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Carola McGiffert     Travis Tanner
President & CEO     Senior Vice President & COO
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While most of the US political establishment still believed China wanted to depress the value of its currency to promote exports, Beijing was actively intervening at the time of the summit to prop up the value of the renminbi against the US dollar. And in the days before and during the visit, President Xi and several top cabinet ministers including, Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, NDRC Chairman Xu Shaoshi, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei, and Party Reform Small Group Chief Liu He all clearly stated that China would not pursue a devaluation strategy.

At the same time, most of China’s political establishment still considered the US determined to contain China’s international economic position. But the summit outcomes included the US welcoming China’s new financing institutions which surely alludes to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and embracing the Chinese proposal to work together to finance and otherwise support development in emerging countries.

The US-China economic agenda in the last year of the Obama-Xi era will focus heavily on a substantial item that the heads of the world’s first and second largest economies were not able to agree on: a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). Negotiators remained at work on this only days before the White House summit. BITs are valuable agreements for defining nations’ openness to two-way commercial investment, clarifying justifications for any off-limits industries, and clearly defining due process and protections for host nations and investors. China committed to reducing its “negative list” of industries closed to foreign participation from around 80 to the mid-30s. But this is still a high number, and it includes most of the sectors of relevance to the US. In the end, the two presidents could do no more than pledge to keep working.

While most of the US political establishment still believed China wanted to depress the value of its currency to promote exports, Beijing was actively intervening at the time of the summit to prop up the value of the renminbi against the US dollar. And in the days before and during the visit, President Xi and several top cabinet ministers including, Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, NDRC Chairman Xu Shaoshi, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei, and Party Reform Small Group Chief Liu He all clearly stated that China would not pursue a devaluation strategy.

Only reluctantly have some come to accept Xi’s reform program as perhaps the most serious and defining phenomenon of the contemporary international affairs epoch.
Looking at key issues in the relationship, these experts shine a spotlight on the opportunities—some missed, many yet to come—for collaboration, competition or simply coexistence that will inevitably shape the future of the bilateral relationship and, with it, global security and prosperity. Every single one of these opportunities will require intense interaction and negotiation between US and Chinese counterparts, and will underscore the urgent need for each side to have a deep understanding of the other’s culture, history and interests. The urgency is only growing.

It is in this context that the two presidents issued a new call to action: to see one million young Americans studying Mandarin in US K-12 schools by 2020. “If our countries are going to do more together around the world,” President Obama said, “then speaking each other’s language, truly understanding each other, is a good place to start.”

The goal of seeing one million students studying Mandarin in just five years may seem challenging, but it is both attainable and imperative. Simply put, the United States cannot be truly successful without a keen understanding of China.

The 1 Million Strong initiative is about more than simply learning a new language. 1 Million Strong is aimed at exposing a generation of Americans to their Chinese counterparts. It is about breeding knowledge and understanding of China, its policies and its people. And it is about creating opportunities for American youth—regardless of background or circumstances—for careers both at home and abroad.

In a broader context, 1 Million Strong is about creating a nation that values the US-China relationship. It’s about smart power. The United States cannot successfully navigate this relationship—our most consequential in the world—with shortsighted or reactionary policies. Containing China is neither smart nor possible. Ignoring the challenges with China, on the other hand, is self-defeating. Employing knee-jerk policies is simply dangerous.

Getting to one million US Mandarin language learners will not be easy, but it is a matter of national security. The commentary included in this volume demonstrates the urgency of the task that President Obama and President Xi have entrusted the 100,000 Strong Foundation to achieve.
INTRODUCTION
The greatest concerns among Americans were about reports of cyberattacks and the South China Sea, while the Chinese bristled at the seemingly continuous list of demands Americans put forward. The suspicion was that these asks were part of an unspoken conspiracy to thwart China’s rise and bring an end to Communist Party rule. The warm welcome Americans gave Pope Francis just before President Xi arrived in Washington, and the highly productive and friendly visit by South Korean President Park Geun-hye soon after Xi departed, both served as counterpoints to the uneasiness in the US-China relationship.

At the same time, substantial progress was made during Xi’s time in the US. He tried repeatedly to reassure Americans that China remains committed to economic reform and constructive participation in the post-World War II international order. A series of investments were announced, led by an agreement for China to buy 300 Boeing planes and for the company to expand its production in China. There was progress on air-to-air military communications, climate change and development assistance. And the two sides even created a process to manage disputes over the thorny issue of commercial cyber espionage.

The visit, then, was a microcosm of the broader relationship. There are both areas of worrying competition and mutually beneficial cooperation; and this awkward mix is likely to endure as both sides engage in a strategy of hedging their bets. Hence, the US and China seem destined to remain what the eminent American comedian (and not-so-eminent China specialist) Stephen Colbert calls “frenemies.”

There are observers on both sides who believe a darker future is inevitable. The catchphrase of 2015 has most assuredly been “Thucydides Trap,” the idea that a rising power and the incumbent power are destined for conflict because the rising power is inherently unsatisfied with a world order it did not construct. The tensions over the South China Sea, cyberattacks and China’s mercantilist trade and investment practices are mere previews of what is bound to come, these pessimists say.
But the prognosticators should be more humble. As Graham Allison recently has shown, rising and incumbent powers sometimes end up in conflict and sometimes do not. Tensions resulted in open conflict in 12 out of 16 cases he documents, but because the number of such major transitions is so small, it is difficult to tease out which factors are most important. Relative power, intentions, culture, economic conditions and the nature of international institutions all seem to matter.

