

China-U. S Common Goals: The Need to Cooperate on Global Governance

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Abstract

The relationship between the United States and China is significantly strained. Both countries are involved in a fierce and costly economic confrontation (trade war), competition in artificial intelligence (AI race), global governance, and security tensions. These issues threaten the current international order, and resolving them through negotiations may not guarantee long-term stability when the underlying factors that fuelled the conflict are not addressed. Fundamental ideas that once guided their relationship, such as engagement, cooperation, and convergence, are now being questioned. Additionally, the institutional framework for dialogue is being tested, as established communication channels have weakened, and bureaucratic processes on both sides struggle to keep up with increasing global complexity and diversity.

China argues that the current international system is inherently flawed due to the U.S. dominance and its conspicuous disregard for the rule-based system. Beijing is demanding a more "balanced, mutually beneficial, and equitable global system" based on rules rather than the liberal order championed by the U.S. Conversely, the U.S. views China's rise as a potential threat and a challenge to its leading role in the world. Beyond traditional competition areas such as security and economics, new sources of rivalry are emerging, including technology (AI race), sovereignty, and global governance.

Recent developments highlight that the U.S. and China stand at a pivotal juncture requiring decisive action to avert a potentially devastating crisis. Such a crisis could undermine global governance for decades, destabilize world peace, and hinder economic progress. Yet, despite these challenges, both nations share vital common interests—including international peace, climate change, global security, interconnected trade, global health, and finance—providing opportunities to foster global growth and reduce poverty.

Keywords

Global Governance; United States-China; Cooperation; Competition

1. Introduction

The importance of cooperation between China and the United States on various global issues, such as economic and trade, peace and security, health and disease control, climate change, including reducing carbon emissions levels, cannot be overstated. Both nations boast the largest economies and technological superiority and are the leading contributors to world peace, including within the United Nations. Additionally, they are the two largest carbon emitters, posing a significant threat to global warming and rising sea levels. The primary obstacles to this cooperation on both sides can be attributed to a lack of mutual trust and a fear of dominance by the other. For example, China's economic and military growth over the last two decades has been staggering. China's Real GDP, according to the World Bank 2025 outlook, is more than US\$19 trillion, while the US still stands at more than US\$30 trillion, due to population differences.

For instance, China's 2025 military budget reached a record 1.8 trillion yuan (approximately US\$255 billion), according to the South China Morning Post. Beijing continues to emphasize self-reliance in economic development, technological innovation, and military affairs, with a growing presence in the Global South and other regions, which has heightened concerns in the United States—prompting measures aimed at constraining its rise. At the same time, China's confidence in its domestic capabilities—illustrated by its rejection of Nvidia's high-performance computing chips in favour of homegrown alternatives—has generated unease among U.S. policymakers. Moreover, Beijing maintains that escalating tensions, severed ties, or diminished cooperation with Washington would carry severe consequences for global trade and undermine China's economic growth. Nevertheless, Chinese leaders argue that their strategic options remain constrained by what they perceive as persistent U.S. hostility.

The key questions addressed in this paper are premised on the need for China and the US to collaborate on global issues, including the war against terrorism, universal security, and UN peacekeeping. To address these pressing geopolitical concerns, the paper uses three case studies: the war against terrorism, global maritime security, and the United Nations (UN) peace and security initiatives led by both countries.

2. Research questions

- What will it mean for the rest of the world if China and the United States fail to collaborate on Global Governance issues?
- How have collaboration and cooperation between both countries helped accelerate world peace and security, and fight against terrorism, including maritime security, in the past?
- What does further cooperation mean for the fight against terrorism, world peace, and security?

3. Research Method

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative inquiry with analytical research design. This combination enables a comprehensive examination of the contemporary relationship between the United States and China, blending statistical data analysis with rich individual narratives. Data was collected through desk-based research, drawing on online resources, scholarly publications, journal articles, think tank reports, and official documents from governments and multilateral institutions. The researcher systematically analyses these sources to generate evidence-based findings.

4. Challenges and Prospects for Cooperation

Many researchers and analysts have studied contemporary US-China relations from various lenses. Some argue that cooperation between the duo is one of the most significant in maintaining global order, including economic trade, world peace and security, and the fight against climate change. Others claim that both players are revisionist in some ways and are only seeking their national interests. Other schools of thought contend that China's rise is a clarion call for the US to change its behaviour in the global order, especially with its foreign policy stance, which is largely transactional in nature. However, other scholars argue that the interdependence and interconnectedness of both nations are compelling factors to encourage cooperation.

