world situation was far beyond the imagination of the U.S.; the unipolar illusion lasted less time than the U.S. estimated. Along with the development of multi-polarization, especially the rapid geometrical development of China, Europe, and India , the global political situation went beyond the imagination and out of control of the U.S. In the face of such a rapid transformation of its international and domestic image,⁷⁾ the U.S. was completely unprepared to adapt to the huge shift from its number-one status to the new reality,

4) Beckley M. China's century? Why America's edge will endure. *International Security*, 2011, 36(3): 77-78.

5) Zhuang, Guotu. "Huntington's view of ethnic culture and its interpretation of international relations". *World Ethno-National Studies*. 2004, 2(6):1-8.

6) Fukuyama F. *The end of history and the last man*. Simon and Schuster, 2006.

7) Goldman E. *Power in Uncertain Times*, Stanford University Press, 2010.

and could not accept the huge fear and anxiety caused by it.⁸⁾

Second, the U.S. is subject to a profound lack of self-confidence, distrust of the outside world, and strategic anxiety. The strategy of the U.S. is intertwined with and influenced by both internal and external factors. Based on its strength, the U.S. has always been very confident in its economic, military, and political power. Based on this confidence, the U.S. also has confidence in its international strategy and successively trusts in its alliances and friends. In practice, however, the so-called "power" of the U.S. is not entirely based on real "strength" but rather on propaganda and imagination. For a long time, the U.S. has been beset with internal problems. The endogenous economic and financial system has led to a highly financialized economy and industry hollowing out, resulting in numerous social problems and a serious decline in physical production capacity.

Also, as to international affairs, the U.S. has consumed its own strength and overused its military, economic, and diplomatic means around the world for decades to maintain the "strong America" virtual image. At the same time, the U.S. is reluctant to commit resources to maintain the international public goods and brings serious damage to the authority of the international organizations, which in turn erodes America's own international image and morality.⁹⁾ These consequently hurt America's internal affairs, and the vicious circle leads to a serious decline in America's power. The U.S. has lost its confidence and trust in and outside the country, turning into a strategic failure mentality.

Third, as a strategic failure and strategic anxiety lead to more extreme approaches, the U.S. lost the sense of rules. For a long time, the U.S., which always ranks first in the world due to its strength, has formed an inaccurate perception of the totalitarianism of the international society. Therefore, when dealing with domestic and international issues, there has been a polarization of means and methods; that is, any state will be either a friend or an enemy of the U.S. Its friends will be under the control of the U.S., and for its enemies, it will use force and military means. The middle zone other than "friend or foe", has all but disappeared.¹⁰⁾ The psychology of strategic failure consumes the strategic patience of the U.S., which makes the U.S. prefer resorting to violence when dealing with domestic and foreign problems¹¹⁾. Thus, in the face of catch-up from China, Europe, Russia, India, and the like, the U.S. sees only two options for

8) Yan, Xuetong. "The instability of China-US relations." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3.3 (2010): 263-292.

9) Jisi, Wang, and Hu Ran. "From cooperative partnership to strategic competition: A review of China-US relations 2009-2019." *China International Strategy Review* 1.1 (2019): 1-10.

10) Hersman R K C. *Friends and foes: how Congress and the president really make foreign policy*, Brookings Institution Press, 2012.

11) Xinbo, Wu. "US Security Policy in Asia: Implications for China-US Relations." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* (2000): 479-497.

them: to become an ally or quasi-ally of the U.S. or to fall into the inevitable Thucydides trap. The strategic anxiety generated by new situations that the U.S. had never encountered led it to believe that time was no longer on its side. Thus, the U.S. was using unprecedented means to escalate the crisis and advocate force to meet challenges that the U.S. had never experienced.

Fourth, the U.S. has demonstrated a serious lack of morality and responsibility. Whether it refers to internal or international matters, the U.S. has shown a serious moral deficiency, lack of basic decency, and arrogance toward its people, allies, neighbors, or enemies.¹²⁾ They swing arbitrarily from one extreme to the other when dealing with social issues such as the BLM.