In the current case, certain facts are getting in the way of history. First, China is still far from being a peer of the US on any measure of power. China’s military is more advanced than ever. But although its navy can operate effectively around the country’s maritime periphery, it is not a true-blue blue-water navy that can project force far from its shores. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has a huge economy; but its per capita income is one-eighth that of the US. And China does not lead the world in any area of technology. The US still has soft-power reservoirs China can’t hold a candle to.

Second, the US and China genuinely have a range of common economic, security and cultural interests.

Those common interests are reflected at the macro level in international institutions and practices that the two benefit from and continue to support—especially in economic affairs. Although China advocates a variety of reforms and seeks more voice, it is decidedly a conservative power on global economic governance. And common US-China interests are demonstrated at the micro level each day in the dense network of business relationships, tourist visits, academic exchanges, and collaboration between officials, both state and local.

Still, China watchers should be under no illusion that the strong bonds developed over the last 40 years will neatly eliminate the genuine areas of tension and concern. The proposals for a G2 (Group of Two) condominium and a new type of major power relations may be even less likely and achievable than outright conflict. Underlying the latter proposal, put forth repeatedly by President Xi, are three unrealistic assumptions.

The first is that China’s rise to great-power status is inevitable and could only fail to materialize as a result of external (read: US) meddling. But the greatest challenges China faces—the environment, economic development and governance—are domestic, not international.

The second is the view that both sides should respect, without condition, the other side’s core interests. This suggests that their core interests do not in some places conflict. There are, unfortunately, some zero-sum elements to the relationship that will not disappear, such as the PRC’s quest for unification with Taiwan against America’s position that any change of the status quo occur peacefully and without coercion.

Third, embedded in Xi’s view is the idea that China has already accommodated the US enough and that now the onus is entirely on the US to return the favor. As long as China does not recognize that it needs to do more, in words and deeds, to accommodate the concerns of the US and its neighbors, the chances of greater harmony are quite small.

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100K STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILE

YUMNA NAQVI
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SCHOOL: Wardlaw-Harttridge High School
HOMETOWN: Plainfield, NJ
AGE: 16

Yumna studies Mandarin through an Asia Society Confucius Institute Classroom and loves to bake Chinese moon cakes. Yumna feels ready to experience other cultures, and now has that opportunity through School Year Abroad’s Halsey Fund Scholarship. She is spending a year studying in Beijing, living—and learning—with a host family.
We are thus caught between friendship and antagonism. But not all intermediate states are the same. There is purgatory, but there is also the golden mean. The leadership of both countries could do more to create conditions for a more balanced relationship that can manage competition while facilitating greater collaboration. In some ways, those actions are less about strictly bilateral policy steps and more about the countries’ overall orientations. China could start by rededicating itself to economic liberalization and pursuing peaceful resolution of its maritime sovereignty disputes. The number-one priority for the US should be developing the next generation of the world’s economic architecture. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), its European counterpart, and the World Trade Organization’s Agreements on Information Technology, Trade in Environmental Goods, and Trade in Services are the critical pieces remaining to be completed. They not only could foster more inclusive global growth, they also could act as clear signals pointing China toward an economic path that would help it avoid the middle-income trap.

In sum, a long era of harmony in US-China relations is not upon us, but there is still reason to be hopeful that through enlightened leadership—by officials and private citizens alike—the US and China can avoid the worst traps that lay before them.
KEY ISSUES
POLITICS

A NEW TYPE OF CYBER RELATIONS? BY CHENG LI & RYAN MCELVEEN

It was billed as the $2.5 trillion photo op—based on the market capitalization of the companies involved—but the value of the image to Chinese President Xi Jinping in promoting China’s looming stature in the world economy was priceless.

In his commanding position at the center of three rows of tech titans from the world’s two biggest economies—the United States and China—President Xi symbolized the power of the Chinese market to command the attention and respect of the world’s most powerful corporate giants, even after months of negative news questioning the strength and stability of China’s financial system.

The fact that the photo op—part of a multi-day effort to woo American businesses in Seattle—took on more significance than the pomp Xi would later encounter in Washington, D.C., underscores the unique dynamics of his first official state visit.

Despite being overshadowed by Pope Francis’ arrival and the announcement of House Speaker John Boehner’s departure, Xi took full advantage of his visit to project two images aimed at two distinct audiences. He used Chinese media to show a domestic Chinese audience an image of China’s power—in terms of economic relations, foreign policy, and multilateral cooperation—and for the American audience, he cultivated the image of a Washington outsider: embracing the economic and political connections that often can be developed more effectively outside of the nation’s capital while appearing respectful of—and connected to—middle class America.

Clearly, Xi understands that domestic sentiment has an outsized effect on the policy decisions of leaders, and he sought to shape that sentiment during his visit. Even Vice President Joseph Biden cited Xi’s political acumen during a State Department lunch in the Chinese president’s honor.

Xi understands that domestic sentiment has an outsized effect on the policy decisions of leaders; and he sought to shape that sentiment during his visit.

CHENG LI & RYAN MCELVEEN

Cheng Li and Ryan McElveen are, respectively, Senior Fellow and Director, and Assistant Director of the John L. Thornton China Center at The Brookings Institution.
When he went to Muscatine, Iowa, I told him I couldn’t go but, I should have gone,” Biden joked about Xi’s earlier visit to the United States. “He went, and he became president. I didn’t go, and I’m still vice president.”

Prior to Xi’s visit, the atmosphere surrounding bilateral relations was hardly conducive to productive discussions during his time in the United States. Expectations were low—characteristic of most US state visits by Chinese leaders—and the relationship was probably at its most tense point since Xi assumed the presidency in 2012. China’s recent stock market crisis, activities in the South China Sea and purported attempts at cyberespionage all had sown deep mistrust among the American public.

