**Bridging the Divide**

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A generally stable relationship between China and the US is crucial for the world. The international community strongly opposes any conflict or confrontation between these two nations and seeks to avoid taking sides. The Chinese foreign ministry emphasizes that China respects the interests of the United States and has no intention of challenging or displacing them. Similarly, the United States must show respect towards China and refrain from undermining its legitimate rights and interests.

President Joe Biden has acknowledged the obligation and responsibility of both countries to effectively manage their relationship. He recognizes that doing so is in the best interests of the United States, China, and the world at large. These statements from both nations have a positive and meaningful impact on global policies and international relations. In stark contrast to the previous administration under Donald Trump, which heavily relied on social media for trans-Pacific communication, the current tone and content of the dialogue between China and the United States are more positive and measured. This shift is notable and signifies a constructive approach. The recent visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in June, followed by Ms Yellen’s trip, further demonstrates the commitment of both countries to stabilize their relations.

Ms Janet Yellen, the Treasury Secretary, became the second high-ranking Washington official to travel to Beijing within the past two months. Throughout her four-day trip, Yellen engaged in meetings with numerous prominent Chinese officials, among them Premier Li Qiang, Vice Premier He Lifeng, Minister of Finance Liu Kun, and Deputy Governor of the People’s Bank of China, Pan Gongsheng.

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She expressed that her trip to Beijing has signified a positive advancement towards the goal of establishing stability in the relations between the United States and China. This visit aims to establish a robust and fruitful channel of communication with China’s recently formed economic team, fostering resilience and productivity.

In recent years, the relationship between the United States and China has experienced a significant decline. Numerous factors have contributed to the growing divide between the two countries, such as concerns regarding human rights violations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, conflicting territorial claims in Taiwan and the South China Sea, as well as Beijing’s increasing influence over various industries. The United States and China have resumed direct, in-person conversations, characterized by polite and respectful exchanges, though not necessarily marked by warmth. This marks a significant departure from the mode of trans-Pacific communication observed during the Donald Trump administration.

The current dialogue between the two nations exhibits a noticeable shift in tone and content, with both sides adopting a more positive and measured approach. In June, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s visit set the stage for these developments, and now, Ms Yellen’s trip further strengthens the commitment of both countries to stabilize their bilateral relations.

During her visit, Ms Yellen made efforts to convince her Chinese hosts that, under President Joe Biden, the United States does not harbour a fundamental hostility towards China. She emphasized that the relationship should not be perceived as a great power conflict and reiterated that the US does not seek to sever ties. On the issue of climate change, Ms Yellen urged Beijing to collaborate with the US and support institutions like the Green Climate Fund, which assists developing nations in adapting to climate change and mitigating its effects. The Biden administration aims to demonstrate that its China policy differs from the previous administration’s confrontational approach. However, action speaks louder than words, and from Beijing’s standpoint, some recent actions by the Biden administration have been far from friendly. Notably, the imposition of export controls on certain US microchips used in artificial intelligence development has been a point of contention. Rather than relaxing these restrictions, the US is now looking to expand them to other high-tech exports to China. Moreover, the US is pressuring its allies, including Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands, to refrain from supplying China with advanced microchip technology. The motive behind these measures is clear: the US aims to limit China’s access to American technologies that could provide an advantage in areas like AI and military capabilities, which could potentially be used against the US in a future conflict, such as one involving Taiwan.

As a result, although dialogue has resumed and is expected to intensify in the coming months, the process remains delicate. The progress achieved in recent days can easily be undermined by incidents like “spy balloon” controversies or close encounters between US and Chinese naval or air forces. Even the most optimistic experts acknowledge that this relationship has become exceptionally challenging, requiring careful and long-term management by both sides to maintain stability.

In the last month, the United States and China have reached an agreement to engage in discussions aimed at increasing the number of flights between the two countries. This commitment was established during the visit of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to China. A meeting between Blinken and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang resulted in a consensus to enhance “people-to-people and educational exchanges.” Both sides expressed their welcome towards increased mutual visits by students, scholars, and business people, and agreed to provide necessary support and facilitation for such visits. The relationship between the United States and China is the most complex bilateral relationship for both countries. Over the past three decades, the dynamics of Sino-American relations have transformed significantly, progressing from hostility and conflict to open and constructive dialogue. These two vast and intricate nations have discovered common ground on matters concerning trade, investment, and more recently, security. However, unresolved key issues persist, and there is a real potential for divergence, particularly as China continues to assert itself as an economic powerhouse, a military force in Asia, and a potential challenger to US hegemony.

Given the diverse range of US interests concerning China, the United States must adopt a multifaceted policy. It is common for many Americans to view the US-China relationship solely through the lens of a single issue, such as trade, Taiwan, or human rights. While these specific issues should not be undermined in their significance, American policymakers must not allow any one of them to dominate, steer, or derail the entire relationship. With numerous uncertainties ahead, challenging times and differences of opinion are likely to arise. China is a vast and diverse country with a fluctuating economy, which may undergo both progress and upheaval in the future. By pursuing a policy that acknowledges the breadth of common interests between the two nations, the United States can avoid the turmoil that has plagued their relationship over the past 30 years.

This new wave of positive relationships will be expedient for the world. It can be a way to bring peace and prosperity to the Asia-Pacific region and even to the rest of the world. Regarding the nature of China-US economic and trade relations, it is recognized as mutually beneficial and win-win. It is acknowledged that a trade war does not produce winners.

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