On the external problems, they willfully resort to threats of force, sanctions, and confrontation, show a serious lack of respect, and are unwilling to solve problems through rational and reasonable means. They try to solve problems through the "easy way" with regimes or even races or individuals. All of these reflect the lack of morality and responsibility in the U.S. have evolved into poverty of strategy. In addition, as the world's largest power, the U.S. is expected to show great power responsibility in maintaining the international system and world order and take care of the needs of other countries, which, in turn, would ensure its international status and the resulting economic security and political interests. However, due to the totalitarianism of the internal system of the U.S. and the de-democratization caused by extreme freedom, the ability and desire of the national leaders went seriously alienated, and the U.S. could not assume its due responsibilities as a great power, let alone take care of the interests of other countries.¹³⁾

The above changes have simplified and roughed up the policy options of the U.S. The Biden administration has proposed the "three Cs" solution, cooperation, competition, and confrontation, which is reflected in the handling of China -U.S. relations.¹⁴⁾ The three constituent parts are as follows: (1) China and the U.S. are in competition, sometimes confrontation, but the U.S. is willing to maintain political dialogue and exchanges; (2) the U.S. and China are in competition and confrontation, but the U.S. may discuss cooperation, when necessary, but the cooperation must be in the interests of the U.S., not China's or mutual interests; (3) the U.S. can establish a crisis management mechanism to avoid conflicts caused by competition or confrontation.

12) Kane J. *Between virtue and power: the persistent moral dilemma of US foreign policy*, Yale University Press, 2008.

13) Neiwert D. *Alt-America: The rise of the radical right in the age of Trump*, Verso Books, 2017.

14) Xinbo W. China-US Strategic Competition under the Biden Administration, *China Int'l Stud.*, 2021, 87: 5.

II. Risks of the U.S. behavior toward China

The National Security adviser Sullivan said on Nov. 7, that the object of the Biden administration is to shape the international environment so that it is more favorable to the interests and values of the U.S. and its allies and partners as well as like-minded democracies. It is not to bring about some fundamental transformation of China itself. But at least so far, there have been no fundamental changes in China-U.S. relations. The risks posed by the U.S. policy toward China continue.¹⁵⁾ This is mainly reflected in three aspects.

First, strategic anxiety and strategic blindness' impact on strategic rationality. The U.S. is immersed in its own imagination, and the strategic anxiety caused by the echo chamber of "fear of China" has led to serious strategic blindness¹⁶⁾, especially the risk of losing its strategic rationality on the Taiwan issue. There are three reasons for this.

(1) The U.S. does not have a correct understanding of China; nor does it have a correct understanding of itself. Until now, the U.S. has not realized the strength and fragility of China, let alone the inherent contradictions and structural problems of its own. It is true that China has come a long way, but the lessons of Chinese history have always been the logic of internal causes. What China is worried about is that people's livelihood is not good enough to cause problems. Its development logic is internal and is committed to internal stability and economic improvement. Reminding or forcing China to turn to external concerns is an unwise strategy.¹⁷⁾ The absolute power of the U.S. has not changed significantly, but the external environment is changing. America's "inadequacy" is only a relative decline in its ability to control. This is historically inevitable, but the U.S. is not so weak as to become a "second-rate" or "third-rate" nation.¹⁸⁾

(2) The U.S. does not manage its international affairs and its internal affairs properly. Although the U.S. will continue to be strong, the diversification of international affairs is a big trend, which will no longer be as absolutely affected by the U.S. as in the past. This is also the inevitable and new normal of the development of the international community. America should adapt to this change. In the same way, the U.S. fails to recognize that changes within the U.S. are the

15) Perthes V. Dimensions of rivalry: China, the United States, and Europe, *China International Strategy Review*, 2021, 3(1): 56-65.

16) Zakaria F. The new China scare: Why America shouldn't panic about its latest challenger, *Foreign Aff.*, 2020, 99: 52.

17) Foot, Rosemary, and Amy King. "Assessing the deterioration in China-US relations: US governmental perspectives on the economic-security nexus." *China International Strategy Review* 1.1 (2019): 39-50.

18) Sieber S D. *Second-rate nation: From the American dream to the American myth*, Routledge, 2015.

foundation of changes outside the U.S. For a long time, U.S. foreign policy has been based on internal stability and high-speed growth. However, under the current situation, the domestic economic and social problems in the U.S. have caused governance difficulties. Economic decline and social instability seriously restrict the options of external policies of the U.S.¹⁹⁾

(3) America's ideas are polarized and stubborn. Although the Biden administration has been in office for several months, in terms of overall China policy, the Biden administration is still following the policies of the Trump era.²⁰⁾ Its policy toward China and perception of China are still being held hostage by fanatical anti-China sentiment, and internal political struggles and polarized political ideas dominate the decision-making process. The populist and extreme Trumpism not only obscures the real nature of the China-U.S. issue but also dilutes efforts to stabilize China-U.S. relations. Rational voices and basic facts are distorted by extreme emotions in policy decision-making. Even if such policy shockwaves can be corrected in the future, the extreme perception of China in American society and politics will not fade away.