But unlike the previous meetings between presidents Obama and Xi at Sunnylands in 2013 and at Zhongnanhai in 2014, Xi’s 2015 state visit to the United States was far more successful at deftly defusing concerns and changing the dynamics of the relationship.

While this visit brought progress in several important areas, including China’s commitments on climate change and UN Peacekeeping support, it also left many unanswered questions on the South China Sea, Chinese market access and human rights issues. But one area saw progress and a potential breakthrough: the issue of cybercrime.

The Sunnylands summit in June 2013 marked the beginning of the effort of both countries to address cyber issues, or “uncharted waters,” as President Obama referred to them at the time. US leaders had been prepared to enter that summit with the upper hand on cyber issues: The meeting would occur only four months after the release of a US report revealing that the Chinese government had infiltrated almost 150 major US corporations and agencies over the previous seven years. Unfortunately for the US, two days before the summit was to begin, the initial account of National Security Agency espionage was published in the British newspaper The Guardian, marking the beginning of America’s Edward Snowden-induced diplomatic nightmare.

Instead of providing President Obama with the perfect opportunity to confront China about its years of intellectual property theft from US firms, the Sunnylands meeting forced him into a defensive posture. Both sides agreed at the time that international law applies to cyberspace, and they set up a bilateral, cybersecurity working group. But the progress was short lived—the working group was later disbanded.

The progress on cyber issues during Xi’s 2015 state visit seems more promising. For the first time, China has agreed that the theft of intellectual property for commercial use is unacceptable, stating that “neither country’s government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property...with the intent of providing competitive advantages to companies or commercial sectors.” To ensure they actually live up to this promise, both countries also agreed to respond in a timely manner to requests for information about malicious cyberactivities, and to help mitigate such actions that occur on their territory.

Amber Douglas
SIGNATURE PARTNER: Xavier University
SCHOOL: Xavier University
HOMETOWN: Marietta, GA
AGE: 21

Amber remembers that when she arrived at Louisiana’s Xavier University, “I always took classes that were different than what an average black woman would take and that would open my eyes to a culture totally different than my own.” A two-week trip to Hebei, China, in 2014 cemented her love of Chinese language, culture and people. After finishing dental school, she hopes to return to China to teach and to provide free dental services in underserved areas.
If concerns arise, there will be two new mechanisms by which to address them: a high-level joint dialogue that will meet biannually beginning in 2015 to review the processing of requests for information on malicious cyberactivities; and a new cyber incident hotline.

While these actions may be considered small steps, they provide a crucial starting point for future dialogue. A positive sign came soon after President Xi’s visit, when several hackers identified by US officials were arrested in China for stealing US commercial secrets on behalf of Chinese state-run corporations. In the coming months, the United States will need to monitor whether China shows any willingness to prosecute these and other known hackers, whether responses to other concerns about China’s cyberactivities are received, and—most critically—whether there is an appreciable decrease in the overall number of cyberattacks.

If progress remains elusive, the US still holds in its arsenal—as a result of an executive order signed by President Obama in April 2015—the ability to implement economic sanctions against Chinese companies and persons accused of cybercrimes targeting companies or US citizens.

In the long term, the US should continue to push for the development of and agreement to international cybernorms, a détente-like cyberarms agreement, and the gradual expansion of internet freedom in China. Although progress on these issues will take significant time and effort, the result will be a far more constructive political and economic US-China relationship.

While photo ops with leaders can memorialize important historical moments, the messages they convey are only as powerful as the enduring achievements they represent. As long as the United States and China continue to make progress on cyberissues, the picture of President Xi alongside the leaders of tech companies will be a lasting symbol of a turning point in US-China cooperation. But if progress falters, his photo op will be a $2.5 trillion reminder of a great opportunity lost.
Only reluctantly have some come to accept Xi’s reform program as perhaps the most serious and defining phenomenon of the contemporary international affairs epoch.

President Xi’s September 2015 state visit to the United States laid the foundation for the priorities to be pursued in this time frame. This seven-day trip was Xi’s first and only US visit as head of state during the Obama administration. The trip, especially the summit at the White House, was the focal point for US-China business and political relations. It was Xi’s most important appearance of the year on the world stage, as it was the first time he was in the spotlight with unscripted media engagement since his country’s stock market turmoil and exchange-rate missteps.

US executives, with commercial plans and assets at risk as a result of China policy uncertainty, urged President Xi in the run-up to the visit to offer a frank public appraisal of Chinese conditions. In his public remarks, Xi offered only general assurances, including that China’s stock market had “reached the phase of self-recovery and self-adjustment.” He did not account for Beijing’s role in fanning the stock market bubble, its lack of finesse in intervening during the correction, or the risks it might run in declaring the market set to recover—especially considering that government signals of favor helped cause the bubble in the first place.

This example of the many complexities facing China’s leadership today also marks a sea change. Government assurances, which spurred growth just a few years ago, now have the opposite effect.
As the two Presidents prepared for their summit, they and their advisors were still in the formative stage of recalibrating relationship expectations in light of these new realities. When we look back on this period years from now, we will likely be struck by how much of US-China economic policy was in flux at this moment. After some years of proposing more active cooperation to suppress cyber espionage for commercial motives, the United States at last achieved progress toward that goal—though only after a high-stakes, last-minute show of exasperation.

While most of the US political establishment still believed China wanted to depress the value of its currency to promote exports, Beijing was actively intervening at the time of the summit to prop up the value of the renminbi against the US dollar. And in the days before and during the visit, President Xi and several top cabinet ministers including Central Bank Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, NDRC Chairman Xu Shaoshi, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei and Party Reform Small Group Chief Liu He all clearly stated that China would not pursue a devaluation strategy.

At the same time, most of China’s political establishment still considered the US determined to contain China’s international economic position. But the summit outcomes included the US welcoming China’s new financing institutions, which surely alludes to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and embracing the Chinese proposal to work together to finance and otherwise support development in emerging countries.

