

Chinese Views on the State of Sino-U.S. Relations in 2018

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Provocative actions on both sides led to heightened tensions and a deterioration in trust between China and the United States in 2018. Chinese authoritative and non-authoritative sources have been consistent in pushing back against what is correctly viewed as a fundamental U.S. shift toward greater hostility and suspicion, although non-authoritative sources use much harsher language. At the same time, both sources call for restraint, dialogue, and cooperation in handling U.S.-China relations, and point out the apparent misalignment of the anti-China attitudes of the Trump Administration compared to the U.S. public and the rest of the world. The likely presence of moderate Chinese views toward the worsening of Sino-U.S. relations suggests the need for the Trump Administration to replace its current confrontational approach to China with a more sophisticated, balanced approach that recognizes the need for continued cooperation with Beijing.

Introduction

This article examines Chinese views toward Sino-U.S. relations since CLM 56 of May 2018, which describes Chinese views of the relationship following promulgation of several major U.S. strategy documents (the 2017 National Security Strategy and the 2018 National Defense Strategy), and the so-called Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy. Unfortunately, recent developments in Sino-U.S. relations have not validated the limited optimism expressed by many Chinese observers, as described in CLM 56. Since May, bilateral tensions have increased considerably on many fronts as a result of actions taken by both sides, but especially by the United States.¹

These developments during the past several months have considerably worsened the Sino-U.S. relationship, bringing it to the verge of what several Western observers believe is a new Cold War.² Indeed, many U.S. observers now seem to believe that anything resembling the constructive engagement of the past has now been replaced by a fundamentally adversarial stance on both sides. This raises the question of whether Chinese views of the bilateral relationship have become pessimistic since May or whether they have retained a level of positivity that argues against drawing such a dire assessment.

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A transformation of the Sino-U.S. relationship into one rooted in deep hostility and suspicion may lead Beijing to conclude that its long-standing characterization of the great power environment of the reform era as one of “peace and development” is no longer applicable. Instead, the Chinese leadership might move to designate the emergence of a new era of potentially destabilizing great power confrontation or even conflict. Given the great importance Beijing places on such formal designations of great power relations, this change would likely result in a thoroughly negative, long-term shift in China’s future policies toward the U.S., an overall worsening of the bilateral relationship, and adverse changes in the regional and global economic and security environments.

This article takes a close look at Chinese views toward the Sino-U.S. relationship since May to determine whether there are signs that such a change is actually occurring, and, if not, what the discussions in Chinese debates might be regarding the state of current and future relations. As in the past, the article uses open sources to assess Chinese views, divided into authoritative and non-authoritative categories to distinguish between official and unofficial perceptions and to identify possible differences within leadership and elite circles.³ The article ends with a summary and an assessment of the Chinese perspective and the implications for future U.S.-China relations.

Authoritative Sources

Despite growing tensions and hostility in the relationship, since May 2018 authoritative Chinese sources have generally expressed a hopeful, positive stance when characterizing the situation between Beijing and Washington, albeit with some notable qualifications. Overall, senior Chinese leaders, such as President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, have reiterated the desire for both sides to “earnestly implement” the positive “consensus” reached during Trump’s visit to China in November 2017.⁴

This desire has usually been accompanied by upbeat hopes for a strengthening of bilateral cooperation through dialogue and an attitude of “mutual respect,” while handling differences through “mutual trust.” As President Xi stated during a recent phone call with President Donald Trump:

Both sides should respect each other, pursue mutual benefit and reciprocity, focus on cooperation, as well as manage and control differences, so as to promote the healthy, stable and forward-looking development of bilateral relations.⁵

In a recent meeting in Beijing, with former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, President Xi reiterated:

China sticks to the road of peaceful development, and is still committed to the building of a relationship with the United States that features no conflicts, no

confrontation, mutual respect and win-win cooperation. ...China is willing to properly resolve issues emerging in bilateral ties through friendly consultations with the United States.”⁶

Perhaps the most upbeat, balanced, and pragmatic assessment of U.S.-China relations by a fairly senior authoritative source is conveyed in the remarks by PRC Ambassador to the U.S., Cui Tiankai, in August:

Looking ahead, China and the US enjoy vast prospects for cooperation, as our shared interests far outweigh our differences.