Second, undermining the world order through militarism and revisionism. In its choice of approach, the U.S. has adopted a more dangerous camp dichotomy. The question is not whether the world is heading for a “new cold war” but rather that the U.S. is taking an approach that carries a high risk of dragging the world into an imaginary “Cold War” or even a regional hot war.

(1) To replace liberalism with like-minded partners to ensure hegemonic legitimacy. To ensure the legitimacy and continuity of hegemony, the U.S. has redefined many core concepts, such as “democracy”, “freedom” and “human rights”, and replaced them with more generalized concepts.²¹⁾ The most obvious of these is to define democracy in the egoistic way; that is, any country will be “democratic” as long as it is different from China in an attempt to preemptively occupy the conceptual high ground of these traditional Western values. Moreover, the U.S. has interpreted this generalized value as “of the whole world,” characterized China as a “challenger” to the existing order, expanded the competition between China and the U.S. into China's struggle with the “whole world”, replaced universal values with ideology, and covered and replaced democratic values with American interests. In addition, the U.S. is morally discrediting China, characterizing values different from the U.S. as “immoral” and claiming legitimacy through the legal system.²²⁾

19) Daojiong, Zha. "Non-traditional security and China-US relations." *Asian Perspective* (2020).

20) Haar R. Some aspects of Trumpism are here to stay, *Observant*, 2020.

21) Zhao, Quansheng. "America's response to the rise of China and Sino-US relations." *Asian Journal of Political Science* 13.2 (2005): 1-27.

22) Johnston A I. The failures of the ‘failure of engagement’ with China, *The Washington Quarterly*, 2019, 42(2): 99-114.

(2) To rebuild the military and intelligence system with militarism as a multiplier of war power against China and to maintain its traditional balance of power. The Biden administration is rebuilding its global military and intelligence capabilities with the strategy of containing China by strengthening alliances in terms of values (the D10 club of democracies) and geopolitics (Quad and Quad Plus).

First, the U.S. is reconstructing the racial alliance system with Anglo-Saxon blood as the core of its alliance strategy. Such as the Five Eyes alliance and the latest AUKUS are ethnic-based blood alliances.²³⁾ Second, based on the blood-race alliance, the U.S. is repairing and strengthening the existing alliance system and repairing the cracks and deficiencies of the past to establish a more powerful military alliance system. Third, it is expanding and piecing together a new alliance system. In addition to the blood-race alliance system, the U.S. not only strengthened and patched up the existing alliance system but also expanded and pieced together a new network of alliances.²⁴⁾ Fourth, while the U.S. is building a new network of allies, it is also asking members of the network system to provide public goods that were previously supplied by the U.S. On the one hand, it solves the dilemma that the U.S. is unable to provide public goods; on the other hand, it tests the loyalty of members. Driven by this idea, the newly established groups such as QUAD and Democratic Dialogue formed a nested system with AUKUS and other blood ethnic alliances as its core – with the existing alliance system as the backbone and the expansion of a new network of allies as its extension to confront the "non-American" countries.

(3) To challenge multilateralism with bespoke or ad hoc arrangements. The U.S. is replacing multilateralism with bespoke or ad hoc arrangements which it uses to cover up its unilateralism with the appearance of multilateralism and to isolate countries such as China that do not conform to it.²⁵⁾ First, to counter China and other countries, the U.S. takes a pseudo-multilateralism with clear direction, characterized by taking the U.S. as the core and adopting the unilateral thinking of the U.S. as the means to fight against other parties in a multilateral way with one voice. Second, bespoke or ad hoc arrangements attach great importance to collective action, mainly in the form of multiple countries against one or a few countries. Third, a bespoke or AD hoc arrangement emphasizes the relevance of actions and involves a variety of fields. It takes the form of collective hunting in which gangs "hunt" a certain country or in a certain field.