The US-China economic agenda in the last year of the Obama-Xi era will focus heavily on a substantial item that the heads of the world’s first and second largest economies were not able to agree on: a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). Negotiators remained at work on this only days before the White House summit. BITs are valuable agreements for defining nations’ openness to two-way commercial investment, clarifying justifications for any off-limits industries and clearly defining due process and protections for host nations and investors. China committed to reducing its “negative list” of industries closed to foreign participation from around 80 to the mid-30s. But this is still a high number, and it includes most of the sectors of relevance to the US. In the end, the two presidents could do no more than pledge to keep working.

Few things have shaped China’s reform and transition since 1978 more than inward foreign direct investment. The recent advent of outbound Chinese investment, and the dawn of a new era of substantially liberalized conditions for inbound investors, will recast the fabric of the Chinese economy. That will make China more competitive, both at home and abroad, and will make its population wealthier and better off. The United States will reap benefits from hosting Chinese investment and will also see gains from better access for US firms operating in China. This tapestry of direct investment can deepen the mutual interests of both nations in the decades to come and serve as an example of the kind of cooperation possible between erstwhile competitors.

In the weeks after Xi’s visit, President Obama’s team completed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a major trade and investment initiative 10 years in the making. This gives China even greater incentive to finish a BIT with the US, and leaves US negotiators better able to focus on that priority. For Washington and Beijing, completing a BIT would be a perfect way to mark both China’s arrival as a middle-income member of the international community, and the final round in Obama and Xi’s chance to build a healthy US-China relationship.

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**100K STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILE**

Emma DiStefano

**SIGNATURE PARTNER:** Asia Society

**SCHOOL:** Janesville Elementary School

**HOMETOWN:** Janesville, WI

**AGE:** 12

In third grade, Emma DiStefano began learning Mandarin in her Janesville, Wisconsin, elementary school. Now 12, Emma finds many opportunities to practice her Mandarin. She participated in her school district’s Asia Society Summer International Learning Institute, where she studied with students from Beijing and Shanghai.
Cities have become the focal point of economic growth and environmental protection—the most important issues of the US-China relationship.

Bilateral tensions ran high in the months leading up to President Xi Jinping’s first state visit to the United States last month. Coming out of the trip, deliverables were thin, as expected. One of the bright spots of the visit—and increasingly of the bilateral relationship—was the robust engagement at the subnational level, particularly on environmental cooperation.

Highlights included the commitments made at the US-China Climate Leaders Summit hosted by Los Angeles prior to the arrival of President Xi. Mayors and state leaders from across China and the US announced they would collectively cut carbon dioxide emissions by 1.2 gigatons annually, equivalent to the annual emissions of Brazil and Japan. And the Chinese delegation announced the Alliance of Peaking Pioneer Cities (APPC), a commitment to hit peak carbon dioxide emissions earlier than the 2030 national goal.

At the top level, the bilateral relationship remains bogged down by a host of intractable issues, ranging from cybersecurity and the South China Sea to currency devaluation and China’s economic slowdown. But at the subnational level, exchange and dialogue has yielded results. Notably, there were three subnational events organized on the margins of President Xi’s visit that focused on China’s top economic and environmental priorities: mitigating climate change and the adoption of clean technologies, increasing bilateral trade and investment, and promoting small and medium enterprises. Among these issues, cooperation on the environment seemed to dominate the agenda during President Xi’s visit.

Cities have become the focal point of economic growth and environmental protection—the most important issues of the US-China relationship. Urbanization is occurring at an unprecedented pace. For the first time in history, more people live in cities than in rural areas. Every week, more than one million people move into cities around the world. Almost half of the world’s economic growth will take place in 400 cities located in so-called emerging markets.1 In fact, China’s ambitious economic growth agenda features a historic urbanization plan that will move more than 100 million rural dwellers into cities by 2020—the equivalent of moving four of the most populous US cities every year. China’s urbanization, which has been characterized as one of the defining events of the 21st century, is intended to transition its economy from investment- and export-led growth to demand-driven growth.
Another major obstacle in pursuing environmental sustainability is the local officials themselves who often lack expertise and are sometimes reticent to implement policy set by central officials. Overseas training programs—or mayor-to-mayor exchanges—have transformational potential to address this issue. The current atmosphere under the sustained anti-corruption campaign and austerity measures sweeping through the Chinese political system has resulted in a dramatic cut in these types of training programs. The Paulson Institute partners with the China Association of Mayors to organize an annual sustainability training program for mayors and municipal officials in cooperation with the University of Chicago and Tsinghua University. Going into its fourth year, the training program, which takes place in China and the US, has hosted delegations from Beijing, Guangdong and Zhejiang; and each year, this program has resulted in tangible change. For example, the head of the Beijing delegation, the Party Secretary of Pinggu District, an agricultural district in eastern Beijing, was inspired by a bike ride along the shores of Lake Michigan to revise plans for a major highway running along a river in his district in favor of a bike path and green space. The Party Secretary

Growth on this scale will have significant environmental consequences. Cities occupy only two percent of the world’s landmass, yet they emit about 70 percent of its energy-related carbon dioxide. Mayors are squarely on the frontlines of the war on pollution. They experience the impact of climate change more directly than their national- and central-level counterparts. As a result, mayors have become more willing than national governments to act, and cities have turned into catalysts and labs for countries’ attempts to transition to low-carbon economies.