We believe that our competition should be healthy and positive, aiming to improve ourselves, not to replace the other side. Our two sides need to promote cooperation through competition and achieve win-win results from cooperation.

... as far as China is concerned that we are always ready to cooperate with the United States even if we have differences and maybe just because we have differences the need for cooperation is even bigger. ...It's not a zero-sum game.⁷

Alongside these largely positive assessments of and hopes for an improved Sino-U.S. relationship, both senior and lower-level PRC officials have expressed various concerns, and some very pointed criticisms, toward the increasingly negative U.S. actions toward China. For example, regarding the U.S. portrayal of China as pursuing global hegemony and seeking to overthrow the current global order, Foreign Minister Wang Yi has stated:

I want to tell you very clearly that this is a serious strategic misjudgment. It is a misguided anticipation that will be extremely detrimental to U.S. interests and the future of the United States. ... I don't think China will become the United States, and China will not challenge the United States ... we must observe and preserve the existing order. China cannot and will not start a new order.⁸

In other instances, authoritative PRC reactions to regular U.S. actions and reports about China have been critical but consistent with previous statements. For example, Beijing's reaction to recent U.S. arms sales to Taiwan generally resembled its typical rhetoric in the past.⁹

In response to the Trump Administration's \$330 million arms sales to Taiwan in September 2018, a spokesperson for the PRC Ministry of National Defense (MND) stated:

We have expressed our firm opposition to the US arms sale to Taiwan. ...The US action has violated the one-China principle and the three Joint

Communiqués between China and the U.S. It is an interference into China's domestic affairs. It undermined China's sovereignty and security interests and severely damaged China-US military relations and bilateral ties as well as peace and security across the Taiwan Straits.¹⁰

The PRC has issued similar authoritative statements on even larger arms sales, such as in 2014 when the Obama Administration authorized the sale of Perry-class missile frigates to Taiwan.¹¹

This is also the case for recent PRC authoritative responses to the Defense Department's 2018 annual report "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China." Such sources remarked:

China is firmly opposed to the [report] which, in total disregard of facts, makes presumptuous and irresponsible comments on China's national defense development and its legitimate acts to safeguard territorial sovereignty and security interests.¹²

Beijing has made similar statements every year, such as in response to the 2014 report.¹³

Authoritative Chinese reactions to U.S. criticism of China's human rights record, its actions in the South China Sea, and the crackdown on alleged Chinese commercial espionage have been sharply critical, yet demonstrate no major divergence from Beijing's positions during the past decade.

Regarding U.S. concerns about the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities in Xinjiang, Beijing retorted:

Our advice for the US is to buy itself a mirror and take a look at itself, and spend more time thinking about its own human rights problems, instead of exploiting human rights and religious issues to interfere in China's internal affairs.¹⁴

In fact, the Information Office of the PRC State Council has published an annual "Human Rights Record of the United States" since 1998, accusing the United States of various abuses.¹⁵

Regarding the South China Sea, in late October a MND spokesperson repeated its standard position:

The US side keeps sending warships and aircrafts to the South China Sea and draws other countries in highly-relevant joint military exercises and patrols. That is the real militarization in the South China Sea.¹⁶

And a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) spokesperson offered this similarly standard remark:

Installing necessary national defense facilities on the Nansha Islands which are our territory is China exercising its right of self-preservation and self-defense as a sovereign state in accordance with international law. ... We urge the US to stop stirring up troubles and creating tensions. The US should respect efforts made by relevant parties to resolve the issue through negotiation and consultation.¹⁷

The official PRC response to a U.S. State Department press statement on the South China Sea in 2012 reflects the consistency of Beijing's criticism of Washington on this issue.¹⁸

Regarding the recent China Initiative of the U.S. Justice Department to respond to alleged Chinese economic espionage, a MoFA spokesperson stated:

If the U.S. does have some concerns over this issue, it should present solid evidence that can stand tests by facts.¹⁹