23) Lau, Lawrence J. "The China-US trade war and future economic relations." *China and the World* 2.02 (2019): 1950012.

24) Kutty S N, Basrur R. The Quad: What it is—and what it is not, *The Diplomat*, March, 2021, 24.

25) Medeiros, Evan S. "The changing fundamentals of US-China relations." *The Washington Quarterly* 42.3 (2019): 93-119.

Third, undermining the world order through military measures and geopolitics. More dangerously, the U.S. is disrupting the world order with military measures and geopolitics. In other words, the U.S. had broken the old order before it had planned to establish a new one.²⁶⁾

(1) American diplomacy is getting worse. Since the Trump administration, U.S. diplomacy has entered a cycle of deterioration, not only ignoring the economic and development needs of other countries but also trying to reap the economic and financial gains of other countries through unprincipled financial plunder. At the same time, the U.S. has downgraded its diplomatic strategy to purely defense needs, ignoring the security needs of other countries, merely serving the security of the U.S., and integrating the security and diplomacy of other countries into its own security and diplomatic needs.

(2) The U.S. prioritizes military issues in ways that aggravate security dilemmas, and the bottom line of war is approaching a critical point. The U.S. is adopting a similar approach to North Korea's "military-first politics", weaving military networks such as militarizing India and the Pacific and militarizing the South China Sea, loosening military controls over Japan, India, and the ROK, and allowing Taiwan to trample on the bottom line of cross-strait relations. More seriously, the U.S. has deliberately lowered the threshold for the use of tactical nuclear weapons while increasing its nuclear superiority and has continuously breached the red line and bottom line of the balance of power among nuclear powers in the past on intermediate-range missiles and nuclear issues.²⁷⁾ Third, the U.S. also condones regional conflicts and regional wars and inflames regional problems by weaving all kinds of military alliances and alliance systems.

(3) The U.S. also intends to intensify the risk of major power conflicts. In addition to the Taiwan issue, which is colliding with the China-U.S. consensus and the cross-strait bottom line, the U.S. intends to exacerbate and maintain civil, ethnic, and geo-political conflicts in global military issues. In the U.S.-Russia relations, the U.S. intends to break the military tacit understanding with Russia and squeeze Russia's geographical space with the eastward expansion of NATO. Also, the U.S. is attacking China's military tolerance threshold in its neighborhood and on the sea intentionally by inflaming all kinds of geo-problems to split regional ties and create contradictions and conflicts.²⁸⁾

26) Haass R. How a world order ends: And what comes in its wake, *Foreign Aff.*, 2019, 98: 22.

27) Finaud M. Why New Thinking Is Needed on Negative Security Assurances, *Arms Control Today*, 2017, 47(8): 12-16.

28) Wuthnow J. Beyond imposing costs: Recalibrating US strategy in the South China Sea, *Asia Policy*, 2017 (24): 123-138.

III. How to think about the real world

China's understanding of the new order is based on its historical traditions and lessons, as well as its understanding of American solutions. It is more concerned about whether such a situation will lead to conflicts between China and the U.S. or even global instability.

First, China's historical traditions and lessons. China has thousands of years of struggle experience and painful lessons. On the way of ending wars and pursuing peace, China has countless cases, which cost tens of millions of Chinese lives. The replacement of the old order can take many forms and have many consequences, but China's experience shows that few of these outcomes are as planned and there are no immutable eras or regimes. At present time, due to the China-U.S. relations likely to remain on an unstable course, all kinds of conditions have changed in different ways, but their essence has not changed significantly.

(1) Endogenous growth and matured replacement are the optimal results. China's experience and historical traditions are different from those of the West. China believes that the growth of a new order and transformation of the system will be more stable and at the lowest cost through endogenous growth. The consequences of violence, plunder, and oppression can only be greater violence.²⁹⁾ China cannot afford the war and turmoil that the transformation of the order will bring.³⁰⁾

(2) Unlike external perceptions, China does not have a strong bearing capacity for new orders. In other words, China is neither ready to become the world's largest power to lead the world³¹⁾; nor has it developed into a great power qualified to lead the world. China has no ambition to dominate the world. It still respects the current world order and the global political and military system. It still respects the leadership of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific and the world. It does not intend to challenge this position and replace the U.S. as the new hegemony.