For instance, Wang Yong (2018) argues that both the US and China are the two largest economies, and they

have a mutual stake and a responsibility to maintain good relations. According to Wang, cooperation between China and the United States is not only advantageous for the two countries but also for the broader international community. He argues that trade disputes carry significant implications for global commerce, warning that escalating tensions risk severe deterioration and could spiral into open conflict—potentially evolving into a long-term geopolitical rivalry reminiscent of the Cold War. To avoid such an outcome, Wang underscores the importance of constructive dialogue and sustained cooperation.

In his article, "China and the United States must avoid a new Cold War," Wang outlines two possible future scenarios. The first envisions China and the United States strengthening collaboration within global governance frameworks, thereby contributing to stability and shared prosperity. The second scenario foresees a path of decoupling, which would intensify confrontation and raise the likelihood of a new Cold War. To prevent this trajectory, Wang emphasizes the importance of effective dialogue, strategic trust, and careful management of economic and trade frictions.

He maintains that mutual understanding and cooperation are essential for managing differences and averting destructive conflict. In particular, Wang highlights the value of reinforcing cooperation through institutions such as the G20, which can help safeguard international stability and the integrity of global trade systems. Ultimately, he concludes that these scenarios represent critical concerns for all stakeholders in the current geopolitical and economic environment, urging collective action in the best interests of humanity. These arguments by Wang are significant because, so far, the trade war and other geopolitical competition by the US and China are having ripple effects on the price of consumer goods in the US and a loss of jobs in China.

Like Wang, Thomas Fingar (Fingar, 2015) explores how the two nations navigate their differing interests, values, and visions for the future while recognizing their deep interdependency. This means both countries, being the first and second largest economic powers in the world, first and second leaders in artificial intelligence, first and second most significant producers of electric vehicles (EV), and first and second most prominent producers of solar technology, lack of cooperation and opened lines of communication on global governance, security, and military, economic and trade-related issues —the world will be in a state of entrenched uncertainties and deep crisis. Fingar further sheds light on the interconnectedness of the two nations. He argues that from a historical perspective, the US and China have very different historical experiences and political, economic, and social systems. However, both are integral parts of the global order. Historically, the US often viewed China

through the lens of broader global interests. This is important because Chinese cultural and traditional values are not the same as those of the US. For instance, the Confucian doctrine of the Chinese people and government makes it difficult for the people to change their political governance if the state meets their needs. The doctrine essentially argues that the government should uphold what it calls the "Mandate of Heaven," which is ensuring that socioeconomic, security, and other needs are central to statecraft. This is different for the US. The historical foundation of the United States is premised upon "Freedom, liberty, and democracy." The point of intersection is that both nations have values they have conformed to for centuries. The varied belief systems, cultural and traditional values, and norms do not mean they should not like each other or continue to disagree; it means that mutual respect over values and beliefs is central to a great relationship as global leaders. Daoism is one classic example of the Chinese belief system. This cultural doctrine of China essentially forbids it from direct intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries. This is different from the US approach. The US believes "freedom and liberty" should be the same everywhere, even if the cultural factors and conditions differ. These arguments by scholars should inform the basis for policymakers and leaders to formulate a workable framework that values the historical and cultural factors that have governed these societies for several millennia.

In 2013, the Atlantic Council (Atlantic Council, 2013), a joint effort between the China Institute of International Studies and the Atlantic Council, also emphasized the importance of continued and proactive collaboration between China and the United States to tackle crucial global challenges. The ACR argued that cooperation between the two countries is crucial for maintaining and promoting global peace, prosperity, and interdependence. The report was commissioned when there were growing tensions between the two superpowers in the aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Much of the developed world was still nursing the impact of the crisis. These challenges include economic disparities, environmental sustainability, geopolitical tensions, and global health crises. The imperative for practical collaboration between these influential nations is vital for addressing complex international issues and fostering a more stable and prosperous future for the world.

