

Setting the Agenda for China-US Relations

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1. What is the real turning point of the improvement in Sino-US relations since a year and half ago?

It is said that this bilateral relationship is more stable now than at any time since the Tiananmen Crisis in 1989, even since 1980's. Scholars and analysts both Chinese and American tend to only "explain" their government policies. It seems many of them used to swing between optimistic and pessimistic.

Ironically speaking, the terrorist attack on September 11 actually helped the Bush administration for both domestic and international reasons. It also helped save Sino-US relations from further deteriorating, preventing the two biggest countries in the world from becoming confrontational. But what would be the scenarios if there was no "9.11"? Would there be remarkable changes regarding China from QDR (Quadrennial Defense Review) published right after 9.11 to NSS (National Security Strategy) issues in September 2002? Will there be candid and constructive cooperation between U. S. and China?

2. Priorities on the agenda for both Beijing and Washington.

Beijing:

- 1) More resolute and unwavering to devote itself to economic development as demonstrated by the 16th Party Congress of China;
- 2) Concerns over its security environment, particularly over nuclear threats, since China share borders with three nations, Russian, India and Pakistan, that each has nuclear arsenal big or small. An additional nuclear state, namely North Korea, and potential nuclear arms race in the region would generate a lasting problem for China's national security;
- 3) Be consistent in its U. S. policy, trying its best to understand the unique superpower and avoiding confrontation with it. To maintain a constructive, stable and fair relationship with the United States;
- 4) To integrate itself into the world system and to act as a responsible big country;
- 5) More flexible policies towards Taiwan to decrease tensions in the Taiwan Straits for the long-term goal of peaceful reunification.

Washington:

- 1) Home land security,
- 2) Anti-terrorists war;
- 3) Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- 4) Promotion of American value worldwide : democracy, freedom, and human rights;
- 5) To maintain predominant position over the world by unprecedented power in the history by way of “preventive defense”, “preemptive strategy”, and “ regime change”.

It might be necessary to suggest that the U.S. and China need to have strategic dialogue based on long-term national interests; to seek broader convergence and to narrow divergence between the two countries.

3.Short term agenda

- 1) Cooperation for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula;
- 2) Common efforts on Taiwan problem to prevent Taiwan Straits situation from being out of control by more flexible, patient and benign policies towards Taiwan on part of Beijing, and not sending wrong signals to Taiwan, not sending more advanced arms to Taiwan and not upgrading official relations in particular military relation with Taiwan on the part of the U.S.;
- 3) To create a positive political atmosphere and environment conducive to improvement of bilateral relations on both capitals, to encourage useful writings by analysts and objective reports by the press in particular.