(3) At the same time, China also believes that there is a need for innovation in today's world order. The current order is the result of the traumatic experience of the two world wars and the precipitation of decades after World War II, including the history of the Cold War and the development of countries in the world. It has been systematized and worked well though it still has many problems. The necessary innovation is fundamentally different from building a totally new one.

29) Zhao, Suisheng. "A New Model of Big Power Relations? China-US strategic rivalry and balance of power in the Asia-Pacific." *Journal of Contemporary China* 24.93 (2015): 377-397.

30) Tsai K S. Adaptive informal institutions and endogenous institutional change in China, *World Politics*, 2006, 59(1): 116-141.

31) Jianfei, Liu. "Sino-US relations and building a harmonious world." *Journal of contemporary China* 18.60 (2009): 479-490.

Just like the rapid collapse of the U.S. in Afghanistan, the rapid decline of the U.S. will lead to unpredictable serious chaos and disasters in the current world order.³²⁾ China does not want to see such a situation and therefore hopes that the U.S. can maintain the basic stability of the world order during the transition period.

(4) Transformation of the international order is a worldwide problem, especially in today's complex conditions, because the uncertainty brought by the transformation is completely unpredictable. Although China is one of the most important actors, it is not the only choice or solution to the transformation of order. Only with the joint participation of countries including China and the U.S. can we find the solution that has the least impact on the world. Especially when the current U.S. policy is to regard China as "a problem to be solved", the fact to be clear is that solving the China problem or eliminating China is an extreme idea, and it is impossible to solve all the problems faced by the U.S. New problems and even bigger problems may arise. China is the object of cooperation, not a list of problems to be solved.

Second, the U.S.' "three Cs solution" ("competition, cooperation, and confrontation" policy) is to further divide the world, not to unite nations. In China's logic, the solution proposed by the U.S. is undesirable due to serious differences in the starting point. There are four reasons:

(1) The fundamental logic of the so-called "three Cs solution" is zero-sum. This approach will only further allow countries and actors to go their own way and pursue their own interests separately instead of strengthening coordination and cooperation. Under the circumstances of this approach, not only China and the U.S. will strengthen their competitive situation against each other, but also most of the other actors, which do not have the all-time-space conditions and capabilities to compete with China and the U.S., can only choose to rely on China or the U.S., resulting in a de facto camp confrontation.³³⁾

(2) the U.S. seems to have many options for this approach, but its real purpose is to build domestic consensus through strategic competition with China, stimulate public opinion and negative factors in decision-making, and solve the domestic social and economic problems.³⁴⁾ This will lead to narrow decision-making orientations and fewer policy options, which will eventually lead to extreme policies that further intensify China -U.S. competition.

(3) The current implementation effect of the U.S. policy is to force countries outside China and the U.S. to take sides, which makes other countries confused.

32) Regilme Jr S S F. The decline of American power and Donald Trump: Reflections on human rights, neoliberalism, and the world order, *Geoforum*, 2019, 102: 157-166.

33) Jisi W. The Plot against China?: How Beijing Sees the New Washington Consensus, *Foreign Aff.*, 2021, 100: 48.

34) Liping, Xia. "The Development of the "One Belt and One Road" and its Impact on China-US Relations." *Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament. Beijing, China* (2015).

The competition between the two countries has evolved into a confrontation and competition between the U.S. and its followers and those countries that are unwilling to participate in such a competition. This is the situation about which other countries worry most.

(4) China and the U.S., which have an important influence on the world situation and future international order, should consider not only their own benefits but also the collateral damage that the implementation of their new policies may bring about. At the same time, the competitive relationship between the two countries should not only reduce losses but also consider how to enhance cooperation and benefits for the world. These policies serve as guardrails and borders for China-U.S. relations, and they are responsible, sustainable, and high-quality policies.³⁵⁾

Third, will the competition between China and the U.S. inevitably lead to conflicts? The China-U.S. relationship is a new style that has never appeared before and cannot be described in a simple term. On the whole, the imminent situation between China and the U.S. is neither a cold war nor a hot war; rather, it is a new change in the style of integration to a greater extent. However, under the current U.S. policies, competition between China and the U.S. has seen risk-reduction events such as video talks between top leaders and meetings and negotiations between high-level diplomats. However, on the whole, if the U.S. does not change its existing policy of suppressing China, the disorderly and irresponsible competition between the two will bring extremely high risks, increasing the possibility of armed conflicts in some parts will increase.