5. Case study

5.1 Global Security—(Terrorism)

In an increasingly interconnected world, global terrorism poses a profound challenge to international security. Extremist groups, empowered by advanced technology and transnational networks, continue to execute violent acts that disrupt societies and

destabilize regions. Among the many nations grappling with this menace, the United States and China stand out due to their significant global influence and the direct impact terrorism has had on their populations. The devastating 9/11 attacks in the United States and the Urumqi bombing in China underscore the pervasive and persistent threat posed by extremist ideologies, in particular, radical Islamic extremism. Against this backdrop, the necessity for Sino-American cooperation in counterterrorism efforts becomes evident. This portion of the essay explores the potential for military and strategic collaboration between these two superpowers, focusing on their shared goals in combating Islamic extremist terrorism. By examining their past and ongoing joint initiatives, this discussion highlights the critical role that U.S.-China cooperation plays in enhancing global security and stability, but also the room for growing cooperation in the future.

Global terrorism remains a significant threat to international security, with extremist groups leveraging advanced technology and transnational networks to perpetrate acts of violence with political aims. Both China and the U.S. have experienced the impacts of terrorism and recognize the need for robust counterterrorism strategies. The September 11, 2001, attacks on the U.S. and various terrorist incidents in China, such as the Urumqi bombing in 2014, highlight the pervasive threat terrorism poses to national and global security. Although there have not been any recorded incidents of major terrorist attacks in China relating to Islamism since 2016, Chinese Uyghurs can be attracted to radical Islamic ideology just as many Western Muslims are. For instance, over 200 Uyghurs joined the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) up to 2017, traveling long distances to the Middle East to establish a fundamentalist Islamic state, with a similar number originating from the United States (Clarke & Kan, 2017). Both the US and China have not only a joint responsibility to rid the world of Islamic terrorism but also a mutual interest in defeating extremist ideologies.

Previously, China and the U.S. cooperated through multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, where both nations supported resolutions aimed at curbing terrorist financing and strengthening international counterterrorism frameworks. Additionally, they have shared intelligence and best practices through bilateral dialogues. A notable instance of cooperation was the joint efforts to combat the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which was recognized as a terrorist organization by both countries until recently. Despite differing political systems and strategic interests, China and the U.S. have found common ground in addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, lack of education, and political instability, which extremist groups often exploit. Indeed, it is the Chinese point of view that emphasizes poverty as the sole cause of terrorism,

which is why Xinjiang has been at the centre of development funds from the central government for a decade (Mishra, 2021). America, on the other hand, tends to emphasize political disenfranchisement as the root cause of terrorist ideology. Despite these subtle differences, which underscore more profound political differences between the two powers, China and America have still been able to cooperate on this front in the past. China's interests are primarily to ensure domestic stability in Xinjiang and throughout China, and China's foreign diplomacy seeks to avoid 'interference' in other countries' domestic affairs. However, China is also interested in promoting regional stability and protecting Chinese business interests abroad. After ETIM became a force within China, committing terrorist acts to achieve independence, America declared ETIM a terrorist organization in 2002. Likewise, in the years following this terrorist designation, China cooperated with America by providing information on Uyghur detainees held in Guantanamo Bay (Crook, 2009). This case study shows how collaboration in fighting global terrorism has benefited both countries.

5.2 US-China Cooperation on Maritime Security in the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa is a geo-strategic enclave for the free flow of marine vessels carrying essential commodities from Europe and Asia to Africa, promoting the 'Blue Economy.' The security of this region is priceless in facilitating the movement of manufacturing goods from Europe, China, and other parts of Asia, and it is also essential for the survival of most African economies, which are largely consumption-based. As Brigid Gesami (2023) puts it succinctly, maritime security in Africa is a matter of utmost importance, carrying significant economic, geopolitical, and social ramifications for the continent. Africa's coasts and offshore resources—comprising essential resources such as oil and gas reserves, fishing stocks, and trade routes—play a pivotal role in the stability and prosperity of most African nations. It is imperative to safeguard these resources and promote regional development, as they contribute to addressing a range of global challenges, including food security, energy security, and climate change.