Beijing has repeatedly denied previous allegations of Chinese economic espionage in the United States, such as in 2014 when the U.S. Justice Department indicted five Chinese military officers for cyber theft.²⁰

At the same time, at least one authoritative Chinese source, a minister in the PRC embassy, made a perhaps unprecedented assertion that the statements on Taiwan in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2019 and the Taiwan Travel Act suggest that "... *some people want to break [the long-standing 'One China' policy]... framework.*"²¹

Beijing has always been critical of the Taiwan-related portions of the NDAA, such as the NDAA for fiscal year 2017 under the Obama Administration.²² However, the NDAA for fiscal year 2019 contains provisions that are much more sharply targeted toward China.²³ And the response from Beijing thus far has been harsher compared to the responses to previous iterations:

The [NDAA] interferes with China's internal affairs, stokes Sino-US conflicts, and is full of Cold War mentality. The act also goes against the one-China policy, damages the development of Sino-US military-to-military relation, and undermines mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries.²⁴

More notably, some authoritative sources have expressed a more pointed response to major unilateral actions taken by the Trump Administration. Regarding the unprecedented imposition of U.S. tariffs, at the China-ASEAN foreign ministers' meeting in August Foreign Minister Wang Yi remarked:

Such actions [tariffs] will fail to achieve the goal, and will only end up eating the bitter fruit of someone's own making. ...Does the US want to increase the cost and burden of its own people by imposing tariffs?²⁵

Interestingly, drawing upon recent public opinion polls and other sources, Wang Yi's and subsequent MoFA statements also suggest that the U.S. public, local officials, and the international community might not support such extreme behavior.²⁶

A few authoritative Chinese sources have even suggested that the harsh actions by the U.S. government might be out of step with President Trump's apparently more positive stance toward the bilateral relationship.

Perhaps the most pointed recent authoritative Chinese response to U.S. actions came after the U.S placed sanctions on a PLA agency and its head for purchasing Russian fighter aircraft. The MND spokesperson asserted that the U.S. has no right to interfere in such actions, and

accused the U.S. move as "a flagrant breach of basic rules of international relations" and "a stark show of hegemonism" that severely harmed relations between China and the U.S. as well as the two countries' militaries."²⁷

The authoritative Chinese response to the unprecedentedly hostile speech by Vice President Pence was almost as sharp:

The relevant speech ... slandered China by claiming that China meddles in US internal affairs and elections. ...The international community has already known fully well who wantonly infringes upon others' sovereignty, interferes in others' internal affairs and undermines others' interests. ...We urge the U.S. to correct its wrongdoing, stop groundlessly accusing and slandering China and harming China's interests and China-US ties, and take concrete actions to maintain the sound and steady development of China-US relations.²⁸

Non-Authoritative Sources

Unsurprisingly, many non-authoritative Chinese sources use stronger language than their authoritative counterparts in responding to U.S. criticism of China and blame Washington for the deterioration in relations. For example, several sources characterize Washington's criticism of China as an expression of "delusional" thinking and describe alleged U.S. efforts to limit China's development through trade frictions and other means as "morally despicable."²⁹

Many of these criticisms are directed specifically at Vice President Pence's caustic China speech. For example, a lengthy essay by the important non-authoritative source, Zhong Sheng, describes Pence's various attacks on China as "absurd," "completely disregard[ing] the facts," and "a provocation." The author suggests that all the charges in the speech are designed to distract observers from America's

domestic turmoil, play the “China card” to win votes, and pressure Beijing into submission.³⁰

Another observer penned a rather insulting online letter to Vice President Pence:

Dear Vice-President Mike Pence, There is actually nothing new in your speech, which is full of the fusty arrogance, if not self-deceptive shortsightedness of the United States. Your fearlessness has made you a laughingstock of the Chinese. Your tirade has made us all laugh.³¹

Echoing a few authoritative sources, several non-authoritative observers also criticize the U.S by highlighting the alleged hypocrisy of its position on some issues. For example, Zhong Sheng asserts:

So, which country in the world is most keen to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries? The United States has carried out "peaceful evolutions" and "color revolutions" around the world, and has imposed sanctions on other countries. It has used "double standards" for the use of international law.³²