In general, the global order, including China-U.S. relations, could be at risk if malicious competition between China and the U.S. is not managed effectively.

(1) The reshaping of the supply chain and value chain unilaterally carried out by the U.S. will bring about the division of the world and even the result of co-extinction. The ongoing re-integration of the economic and trade system by the U.S., especially the reshaping of the supply chain and value chain, is not aimed at optimizing and upgrading the existing economic and trading system but at trying to contain China's development by cutting off its economic ties with the outside world.³⁶⁾ Therefore, the result is very obvious: it will forcibly divide the world economic and trade system into an either/or adversarial trading regime. This approach will not only bring about the collapse of the WTO and other existing trading systems but will also cause chaos in the global economic, trade, and financial systems. The end result will be co-destruction, not symbiosis.

35) John R. Allen, Ryan Hass, Bruce Jones. *Rising to the challenge: Navigating competition, avoiding crisis, and advancing US interests in relations with China*, 2021.

36) Hao, Qi. "China debates the 'new type of great power relations'." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8.4 (2015): 349-370.

(2) The U.S. politically suppresses and isolates China, separates China from the world, constantly engages in "gangism" with other countries, and deliberately emphasizes political "non-Americanism." These actions will accelerate the political division of various actors and regions, bring about serious political and geographical divisions and serious confrontations, and intensify political confrontations and conflicts within and between various actors.³⁷⁾ If this state continues, political chaos will become common in world politics, and there will be political confrontations and armed group conflicts that are even more serious than camp confrontations during the Cold War.

(3) The U.S. is playing an extremely dangerous chicken game by confronting China through military collectivization and risk-taking.³⁸⁾ To quickly restore and enhance the military power balance against China, the U.S. military confrontation against China has surpassed the US-Soviet confrontation during the Cold War and crossed all China-U.S. policy borders in history. For example, on the Taiwan-related issue and the South China Sea issue,³⁹⁾ the U.S. deliberately provokes the topic of "Taiwan independence" to test China's bottom line of force. The military confrontation between China and the U.S. currently only has the final decisive card. In addition, there is the U.S.' shadow in all global geopolitics.

IV. How to Build a New Order

Undoubtedly, China-U.S. relations are evading responsibility to each other for the current situation, including military security, trade and finance, and political structures that are in an unhealthy state and irresponsible. This state of affairs is unsustainable and dangerous. The U.S. has already put forward what the U.S. believes is the "three Cs solution" to deal with China-U.S. relations. How does China think of a healthy, responsible, and sustainable relationship with the U.S., and what is the new world order that China is trying to build? There are generally some of the followings.

First, strategic understanding and strategic choice. The instability of China-U.S. relations has made all countries in the world realize that the fate of mankind is at a crossroads. Any new order must be established based on history and reality, especially to avoid falling into the Machiavellian style.

37) Carothers T, O'Donohue A. How to understand the global spread of political polarization, 2019.

38) Perlez J, Myers S L. US and China are playing "game of chicken" in South China Sea, *New York Times*, 2018, 8.

39) Xie, Hao. "The Impacts of the Taiwan Issue on Sino-US Relations." *Open Journal of Political Science* 4.04 (2014): 237.

China believes that, under the new order, China-U.S. relations should also be a healthy, responsible, and sustainable bilateral relationship.

(1) Health and responsibility are premised on strategic mutual trust; the bottom line of strategic competition is not to move towards strategic confrontation. On this issue, China and the U.S. have decades of experience in dealing with each other; both sides have a deep understanding of each other's bottom line.⁴⁰⁾

(2) The basis of mutual trust is to respect each other's strategic core interests, which is a ballast stone. This respect means that the U.S. respects that China and other countries have the same development opportunities and living space as the U.S. does and that they also have the right to pursue a happy life like the U.S. does.⁴¹⁾ In other words, if even China's right to "eat meat" is restricted, this China-U.S. relationship is highly unhealthy, nor is it an action responsible for 1.5 billion people.

(3) Competition is normal, but it is as long as it does not affect the cooperative relationship. Healthy competition is necessary at all times. However, the competition currently proposed by the U.S. is based on cutting off cooperation with China or even forcing other countries and important actors not to cooperate with China. The U.S. has even kidnapped Chinese individuals to gain a competitive edge, including suppressing South Korea's Samsung and Taiwan's semiconductor industry to gain high-tech leadership.⁴²⁾ This is not competition but coercion, which is unhealthy behavior.