Mayors in the US and China—and around the world—face similar challenges with urbanization: assimilating populations unaccustomed to city life, trying to stretch resources and social services to meet increases in population, and identifying new engines of economic growth and jobs, to name a few. Balancing environmental protection and economic growth has risen to the level of these major social and economic concerns. In fact, the Chinese government has made promotions for local officials contingent on meeting environmental targets rather than just hitting economic targets. Moreover, concerns over environmental degradation have become a central source of civil unrest in cities across China.

But even with the best intentions, mayors face a number of obstacles to implementing environmental initiatives. Chief among them is finding the funds to support the transition to a low-carbon economy. In China, mayors are unable to collect taxes or issue bonds to raise funds for these efforts. In light of this, one of the notable deliverables coming out of President Xi’s visit that has attracted the interest of mayors and governors in China and the US was the announcement of the formulation of the US-China Building Energy Efficiency Fund. Announced by the Office of the Central Leading Group for Financial and Economic Affairs and facilitated by The Paulson Institute, the fund aims to finance the deployment of existing clean technologies that can substantially reduce CO2 and other harmful emissions while simultaneously improving energy use efficiency, promoting industrial productivity, and creating green jobs.

Anya spent a summer studying Mandarin through the China Institute’s Summer Study in China. In 2013, she traveled to Beijing, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Shanghai. She also plans to extend her research on bacterial diversity in subway systems to Shanghai through the well-known Pathomap Project. All of these experiences should serve her well as she begins college in fall 2015 at the University of Chicago, where she began studying in September 2015 with plans to double major in Mandarin and biology.

Anya Dunaf
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HOMETOWN: Brooklyn, NY
AGE: 18

Any spending a summer studying Mandarin through the China Institute’s Summer Study in China. In 2013, she traveled to Beijing, Nanjing, Suzhou, and Shanghai. She also plans to extend her research on bacterial diversity in subway systems to Shanghai through the well-known Pathomap Project. All of these experiences should serve her well as she begins college in fall 2015 at the University of Chicago, where she began studying in September 2015 with plans to double major in Mandarin and biology.
of Yiwu in Zhejiang Province plans to work with the city of Portland, one of the cities visited by the delegation, to create walkable districts throughout his city modeled on Portland’s famed Pearl District.

Promoting these types of mayor-to-mayor exchanges could also help capture opportunities for US clean tech companies. The country will spend $6.8 trillion on an urbanization plan and will unveil one of its most ambitious environmental plans under the 13th Five Year Plan later this year. Commercial opportunities in the clean tech sector are estimated at approximately $1 trillion. US mayors can and should play a supporting role in positioning domestic companies to take advantage of these opportunities.

Portland has done this exceptionally well. It has launched an initiative called “We Build Green Cities” that packages together all of the city’s clean tech companies. The city offers its expertise on how to implement best practices in sustainability, while positioning its companies to be part of the chosen solution.

Secretary of State John Kerry said recently at a Bloomberg Philanthropies Our Climate, Our Cities event—“If we change the way we power our cities, we change the world.” It is in the global interest that China implements its urbanization plan in an environmentally conscious way. Given limited progress at the top of the US-China relationship, subnational leaders must take up the mantel to drive progress on this critical bilateral issue.

END NOTES


Concerns over environmental degradation have become a central source of civil unrest in cities across China.
The two militaries should move to a new dynamic in which they address common international security problems together, leveraging the strengths each brings to bear.

Chinese President Xi Jinping’s first state visit to Washington marked new progress in what has been a contentious dimension of the US-China relationship: military ties.

During the September 2015 visit, Xi and President Obama announced new military-to-military confidence-building measures and increased cooperative military operational opportunities that could help change that. This essay highlights key developments that came out of the state visit, and outlines the prospects for making even greater strides in the future.

Recent Developments

The agreements made in the September state visit include:

- **Strengthened support for international peacekeeping operations**: China’s commitments included a dedicated force of 8,000 officers, training for 5,000 international peacekeepers, and a promise of $100 million to train African Union forces. The US reaffirmed its own support for UN Peacekeeping Operations, and the two sides pledged to work toward building peacekeeping capacity in contributing nations.

- **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR)**: The two countries agreed to increase cooperation on humanitarian response to disasters—including via participation in the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit—and specifically to support collaboration between the international community and Nepal in the wake of the 2015 earthquake. While not exclusively a military-to-military endeavor, military forces play a critical role in HADR efforts. Increased cooperation paves the way for more significant military engagement in the future.

- **Improved Bilateral Military Relations**: The two presidents signed two new annexes to the 2014 agreements on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)—one on air-to-air safety, and another on crisis communications. The two sides also continued work on additional annexes for the Notification of Major Military Activities CBM completed last year. And finally, both countries’ coast guards agreed to pursue an arrangement similar in function to the Rules of Behavior CBM annex on surface-to-surface encounters that both countries consented to in November 2014.
These announcements address the fundamental concerns of each side in the military-to-military arena. From a US perspective, safe operations of US Air Force and Navy elements when in close contact with Chinese counterparts are of paramount importance. For China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA), increased peacekeeping participation has been a way to make contributions to global security while avoiding China’s twin concerns—meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, and joining US-led coalitions.

Finally, both sides seem to grasp that military-to-military relations have not made serious contributions to the strengthening of bilateral ties. Indeed, growth in military cooperation has lagged behind that of other dimensions. Few current global issues demand American and Chinese military cooperation to avoid major insecurity. Instead, the two militaries should move to a new dynamic in which they address common international security problems together, leveraging the strengths each brings to bear.

Residual Challenges

However, as we have found in a joint US-China project on Stability in Strategic Domains, co-organized by the National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) and Peking University’s Institute for China-US People to People Exchange, there remain obstacles to more effective collaboration.