And an analyst at the MoFA’s think-tank asserts rather dramatically in responding to strong criticisms of China’s alleged theft of U.S. technology that appeared in an October Pentagon report:

The U.S. has ripped every fruit from its transactions with China and now it's turning the back to depict China as a "thief." There is no better phrase to describe U.S.' allegations than "thief shouting thief."³³

While castigating the U.S., many non-authoritative sources foolishly state or imply that China is virtually blameless in causing the downward slide in Sino-U.S. relations. One particularly strident Xinhua commentator asserts:

The recent string of relentless and groundless China-bashing rhetoric from U.S. leaders has revealed a Washington bent on dragging Beijing into a full-scale face-off. ...The current tensions in bilateral relations are not China's making. ...China has just been forced to take appropriate action to defend its legitimate interests.³⁴

More specifically, one observer asserts that Washington’s accusation that Beijing is stealing technology from the U.S. is “completely a lie made up by the US.”³⁵

In a more restrained vein, some non-authoritative sources correctly point to the unprecedented nature of several recent U.S. government critiques of China. A well-known Chinese international relations scholar asserts that Pence’s “public denunciation” of China has not been seen since the normalization of Sino-U.S. relations in 1972. He attributes such a shift primarily to U.S. domestic politics, such

as Pence's need to demonstrate his loyalty to Trump and to assist his own presidential aspirations by aligning himself more closely with the "anti-China" elements of the Republican right wing.³⁶

Unsurprisingly, many non-authoritative sources attribute the recent shift by the U.S. government toward a more uniformly negative, even hostile, stance toward China as a reflection of the U.S. leadership's fears over the loss of America's strategic position of dominance on the global scene.

For example, Hu Xijin, editor-in-chief of the controversial *Global Times*, states:

The root cause of the deterioration of Sino-U.S. relations is that China's rise has reached a level that the United States cannot accept...the strategic resistance of the U.S. to China's rise is hard to change.³⁷

As expected, the allegedly dominant or "hegemonic" global position of the U.S. and its friction-producing policies are linked by some observers to the supposedly "zero-sum" mentality of America's leaders. For example, Song Guoyou asserts:

The zero-sum mentality advocates conflicts and opposes cooperation. It is an immature concept generated in the early formation of the modern international relations, and also a typical form of egoism.³⁸

Despite such heated rhetoric and depressing analyses of the state of the relationship, most non-authoritative sources reject the notion that the U.S. and China are inevitably headed toward conflict or a new Cold War. For example, a senior editor at the *People's Daily* writes:

Washington may be passionate about time-travel dramas, but today we all live in a world of coexistence. People on both sides of the Pacific are not interested in going back to the Cold War era.³⁹

As suggested in these remarks, many Chinese observers justify their views by pointing to the huge level of economic interdependence between China and the U.S. and the common problems facing both countries that will require cooperation to resolve, such as anti-terrorism, cyber virtual space, climate change, and religious extremism.⁴⁰

And one scholar at the CCP Party School points to the most recent *Integrated Country Strategy: China*, released by the U.S. State Department on August 29, as indicating that at least some elements in the U.S. government still point to the need for Washington to continue cooperating with Beijing.⁴¹

To support this somewhat optimistic viewpoint, several non-authoritative sources also argue that Washington's hostile policy toward China is not supported by U.S.

interest groups, public opinion, and the international community. For example, a Zhong Sheng article asserts:

After more than a year of observing American diplomatic practice, people have seen the US strides under the slogan "America First", but the complaints of those Americans who have not felt the benefits of "America First" are piling up.⁴²

To support this argument, Zhong Sheng also cites a wide variety of non-Chinese, often Western, sources that supposedly rebut the accusations against China made by the Trump Administration, especially in the economic realm.⁴³

The author then goes overboard in asserting that China

is described by the international community as firm-minded, composed, confident and restrained in responding to its trade frictions with the US. ... It is universally believed that China handles trade frictions with the US in a constructive approach, like it always does in addressing differences and contradictions.⁴⁴