(4) The extensive decoupling of the U.S. undermines the basis of competition. Over the years, the U.S. has used various decoupling tactics, such as complete decoupling, partial disengagement, and strategic recoupling, to engage in various clique operations that exclude China and even form various secret groups culturally to exclude China.⁴³⁾

If the competition between China and the U.S. is not managed and controlled, under such infinite competition without borders, the future of China and the U.S. and the direction of the world will be worrisome. There are three possible prospects for the competition between China and the U.S.: 1. The vicious confrontation between China and the U.S. continues, countries around the world have to choose to stand on the sidelines. The new order is divided between the Anglo-Saxons and the non-Anglo-Saxons and will cause a greater degree of

40) Shengli L, Fan Y. The evolution of national security concept in China over the past 70 years: cognition, connotation and countermeasures, *Journal of International Security Studies*, 2019, 37(6): 3-29,153.

41) Layne C. The US–Chinese power shift and the end of the Pax Americana, *International Affairs*, 2018, 94(1): 89-111.

42) Bown C P. How the United States marched the semiconductor industry into its trade war with China, *East Asian Economic Review*, 2020, 24(4): 349-388.

43) Jisi, Wang, and Hu Ran. "From cooperative partnership to strategic competition: A review of China–US relations 2009–2019." *China International Strategy Review* 1.1 (2019): 1-10.

confrontation and frequent wars; 2. China surrenders and becomes part of the world system dominated by the U.S., carrying out large-scale institutional reforms, and racial transformation will make non-Anglo-Saxons, including Chinese, become an "inferior" ethnic group; 3. the U.S. fails, whose internal problems eventually erupt, and the world plunges into a new state of anarchy until a new order emerges.

Cases 2 and 3 are less likely while case 1 is more likely. However, no matter what the situation is, it will seriously impact the existing system, and the consequences are unpredictable and hard to control. Therefore, what is better than the above three situations is to repair and improve the existing order; that is, "good governance," which guarantees the benign dialogue and interaction between the big powers and also ensures the interests of small countries and the corresponding right to speak. It will ensure the stability and improvement of the international system, promote mutual trust and cooperation, and reform the existing international system rather than de-functionalize it.

Second, strategic empathy and the responsibility of great powers. The biggest problem for China and the U.S. is that they do not care about the thoughts of other countries, and lack strategic empathy for each other and other countries.⁴⁴⁾ As traditional security issues continue to grow, and non-traditional issues become more complicated, the intensification of China-U.S. disputes, coupled with the rise of populism mixed with nationalist sentiments around the world, has brought up more and more uncertainties to the whole world.⁴⁵⁾ Under this circumstance, unilateralism that advocates zero-sum will encounter greater opposition, and unilateralism that pretends to be multilateralism, so-called pseudo-multilateralism, will also be countered, and national Darwinism will be abandoned. The concept of a "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind" will gain more respect. The era of democratization of the world order and international relations has arrived. By the nations, for the nations, of the nations will become the standards of the new international order, and respect for every country and actor and the concept of win-win will become the most important standard of the new international order.

Under the new situation, the construction of a new world order requires a redefinition of the concept of great powers in the world system. Unlike in the past, great power or big power should have three characteristics. Firstly, a great power must have international responsibilities. While pursuing its own national interests, it should also take into account the interests of other actors, such as other countries or regions. On this issue, neither China nor the U.S. is perfect. Secondly, great

44) Nacht, M., S. Laderman, and J. Beeston. *Strategic competition in China-US relations*. No. LLNL-TR-759677. Lawrence Livermore National Lab.(LLNL), Livermore, CA (United States), 2018.

45) Wang Z. From crisis to nationalism?, *Chinese Political Science Review*, 2021, 6(1): 20-39.

powers need to provide the world with international public goods to ensure the stability of the system. Yet, the international public goods provided must have a general sense of security and comfort and should not harm or affect the interests of other actors. Thirdly, great powers must have an independent decision-making system, which is not subject to the manipulation of domestic or international actors. The decision-making system of major powers should remain sustainable and should not be broken due to changes in the political system or changes in interest groups, which will lead to instability in the international system.