Despite a presidential mandate to improve bilateral cooperation, the two militaries have fundamental missions that can put them in uncooperative, even adversarial, positions. For example, the United States has a national priority to safeguard freedom of the seas; but Chinese land-reclamation activities on islands in the South China Sea have been seen as putting freedom of navigation at risk. And although China maintains a strategically defensive posture, some PLA modernization efforts—including its anti-ship ballistic missile, a “carrier killer”—appear explicitly intended to push US forces further from the Asia mainland.

Additionally, the US alliance relationships in Asia—Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand—might pull the US into existing disputes with China. In at least two cases (Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands, and the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal) the US has taken no position but has vowed to prevent the use of force and to see the disputes resolved peacefully. Meanwhile, the US has said that the Senkakus are covered by the US-Japan Security Alliance, in the process conveying to China that America is prepared to use military force to avoid a change in status quo. China countered that the US had taken sides with its allies.

America’s support for Taiwan is a third challenge to the US–PRC military relationship. Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States is “to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character,” and “to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.” US military support of Taiwan infuriates China, and Beijing has occasionally cancelled US-PRC military-to-military engagements in reaction to arms-sales announcements. As Taiwan’s sixth direct presidential election in January 2016 draws near—with the level and intensity of cross-Strait engagement a campaign issue—it is useful to remember the degree to which US military support for Taiwan has been an irritant to the mainland even in the best of times.

Finally, each side has domestic constraints. US operations near China’s coast challenge China’s sense of its own security. The PLA views US operations near China as unfriendly and potentially threatening, despite reassurances from Washington. From a US perspective, structural impediments remain as well, since the National Defense Authorization Act of 2000 (modified in 2010) limits the operational contacts between the two armed forces.
Way Ahead

Leaders of the two militaries appear focused correctly on mitigating tensions via confidence-building measures and plans to collaborate on providing global security through peacekeeping and HADR. Their agreements deal with the right issues at the moment, but it remains to be seen whether increased commitments to safety will address Chinese concerns about the closeness of US operations to China. It is also too soon to tell whether the strengths each brings to bear in HADR and peacekeeping can be effectively marshalled in a truly collaborative fashion. Confidence-building and risk-mitigation measures may not be sufficient to negate the emergence of a strong competition between the two militaries.

Avoiding that competition over the medium term means moving to a new normal, one in which the two militaries work together to address regional and global security challenges. These will most likely be issues of concern to both but of utmost importance to neither. With this in mind, the focus on security issues in Africa seems appropriate. The Gulf of Aden anti-piracy effort is one example of this new type of collaboration, but it is still unclear whether the conditions of that case can be replicated. The two militaries must find ways to move beyond the obstacles that hamper their cooperation.

END NOTES


US and Chinese leaders know they have much to gain from bilateral cooperation on climate change.

Last month US President Barack Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping met for their third bilateral summit. All three Obama-Xi summits—Sunnylands in 2013, Beijing in 2014, and Washington in 2015—produced groundbreaking progress on combating climate change.

US and Chinese officials are using these presidential summits to move past old divides, build out new areas of energy and climate cooperation, and leverage that cooperation to pressure other nations to take action as well. Recent successes on this front provide critical ballast for the US-China relationship at a time when other issue areas are growing increasingly contentious.

The most recent US-China presidential summit produced a joint announcement on climate change that included new domestic energy and climate-policy commitments from both nations. It also produced a groundbreaking new US-China common vision for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—negotiations that aim to produce a new global climate agreement by the end of this year to take effect in 2020. The September 2015 announcement also includes an impressive new Chinese commitment to provide $3.1 billion in climate aid to developing nations, an amount that exceeds what the United States has pledged thus far via the Green Climate Fund.

The September 2015 announcement builds on progress achieved last fall. In November 2014, President Obama and President Xi used their Beijing summit to formulate parallel US and Chinese emission-reduction targets for a post-2020 global climate deal and to announce those targets to the world. The United States committed to reduce emissions 26 percent to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025; China committed to peak carbon emissions and nearly double the non-fossil portion of its energy mix by 2030. Both nations agreed to make “best efforts” to hit these targets ahead of the deadlines. These parallel commitments injected a tremendous amount of momentum into the 2015 negotiation process. The United States is the largest developed greenhouse gas emitter, and China is the largest developing emitter. Once these two heavyweights joined forces to support a new global deal other nations felt pressure to do the same.

US and Chinese leaders know they have much to gain from bilateral cooperation on climate change. Both nations are already facing rising sea levels, extreme weather and other climate security risks. Both nations know they
cannot reduce those risks alone—they need the entire world to take action, and the world will not act without the two largest emitters.

At first glance, this clear interest alignment may suggest that climate change is an issue that naturally lends itself to US-China cooperation and therefore may not have lessons to offer other areas of the relationship where alignment has been harder to find. However, it is important to remember that, until very recently, climate change was a problem issue in US-China relations. From the adoption of the UNFCCC in the early 1990s through the Copenhagen conference in 2009, the United States and China were always on opposing sides of a developed-versus-developing country divide in any climate talks. US and Chinese leaders held fundamentally different views about their respective responsibilities for addressing this problem, which made climate change a divisive issue rather than a cooperative one.

Since 2009, however, leaders in Washington and Beijing have used smart diplomacy to turn this former problem area into a new pillar of cooperation. In 2009, President Obama and then Chinese President Hu Jintao recognized that, despite their opposing stances in international climate negotiations, both nations wanted to develop and deploy more clean-energy technologies to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. Energy provided an area of common ground, and US and Chinese leaders decided to build on that by launching new bilateral energy initiatives that would reduce both nations’ fossil-fuel dependence and greenhouse-gas emissions.