Zhong Xuanli, another pen name likely consisting of anonymous officials, similar to Zhong Sheng and associated with the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP, cites non-Chinese sources to rebut not only Washington's charge that Beijing engages in economic aggression but also Beijing's geopolitical expansion and destruction of international rules.⁴⁵

Many non-authoritative sources offer views on what Beijing should do in response to U.S. criticisms of China. Echoing their authoritative counterparts, virtually every observer advises overall restraint, while telling China's leaders to stand firm against any challenges to China's vital interests and to strengthen the nation's capacity to resist pressure. For example, an editorial in the *People's Daily* on August 2 states:

China has to stand firm, keep its orientation, avoid complacency and not be afraid of the US. With rationality, China should be humble and keep the defensive position, and should never provoke the US or boast its strengths in front of it. When pressured by the US, China must resolutely oppose and show zero tolerance toward the unreasonable conducts. Meanwhile, it should take reciprocal countermeasures but never overreact.⁴⁶

In fact, this non-authoritative source states that while resolutely defending its core interests and strengthening its power, Beijing should also

try its best to avoid a military conflict with the US... not conduct military operations objected by the US for reasons beyond China's core interests... intensify cooperation on its core interests with the US, ... respect intellectual

property rights, well handle the relationship between [China's] industrial upgrading and the US wish of maintaining high-tech advantages.⁴⁷

These remarkably restrained actions are recommended as part of an overall effort to not “provoke” the U.S., while raising the costs for Washington in undertaking any attempts to contain China.⁴⁸

Finally, some non-authoritative sources not only express considerable restraint but also at least suggest that although the U.S. is mainly at fault in creating the current downward spiral in U.S.-China relations, Beijing is not entirely blameless. For example, former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs He Yafei writes that both the U.S. and China have “begun to view each other today as ‘competing rivals’ rather than as ‘cooperating rivals.’” Although He Yafei agrees with many other non-authoritative sources in ascribing this shift as largely due to American domestic politics and a strategic shift in U.S. global views, he also urges *both* Washington and Beijing to “begin cool-headed evaluations of their behavior and assume their due responsibilities to the rest of the world as major powers.”⁴⁹

Conclusion

This examination of Chinese views of Sino-U.S. relations suggests a high level of continuity with those views described in CLM 56. Overall, since May Chinese observers have remained highly critical of U.S. statements and actions, although non-authoritative observers are far more caustic in this regard than their authoritative counterparts. Authoritative sources understandably are less pointed and in some important cases merely repeat rather formulaic Chinese reactions. However, other responses are quite sharp, especially those by authoritative military sources.

One interesting feature of both authoritative and non-authoritative criticisms of the U.S. is the more frequent use of non-Chinese sources to refute many of the charges Washington has leveled against China. These are used to support a general argument that U.S. policies toward China are not only inaccurate but also out of step with the views of many individuals and organizations both inside and outside of the United States.

But perhaps the most significant aspect of Chinese views on the bilateral relationship since May has been the continued commitment to maintain a cooperative set of interactions. To support this goal, Chinese observers almost invariably counsel restraint (sometimes even on *both* sides), alongside efforts to strengthen China's ability to stand up to U.S. pressure on vital PRC interests.

This viewpoint reflects a continued adherence to the long-standing Chinese notion that “peace and development” form the major features of the current global environment. Until this important designation is officially discarded by the Chinese

leadership, most Chinese observers will continue to stress restraint and cooperation in Beijing's relationship with Washington.

It is also possible that Chinese restraint reflects a pragmatic calculation that China remains relatively weak compared with the U.S. and perhaps that Beijing is even at least partly to blame for the current downward slide in relations. According to personal interactions with Chinese observers, a minority within China's policy community believe that Beijing's foreign policy has been too assertive. This outlook might dovetail with the notion, expressed privately by many Chinese intellectuals, that the Xi Jinping government is slowing the reform process and relying excessively on domestic repression and greater party control over almost all walks of life.