Over the past decade, China and the United States have been keen to ensure that this region is secure and fewer attacks on commercial vessels. The Maritime Incident Report for January 2023 revealed that piracy and armed robbery against ships decreased globally from 132 incidents in 2021 to 115 in 2022, with Southeast Asian waters being the most heavily affected, especially the Singapore Straits. Piracy-related incidents in the Gulf of Guinea decreased from 35 to 19, and maritime kidnappings dropped from 57 to 2 in 2023. While some pirate groups in the Gulf of Guinea have shifted their focus to oil-related criminal activities, piracy remains

suppressed in the Horn of Africa, with no incidents recorded in 2022. The drastic fall in the number of incidents in the Horn of Africa can be attributed to the presence of other world powers, such as U.S., and China highlighting the significance of security cooperation between the two big players in the region. For instance, the US and China have played mediation roles in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti—an area littered with political instability, poverty, weak governments, porous borders, and years of fragility due to armed conflicts. This region is crucial to both China and the US because of their enormous investments in the area. According to Gebru (2020), the current situation in the region presents an opening for the Horn of Africa states to sidestep the intricate political and economic prerequisites of the US and China and collaborate with them in safeguarding stability in the region. The point noted highlights the shared interests between China, the US, and the Horn of Africa states, signifying mutual gains.

Since 2008, during the peak of attacks on commercial vessels by pirates, the Chinese Navy has conducted 26 escort missions, not only to the Chinese but also to non-Chinese vessels in the coastal areas of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden (CGTN, 2017). In 2017, China dispatched a specialized navy unit, Dragon Commando, to rescue a merchant vessel in the Gulf of Aden. This marked the first time that China had deployed such a force, and the mission was a resounding success, resulting in the capture of three pirates and the safe release of 16 Filipino crew members. Since then, China has demonstrated a keen interest in working with the United States and other Western powers to combat piracy in the area. Given the area's strategic importance, several global powers - including France, Britain, and Japan - have established military bases in Djibouti, collaborating with China and the US in strengthening the region's security. On August 1st, 2017, China inaugurated its first overseas military base in Djibouti. The base, which costs 590 million US dollars, is operated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (CGTN, 2017).

Additionally, across the Somali coast, NATO and China have previously cooperated to secure vital trade routes between Europe and China, as both sides benefit from stability across global trade routes (Gebhard & Smith, 2015). To add some detail, NATO, led by US-Africa Command, has been involved in international counter-piracy efforts off the Horn of Africa since December 2008, working with other international actors to disrupt pirate attacks and develop regional capacity. Despite a 20% increase in pirate attacks between 2010 and 2011, successful hijackings decreased by 45% due to cooperation between NATO and its partners. The Chinese Navy has also contributed to these efforts by providing escorts to merchant vessels, enhancing overall effectiveness. Reciprocal visits

between naval commanders from China and NATO facilitated information sharing, experience exchange, and discussions on improving cooperation in counter-piracy operations, highlighting the constructive collaboration between the two forces. These two case studies underscore the importance of Sino-American collaboration in global governance. By combining their resources, expertise, and influence, China and the U.S. can more effectively disrupt terrorist networks, prevent attacks, and promote stability. Their partnership models how significant powers can work together to address global challenges, emphasizing the necessity of cooperation over competition in international security. However, particularly following the outbreak of COVID-19, the scope for cooperation between the US and China has been perceived as narrowing considerably, with fewer joint naval missions and America revoking its designation of ETIM as a terrorist organization in 2020.

Despite heightened competition and tension leading to narrowing opportunities, the U.S. and China still have significant opportunities for cooperation on counterterrorism. Both countries can benefit from routine intelligence sharing to combat terrorism effectively, which can save lives and weaken terrorist organizations. As the U.S. withdraws military forces from Afghanistan, both nations can jointly promote political stability and economic development there. Additionally, despite competing for influence in the Indian Ocean, cooperation in Pakistan for political and economic stability remains a common interest. In the Middle East, both countries share an interest in preventing instability that fosters terrorist recruitment and violence. By collaborating on these fronts, the U.S. and China can address mutual security concerns while managing strategic competition.

5.3 US-China Global Peace (United Nations)

The United Nations has long served as the cornerstone of global governance. Within its institutional framework, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) stands as one of the most influential decision-making bodies, entrusted with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Yet, the Council currently confronts two pressing challenges: the need for structural reform and the effectiveness of its peacekeeping operations. This section of the article will examine both issues, with particular attention to the significance of—and potential avenues for—Sino-American cooperation in addressing them.