In 2009, the United States and China implemented a Ten Year Framework for Cooperation on Energy and Environment that brought together ten government agencies on the US side and seven on the Chinese side to exchange information and launch cooperative projects on action areas ranging from electricity generation to energy-efficient transport. That same year they also launched a new US-China Clean Energy Research Center (CERC) that brought US and Chinese private sector actors together for joint technology development.

In 2013, US and Chinese leaders created a special Climate Change Working Group under the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) and launched yet another round of energy-cooperation projects under that working group. All these initiatives aimed to achieve two important goals: producing new energy projects that benefit both nations, and bringing US and Chinese experts together on a regular basis in hopes that frequent interaction would deepen bilateral understanding and make it possible to eventually find common ground in multilateral climate negotiations.

At the same time that US and Chinese officials were rolling out new bilateral energy projects, they were also maintaining an ongoing dialogue on diplomatic divides in the climate arena. Energy cooperation eased those discussions because successful energy projects demonstrated that US-China partnership could be highly effective in this space. Energy successes also gave US and Chinese climate leaders positive items to discuss and made it possible to nest their more difficult climate discussions in an overall environment of constructive cooperation.

By 2013, this approach had significantly improved the US-China climate dynamic and presidents Obama and Xi utilized their first bilateral summit to begin unifying US and Chinese positions at the multilateral level. In June 2013, the two presidents committed to work together to reduce hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)—dangerous gasses that speed global warming. Critically, the two presidents committed to address the HFC problem through existing multilateral institutions, thus breaking their new cooperation out of the bilateral relationship and signaling that the two nations were finally ready to begin working as a unified team on multilateral climate issues. From 2013 onward, every Obama-Xi summit has strengthened and expanded this partnership.

Now, at the conclusion of the third summit, the United States and China are leading the global effort to form a new climate pact by December 2015. The challenge
END NOTES


The United States and China should also look for opportunities to apply the climate model in other areas of the relationship. For example, in the South China Sea, the two nations could leverage their common interests in regional disaster relief to lay new groundwork for a more fruitful bilateral discussion on territorial conflicts. Recent progress on climate change makes clear that smart diplomacy can turn a small area of common ground into a new pillar of cooperation. If US and Chinese leaders apply that model across all areas of the bilateral relationship, they may find that the opportunities for groundbreaking US-China cooperation are truly limitless.
There was little reason to expect a breakthrough in Washington in September 2015. But a breakthrough is what appears to have happened.

In the weeks before the third official meeting between President Xi Jinping and President Barack Obama, there was little evidence that the two sides would close the growing gap between them on cybersecurity issues. In fact, all signs pointed to cyber espionage becoming the issue that overshadowed an already full agenda.

Press leaks suggested that the White House was considering sanctioning Chinese individuals or entities that benefit from cyber theft—this amid calls to cancel the summit or downgrade it to a working meeting. Just eight days before a scheduled working dinner with President Xi, President Obama told a meeting of the Business Roundtable, “We are preparing a number of measures that will indicate to the Chinese that this is not just a matter of us being mildly upset, but is something that will put significant strains on the bilateral relationship if not resolved, and that we are prepared to [do] some countervailing actions in order to get their attention.”

Previous meetings did not provide a great deal of optimism that the two leaders could reduce tensions over cybersecurity. At the Sunnylands estate in June 2013, President Obama raised the issue of cyber attacks on US companies, and spoke of the need for “rules and common approaches to cybersecurity.” These discussions, however, were quickly eclipsed by former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden’s disclosures of surveillance programs directed at domestic and foreign targets, including China, and the May 2014 indictment of five alleged hackers from Unit 61938 of the People’s Liberation Army. Beijing soon suspended a cybersecurity working group that the two leaders had established in April 2013. When the presidents met again in November 2014 at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation gathering, President Obama called on China to protect intellectual property, especially against cyber threats, and reportedly pushed Xi to resume the cybersecurity working group.
successful cases of cooperation on criminal investigations, but there have been more instances in which requests for aid have gone unanswered by the FBI and the Ministry of Public Security. If there is no sign that the attacks from China have abated, the United States is likely to levy sanctions on high-level officials and state-owned enterprises. Beijing may retaliate with new regulations restricting foreign company access to the domestic market.

Over the next year, Beijing and Washington will need to identify some shared norms of behavior in cyberspace. This is especially important since neither side will give up traditional espionage, and what may look like legitimate spying to one side may look like preparing for an attack to the other—particularly in attacks on critical infrastructure that may have economic and military value as a target. In order to prevent misperception and miscalculation, Washington and Beijing will want to discuss establishing a threshold for an armed attack in cyberspace and whether certain targets should be off limits. Though the PLA was not mentioned as a participant in the joint declaration, the United States should insist that it is represented in the senior-level experts working group. Without the PLA, the discussions are essentially meaningless.

Given this history, there was little reason to expect a breakthrough in Washington in September 2015. But a breakthrough is what appears to have happened. China and the United States agreed to several important cybersecurity measures including: not engaging in commercial cyber espionage, providing timely responses to requests for assistance in cyber crime investigations, cooperating in conducting investigations and collective evidence, identifying and endorsing norms of behavior in cyberspace, and establishing two high-level working groups and a hotline between the two sides.4

The most important issue over the next several months will be implementation of the joint affirmation, especially the prohibition against cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, and provision of timely assistance in criminal investigations. Many inside and outside of the US government remain skeptical of China’s commitment to reducing commercial espionage. With President Xi at his side, President Obama said, “The question now is, are words followed by actions. And we will be watching carefully to make an assessment as to whether progress has been made in this area.” In the past, Beijing and Washington have disagreed on what constitutes adequate evidence of hacking. There have been a few successful cases of cooperation on criminal investigations, but there have been more instances in which requests for aid have gone unanswered by the FBI and the Ministry of Public Security. If there is no sign that the attacks from China have abated, the United States is likely to levy sanctions on high-level officials and state-owned enterprises. Beijing may retaliate with new regulations restricting foreign company access to the domestic market.