The presence of such alternate views alongside the continued dominance among Chinese leadership circles of the notion of "peace and development" within the global order suggest that Washington is undermining its own interests by pursuing its current, confrontational, zero-sum approach toward China. Overly aggressive, unmodulated pushback against Beijing, especially in the absence of a rational, fact-based recognition of the need for continued cooperation, will simply strengthen the position of Chinese hardliners and weaken those who argue in favor of "peace and development." Unfortunately, it might take a major crisis between the U.S. and China to compel Washington to recognize that some level of meaningful cooperation with China is not a choice but a necessity.

¹ For example, Washington disinvented Beijing from participating in the large annual Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercises in response to China's "continued militarization" of the South China Sea. Washington has leveled billions of dollars in tariffs on Chinese imports, announced new rules aimed primarily at China that tighten national security reviews of foreign investments, and extradited a supposed Chinese intelligence operative from Belgium to the U.S. for conspiring to steal trade secrets from a U.S. company. Perhaps the most significant U.S. action during the past six months relevant to Chinese perceptions of the Sino-U.S. relationship is Vice President Mike Pence's speech at the Hudson Institute on October 4, 2018. In this speech, Pence fully endorsed the Trump Administration's hostile, adversarial stance toward China, declaring that the bilateral relationship has entered a new era of intense competition and confrontation, marked by Washington's refusal to "back down" in the face of Chinese threats and misbehavior. For their part, the Chinese have applied billions of dollars in counter-tariffs on the U.S., increased military pressure on Taiwan while enticing several nations to transfer diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, and pushed back against U.S. FONOPs in the South China Sea by engaging in a dangerous ship maneuver directed at a U.S. destroyer. U.S. companies continue to lose intellectual property and technology from both clandestine Chinese activities and onerous joint venture contracts, while Chinese citizens and foreigners are both subject to increasing levels of surveillance and control. Beijing's placement of hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs into "re-education camps" in Xinjiang is the most appalling example of this more repressive

behavior. See Helene Cooper, "U.S. Disinvites China From Military Exercise Amid Rising Tensions," *The New York Times*, May 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/world/asia/us-china-rim-pac-military-exercise-tensions.html>; Michael C. Bender, Gordon Lubold, Kate O'Keeffe, and Jeremy Page, "U.S. Edges Toward New Cold-War Era With China," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-edges-toward-new-cold-war-era-with-china-1539355839?>; "Vice President Mike Pence's Remarks on the Administration's Policy Towards China," Hudson Institute, October 4, 2018, <https://www.hudson.org/events/1610-vice-president-mike-pence-s-remarks-on-the-administration-s-policy-towards-china102018>; Orange Wang, "US-China Trade War Heats Up as Beijing Hits Back at US President Donald Trump's New Tariffs," *South China Morning Post*, September 18, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/2164686/china-says-it-will-hit-back-against-donald-trumps-latest-trade>; Russell Hsiao, "China's Intensifying Pressure Campaign against Taiwan," Jamestown Foundation *China Brief*, vol. 18, no. 11 (June 19, 2018), <https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-intensifying-pressure-campaign-against-taiwan/>; Liu Zhen, "Beijing's Aggression in South China Sea Driving Expansion of Southeast Asian Coastguard Fleets, Report Says," *South China Morning Post*, August 3, 2018, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2158047/beijings-aggression-south-china-sea-driving-expansion>

² Michael C. Bender, Gordon Lubold, Kate O'Keeffe, and Jeremy Page, "U.S. Edges Toward New Cold-War Era With China," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 12, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-edges-toward-new-cold-war-era-with-china-1539355839?>; Clay Chandler and Eamon Barrett, "The US-China Cold War Has Begun," *Fortune*, October 6, 2018, fortune.com/2018/10/06/the-us-china-cold-war-has-begun/; Ishaan Tharoor, "Under Trump, U.S. Enters a New 'Cold War' with China," *The Washington Post*, October 11, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/10/11/under-trump-us-enters-new-cold-war-with-china/?utm_term=.6897638b73ed;

Kenneth Rapoza, "China and U.S. Inch Closer To Cold War," *Forbes*, October 9, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2018/10/09/china-and-u-s-inch-closer-to-cold-war/#513d6db54bd7>;

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Graham Allison, "The US is Hunkering Down for a New Cold War with China," *Financial Times*, October 12, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/666b020-cd7b-11e8-8d0b-a6539b949662>;

Julian Borger and Lily Kuo, "US-China Tensions Soar as 'New Cold War' Heats Up," *The Guardian*, October 16, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/16/us-china-new-cold-war-tensions>.