In this regard, China and the United States differ in their positions but also have room for cooperation. Generally, China supports advancing Security Council reform through consensus while maintaining the authority and effectiveness of the Security Council. Regarding seat allocation, China focuses on safeguarding the interests of developing

countries and emphasizes that reform should increase the representation of developing countries, especially African countries. On the issue of veto power, China is cautious about restricting it, considering it an essential mechanism for ensuring the authority of the Security Council (Wu, 2020). The United States also supports appropriate Security Council reform. Regarding seat allocation, the U.S. supports expanding the number of Security Council members, including permanent members. However, it prefers to increase the seats of its like-minded allies and partners, such as Germany, Japan, and India. On the issue of veto power, the U.S. is also reluctant to give up its veto power. However, it is open to modest reform, emphasizing the need to ensure the effectiveness of the Security Council (Patrick, 2023).

In summary, both countries believe that the Security Council should be appropriately expanded, are relatively cautious about veto power reform, and focus on enhancing the transparency and efficiency of the Security Council's operations to improve its ability to respond to global challenges. This lays the foundation for future cooperation between the two countries. Based on the above common interests, the two governments can consider the following policy recommendations: First, establish a bilateral dialogue mechanism to communicate, exchange views, and seek consensus on multilateral mechanisms, including Security Council reform. Second, jointly maintain the transparency and effectiveness of the United Nations, striving to make the Security Council more efficient in responding to international challenges. Third, jointly advocate for the interests of the Global South, promote increased representation of developing countries, and push for fair and reasonable reform proposals.

5.3.1 Peacekeeping Operations

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN POs) are a crucial mechanism established by the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and help conflict regions achieve lasting peace. Peacekeeping forces typically consist of military personnel, police, and civilians from multiple countries. They work to de-escalate conflicts and build peace through military presence, monitoring ceasefires, protecting civilians, and assisting humanitarian aid. The three principles of peacekeeping are the parties' consent, impartiality, and non-use of force, except in self-defense and defense of the mandate.

Since their first deployment in 1948, peacekeeping operations have been widely conducted around the globe. Dozens of missions are primarily focused on the Global South, playing a significant role in peace and development in these regions. Currently, the Department of Peace Operations runs 11 peacekeeping missions. Except for the Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and the Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, all are deployed in the Global South, with five in Africa

and four in Asia (UNDPOs, 2024).

Africa is the central region for UN peacekeeping operations, with countries like South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, and the Central African Republic either having or maintaining peacekeeping interventions. The Middle East was the first region to host peacekeeping operations and still has three ongoing missions. In Asia, peacekeeping operations have set up military observers on the India-Pakistan border and have overseen elections, administrative governance, and political transitions or independence in Cambodia and East Timor. For the Global South, peacekeeping operations hold significant importance: first, they maintain peace and security by helping resolve regional conflicts, stabilizing situations, and protecting civilians. Second, they provide support in post-conflict reconstruction, promoting socio-economic development (UNDPOs, 2024). Third, they enhance international cooperation, increasing the participation and influence of Global South countries in international affairs.

As permanent members of the Security Council, China and the United States bear greater responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and both significantly influence peacekeeping operations. Firstly, as P5 members, both countries have agenda-setting power and veto power over peacekeeping operations. Secondly, regarding funding, the United States and China are the most significant and second-largest financial contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, respectively, covering 27.89% and 15.21% of the peacekeeping budget for 2020-2021. Thirdly, in providing personnel and technical support, China is the eighth-largest contributor of peacekeeping personnel. While the United States provides fewer personnel than China and many developing countries, it holds vital senior positions, such as the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. It provides substantial support in terms of technology, logistics, and training. At the same time, peacekeeping operations are also of great significance to both China and the United States.

5.3.2 China's Peacekeeping Role

China first enhances its international image by actively participating in peacekeeping operations. China demonstrates its image as a significant power that promotes peace and security. Participation in peacekeeping operations shows China's support for multilateralism and international cooperation, increasing its influence on the international stage. Second, it promotes defense and military development assistance to fragile countries, especially those in the Global South. China's participation in peacekeeping operations provides valuable combat experience for the Chinese military, improving its ability to handle complex international situations. Cooperation with

other countries' militaries enhances China's joint operational capabilities. Third, it supports developing countries through peacekeeping operations, and China supports the Global South, strengthening friendly relations with developing countries (Gowan, 2020).