Third, strategic stability and strategic approach. The third understanding of building a new order is to maintain the current strategic stability and keep this unsatisfactory status quo from further deterioration until a reasonable new plan and a new path are found. To achieve this, multiple efforts are required.

The establishment of a new order requires maintaining strategic openness and diversity. China is fully aware that the following are essential elements for constructing a new order.

(1) The relationship between countries is not a multiple-choice question but has open answers with multiple possibilities. It cannot fall into the logic of either-or and life-and-death, and it is not a world where there is no other choice except for China and the U.S. China and the U.S. should not create such an environment or force other actors to make such choices.⁴⁶⁾

(2) In the new order, the United Nations and other international organizations should play a new role. Decades of history have proved that the great powers have a special role, and the United Nations has extremely important management functions. Although it is not satisfactory, its role is irreplaceable. The weakening of the joint role or a world order without the United Nations must be a jungle world, where the strong can eat the weak, and it will become the norm for big powers to override weak and small countries.⁴⁷⁾

(3) Regardless of the size, mutual respect comprises the basic prerequisite for the credibility of the new order. If respect for small and weak countries cannot be achieved, a new order cannot be established.

Therefore, for the current China-U.S. relations, to jointly build a new world order, the following three issues need to be addressed together.

(1) Damage control operations . As great powers, China-U.S. relations are related to global stability and are also the pillars of global politics. It is necessary to make a complete analysis of the problems between the two countries; that is, make a list of the positive and negative factors in their relations.

46) Le Thu H. China's dual strategy of coercion and inducement towards ASEAN, *The Pacific Review*, 2019, 32(1): 20-36.

47) Kacharaya A, Plesch D. The United Nations: Managing and Re-shaping a New World Order, *Global Governance*, 2020, 26(2): 221-235.

(2) Seriously manage China-U.S. competition, control risks, and turn crises into opportunities. China and the U.S. should transform competition into a stabilizing device for the world situation and a driving force for healthy development, not the other way around.⁴⁸⁾ At the same time, China and the U.S. should also take measures to control various risks brought about by competition and reduce the cost and collateral damage of competition among major powers, especially possible conflicts and military confrontations.

(3) Reasonably allocate resources. They should put forward feasible plans, allocate as many resources as possible in areas where cooperation can be made, build cooperation platforms, and transform competition into cooperation. Or they should at least reduce competition or reduce the intensity of competition as much as possible.

V. Conclusions

Since the Biden administration, the rule-based international order advocated by American politicians is actually the rules made by the U.S. to exploit the world. It can be interpreted that the basis of the win-win setup is that the U.S. must be the one that wins the most. Thus, China will be blamed for undermining the international order if China wins more. The U.S. advocated international rules, punishing the rule-breakers. However, this kind of punishment does not work as before for China, which made the U.S. fall into deep anxiety.⁴⁹⁾

Based on the above perspective of China, firstly, the results of the China-U.S. competition will be relatively pessimistic. The U.S. policy has not changed, if not worsened. There is still no bright future in sight. Secondly, the process of constructing a new order is very complicated and will encounter various difficulties. It is hard to predict what will happen in the future. However, if some fundamental strategic orientation issues are not resolved, it is far more difficult than imagined. Thirdly, the U.S. has exhausted all kinds of methods to contain China, and the results have become worse one after another. The development of China cannot be stopped.⁵⁰⁾ It is because China's development has its own internal logic, but the U.S. cannot recognize this logic. It always holds the idea of cutting off this development momentum and ignores the basic logic of China's common development with the world. Therefore, the U.S. must fail. Finally, the

48) Hass R. Principles for managing US-China competition, 2018.

49) Zhao, Suisheng. "A New Model of Big Power Relations? China-US strategic rivalry and balance of power in the Asia-Pacific." *Journal of Contemporary China* 24.93 (2015): 377-397.

50) Wei, Da. "A restructuring international order and the paradigm shift in China-US relations." *China International Strategy Review* 1.1 (2019): 21-32.

development of the world order also has its own logic. At present, the U.S. has various advantages; however, the law of the development of things is moving forward and will not move as the U.S. hopes. The democratization and multi-polarization of the world order are the general trends, which cannot be changed by the U.S. What the U.S. does can only make its internal problems more complicated and the world situation more complicated. There may even be wars in some areas, but in general, the reconstruction of the world order is inevitable.

[Received: December 07, 2021; Revised: April 14, 2022; Accepted: June 25, 2022]