³ Several types of PRC sources are considered authoritative in the sense of explicitly "speaking for the regime." Authoritative statements include, in descending order of

authority, PRC government and CCP statements, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) statements, MoFA spokesperson statements, and MoFA daily press briefings. Many types of low-level commentaries and signed articles appearing in a wide variety of PRC and Hong Kong media convey notable yet decidedly non-authoritative views. Such articles appear in the PRC government news service (Xinhua), CCP and PLA newspapers, the Hong Kong-based (and *People's Daily*-owned) *Global Times* (环球时报), and many minor PRC and Hong Kong newspapers and academic publications. See Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy," *China Leadership Monitor* 44 (Summer 2014), 28. Several types of usually homophonous, bylined articles appearing in *People's Daily* are considered non-authoritative. A major example of this is articles using the byline "Zhong Sheng" (钟声). See Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Views on the South China Sea Arbitration Case between the People's Republic of China and the Philippines," *China Leadership Monitor* 51 (Fall 2016), 2.

⁴ "Xi, Trump Have Telephone Conversation, to Meet During G20 Summit," Xinhua wang, November 2, 2018, www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/02/c_137575210.htm;

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⁵ "Xi Jinping Holds Telephone Talks at Request with President Donald Trump of the US," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, May 9, 2018, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1558195.shtml.

⁶ "President Xi Meets Henry Kissinger," Xinhua wang, November 8, 2018, www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/08/c_137592691.htm.

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⁸ "A Conversation with Wang Yi," Council on Foreign Relations, September 28, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/event/conversation-wang-yi?utm_medium=email&utm_source=dailybrief&utm_content=100918&sp_mid=57524958&sp_rid=cGF1bC5sZWVAY2VpcC5vcmcS1.

⁹ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference on June 30, 2017," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, June 30, 2017, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1474637.shtml; "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Regular Press Conference on March 11, 2016," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, March 11,

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¹⁰ "Defense Ministry's Regular Press Conference on Sep. 27," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, September 28, 2018, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2018-09/28/content_4825831.htm.

¹¹ "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang's Regular Press Conference on December 19, 2014," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/t1221009.shtml.

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<http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0725/c90000-9484414.html>. Li Yong is deputy director of the China Association of International Trade Expert Committee.

³⁶ Jin Canrong, "金灿荣：彭斯的小算盘难敌大趋势" (Pence's 'Selfish Calculations' are No Match for Larger Trends), *Huanqiu shibao* (Global Trends), October 8, 2018, opinion.huanqiu.com/hqpl/2018-10/13198942.html. The author is professor and vice president of the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China. For a similar view, see "US Should Respect China's Right to Develop," *Global Times*, October 8, 2018, www.globaltimes.cn/content/1122167.shtml.

³⁷ Hu Xijin (胡锡进), Weibo Post, October 8, 2018,

9:35pm, <https://m.weibo.cn/status/4292963502736291>;

Also see Sun Chenghao, "Commentary: Trump Goes Further Along Strategic Contraction," *Renmin wang*, August 3, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0803/c90000-9487513.html; "Commentary: Stop Making Waves in Taiwan Strait," *Xinhua wang*, October 20, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1020/c90000-9510222.html; Huang Panyue, "China-US Relationship Needs a Reset," *China Military*, October 11, 2018, english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-10/11/content_9307991.htm. Huang is deputy director of International and Strategic Studies at the China Institute of International Studies.

³⁸ Song Guoyou, "Commentary: Zero-Sum Mentality Goes Against Trend of Times," *Renmin wang*, October 12, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1012/c90000-9507835.html. Song Guoyou is deputy director and professor at the Center for American Studies of Fudan University.