5.3.3 US Peacekeeping Roles

First, the United States demonstrates global leadership by supporting and participating in peacekeeping operations. The United States is determined to maintain international peace and order, consolidating its global leadership position.

Second, it promotes the agenda of democracy and the rule of law: peacekeeping operations provide a platform for the United States to promote its values of democracy and the rule of law, helping advance its foreign policy goals (Blair et al, 2023). Third, it enhances multilateral ally cooperation: the United States' cooperation with its allies in peacekeeping operations strengthens military and diplomatic ties and policy coordination with its allies and partners, improving multilateral cooperation capabilities. Both countries' common interests are mainly reflected in the following: first, maintaining the security of the Global South to prevent regional conflicts and instability from spreading to other areas, and second, ensuring development and even strategic security.

The counter terrorism tasks in peacekeeping operations can directly combat terrorist threats, contributing to global counter-terrorism efforts. Second, the UN multilateral mechanism should be maintained, the continuous improvement of peacekeeping operations' effectiveness should be promoted, the authority of the UN-centred international system should be enhanced, and international order should be maintained.

Given this, the governments of China and the United States can consider taking the following measures: First, jointly addressing global challenges such as conflict and instability to promote international peace and security, and jointly advance peacebuilding. Second, it enhances military and diplomatic mutual trust. In the military, peacekeeping operations are a platform where the Chinese and American militaries can find opportunities for cooperation, enhance mutual trust and understanding, and reduce misunderstandings and misjudgments. In the diplomatic aspect, peacekeeping operations should strengthen dialogue and coordination in international affairs, enhancing the willingness to cooperate. Third, promote the reform of the UN peacekeeping mechanism by increasing financial and personnel contributions, sharing resources and experiences, and strengthening supervisory mechanisms to minimize misconduct, thereby improving its efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that peacekeeping operations better respond to evolving international challenges.

6. Findings

The paper reveals that while U.S.–China relations are deeply strained, strategic cooperation remains both possible and necessary. Their shared responsibilities as global powers—particularly in counterterrorism, maritime security, and UN peacekeeping—highlight that collaboration is not only beneficial but essential for maintaining international stability. However, without addressing underlying mistrust and ideological differences, cooperation will remain fragile and episodic.

Today, the relationship is strained across multiple domains due to mistrust. Trade, technology (AI race), global governance, and security are the major areas of confrontation. Traditional frameworks of engagement and cooperation are weakening, with institutional dialogue channels eroding. Both nations perceive the other as a threat. China views U.S. dominance as undermining fairness in the global system, while the U.S. sees China's rise as a challenge to its leadership. The political leadership from both sides should act in the best interest of humanity to address the challenges that have bedevilled them for many years by returning to active dialogue.

7. Conclusion

The trajectory of global governance in the twenty-first century will be decisively shaped by the capacity of China and the United States to cooperate on issues of shared concern. As the largest developed and developing countries, their relationship is not merely bilateral but foundational to the stability of the international system. Past collaboration between these two powers has underpinned unprecedented levels of peace, prosperity, and interdependence, yet the durability of these achievements is increasingly threatened by rising tensions, institutional strains, and divergent strategic objectives.

The evidence presented in this paper underscores that the most pressing challenges—ranging from peace and security to technological innovation, marine governance, and global trade—cannot be effectively managed without sustained Sino-U.S. cooperation. Abandoning zero-sum approaches, setting rational and realistic expectations, and fostering strategic trust are essential steps toward mitigating conflict and advancing collective interests. Moreover, the role of leadership is paramount: history demonstrates that decisive action by both governments is often the catalyst for breakthroughs in cooperation, while hesitation or miscalculation risks entrenching rivalry and undermining global stability.

Ultimately, the choice confronting Beijing and Washington is stark. They can either embrace their common goals and strengthen collaboration within

global governance frameworks—thereby reinforcing institutions such as the United Nations, the WTO, and the G20—or allow mistrust and unilateralism to erode the foundations of international order. The stakes extend far beyond their bilateral relationship; they encompass the future of global trade, security, and prosperity. For the international community, the imperative is clear: constructive Sino-U.S. engagement is not optional but indispensable for addressing the challenges of an increasingly interconnected and turbulent world.

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