Even if the results of the high-level mechanism on cybercrime exceed expectations, the United States and China will still have significant differences in cyberspace. Beijing views Washington’s push for the free flow of information, and its funding of anti-censorship technology, as a direct threat to domestic stability. Both countries are worried about the security of hardware and software products used in government networks and are considering regulations that ban wares based on geographical location or ask for access to source code. The United States also has concerns about China’s continued failure to protect intellectual property rights and its efforts to steal technology or force technology transfer. In addition, the countries have competing visions of Internet governance, with the US promoting a private-sector led, multi-stakeholder model, while China prefers a state-centric process housed in the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union.

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100K STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILE

NATHAN-BEAUCHAMP MUSTAFAGA
SIGNATURE PARTNER: School Year Abroad
SCHOOL: The George Washington University
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AGE: 27

Nathan spent his junior year of high school studying in Beijing through School Year Abroad. At The George Washington University, he double majored in Chinese and international affairs, and—thanks to three US Department of State scholarships—spent every summer in China. In 2011, Nathan returned to Beijing for a dual-degree master’s program through the London School of Economics and Peking University. Nathan is now a Research Assistant at the RAND Corporation.
END NOTES


Of the many outcomes of the Obama-Xi Summit, we believe none is more important than those designed to shore up the enduring stability of the relationship by strengthening people-to-people relations.

In September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping made a historic visit — his first state visit — to the United States. The trip came at a critical moment — the US-China relationship stands at a decisive crossroads.

While the bilateral relationship generates substantial benefits for both countries, tensions are rising over cybersecurity, maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas, obstacles impeding US businesses operating in China and more. These frustrations, along with other friction points, have led to a heightened level of strategic rivalry between the world’s two largest military powers.

There is simply too much at stake, including global stability and prosperity, to allow heightened tensions between our two nations to boil over into conflict. While it should be expected that some discord will inevitably exist between the two largest economies in the world, the growing strategic rivalry could—if left unchecked—damage ties and result in negative outcomes for both nations.

The world faces a litany of global challenges ranging from climate change and extremism to non-proliferation and public health crises. To resolve these, the US and China must be able to work together. In fact, as China has become increasingly more engaged in multilateral efforts, senior leaders on both sides have begun pointing to global-governance cooperation as the future glue of the relationship. To that end, Washington and Beijing should identify and jointly cultivate many more opportunities to collaborate in areas of mutual concern and overlapping interests.

So how can these two powers be encouraged to mutually address shared challenges while simultaneously laying the foundation for a future, collaborative relationship? Our answer: through cultivating more robust, strategic people-to-people ties.

People-to-people exchange has played a critical role in the development of the US-China relationship. Just over 40 years ago, ping-pong players broke the diplomatic ice between the two countries, heralding the normalization of the bilateral relationship several years later. In 2014, Chinese and US citizens made more than 4.3 million trips across the Pacific Ocean. The number of exchanges occurring between students, scientists, artists and athletes is growing. In 2014, nearly 275,000 Chinese students in higher education studied in the United States—an increase of 17 percent from the previous year. Likewise, between 2010 and 2014 more than 100,000 American students studied in China—achieving the goal of US President Obama’s 100,000 Strong initiative.

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The 1 Million Strong initiative aims to produce a future generation of China-savvy American workers and leaders—individuals who will be equipped to successfully manage and lead a constructive US-China relationship away from conflict and in a mutually beneficial direction. The mission of 1 Million Strong is to create a nation of stakeholders who value the US-China relationship and who have the skills to compete and collaborate effectively with China in the global economy. 1 Million Strong is a smart-power initiative that will help the US build a strong and lasting relationship with China.

In addition to 1 Million Strong, Presidents Xi and Obama agreed to launch an annual China-US University Think Tank Forum (CUUTTF) beginning in 2016. The CUUTTF will bring together top scholars and experts from both countries by creating a high-end institutional platform to engage in in-depth discussion and research on subject matters concerning bilateral, regional and global issues and challenges, and injecting new intellectual momentum into US-China relations. It will further deepen the role of people-to-people exchange as a pillar for US-China relations. Such a forum will help eradicate misperceptions and misunderstanding and thus increase mutual understanding between the two nations, and will also help shape public opinion and media narratives in both countries.
The CUUTTF will provide intellectual support for strengthening the bilateral relationship while also training the next generation of young scholars who will help nurture a robust, positive and cooperative US-China relationship in the decades ahead.

As President Xi noted, “The foundation of Sino-US friendship lies in the people, and our hope in youth.” It is imperative that intense, high-level diplomatic negotiations continue in order to keep the US-China relationship on a positive track. It is also vital that constructive people-to-people ties continue to be strengthened and championed, in particular the track II dialogues and Mandarin language instruction for K-12 students highlighted during the Obama-Xi Summit. Stepping up investments in US-China people-to-people exchange will help lay the foundation for a strong, collaborative bilateral relationship that helps contribute to global peace and prosperity.

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The 100,000 Strong Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization launched in January 2013 to strengthen US-China relations through study abroad and Mandarin language learning.

Specifically, the Foundation leads a national movement to expand and diversify the number of Americans studying Mandarin and studying abroad in China to ensure the next generation of Americans is equipped to engage effectively with China, our fastest growing trade partner and major global power.

With high-level political support from both Washington and Beijing, as well as from a bipartisan group of governors and Members of Congress, the 100,000 Strong Foundation is positioned at the crucial intersection of foreign policy and politics. By simultaneously engaging prominent stakeholders and American students, the Foundation seeks to shape a more constructive future for US-China relations.