³⁹ Ding Gang, "Op-Ed: Despite Rivalry, Much Unites China and US," *Renmin wang*, October 11, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/1011/c90000-9507446.html>. Also see "Editorial: China, US Have Little Possibility to go into Strategic Confrontation," *Renmin wang*, August 2, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0802/c90000-9487090.html. The editorial states: "But it is almost impossible for China and the US to let their relations go all the way towards all-round confrontation."

⁴⁰ Jin Canrong, "金灿荣：彭斯的小算盘难敌大趋势" (Pence's 'Selfish Calculations' are No Match for Larger Trends), *Huanqiu shibao* (Global Trends), October 8, 2018, opinion.huanqiu.com/hqpl/2018-10/13198942.html. The author is a professor and vice president of the School of International Studies at Renmin University of China. Also see Huang Panyue, "China-US Relationship Needs a Reset," *China Military*, October 11, 2018, http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-10/11/content_9307991.htm. Huang is deputy director of International and Strategic Studies at the China Institute of International Studies. He echoes remarks by some Chinese officials that "China and the US are riding on the same boat. Any drastic actions that can overturn the boat will harm the interests of both sides. Therefore, while resetting the relationship will be difficult, both sides should try."

⁴¹ U.S. State Department, "Integrated Country Strategy: China," August 29, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/284988.pdf>; Chen Jimin, "The Indo-Pacific Strategy's Obstacles," *China-US Focus*, October 10, 2018, <https://www.chinausfocus.com/foreign-policy/the-indo-pacific-strategys-obstacles>. Chen is an associate research fellow at the CCP Central Party School.

⁴² Zhong Sheng, "Op-ed: 'America First' Policy Hurts US Citizens," Renmin wang, August 17, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0817/c90000-9491811.html . Also see Jin Canrong, "金灿荣：彭斯的小算盘难敌大趋势"(Pence's 'Selfish Calculations' are No Match for Larger Trends), *Huanqiu shibao* (Global Trends), October 8, 2018, opinion.huanqiu.com/hqpl/2018-10/13198942.html ; Jin states: "the idea of 'comprehensive and whole-of-society' confrontation with China" has no mass base in the United States. From the outside, the US posture has no traction on the international level.... American allies are also not very supportive."

⁴³ See, for example, Zhong Sheng, "并不高明的造谣术：评美国领导人诬蔑中国的种种奇谈怪论" (Not-so-Bright Rumor-Spreading: A Critique of U.S. Leader Using Absurd Arguments to Defame China), Xinhua wang, October 5, 2018, www.xinhuanet.com/world/2018-10/05/c_1123521668.htm ; Zhong Sheng, "Op-ed: No Way Out for Unilateralism," Renmin wang, October 1, 2018, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/1001/c90000-9505452.html>; Zhong Sheng, "Op-ed: 'America First' Policy Hurts US Citizens," Renmin wang, August 17, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0817/c90000-9491811.html .

⁴⁴ Zhong Sheng, "Op-ed: China Follows Global Trend with Composure," Renmin wang, October 10, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1010/c90000-9507068.html.

⁴⁵ Zhong Xuanli cites Sri Lanka's ambassador to China who insists that China did not pursue so-called "debt trap diplomacy" toward his country. The article adds that the Belt and Road Initiative has "attracted 103 countries and international organizations to sign 118 agreements...[and] together with its core concepts has been incorporated into outcome documents of important international mechanisms." Zhong Xuanli (钟轩理), "泾渭由来两清浊：给中国对世界的贡献算算账" (Unlike the US, China Creates Hope for World), *Global Times*, October 14, 2018, www.globaltimes.cn/content/1122892.shtml . Also see Zhong Xuanli, "Op-ed: US Not at a Disadvantage in Economic and Trade Ties with China," Renmin wang, October 12, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1012/c90000-9507833.html ; Zhong Xuanli, "Op-ed: Trade War Cannot Stop China From Moving Forward," Renmin wang, October 17, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1017/c90000-9509241.html . For additional specific rebuttals of American charges from other sources, especially as contained in Pence's speech, see Sheng Dingli, "Pence's Remarks on China Represent Minority US Opinions," *Global Times*, October 15, 2018, www.globaltimes.cn/content/1123046.shtml . Sheng is a professor at Fudan University; "Mike Pence's Speech Adds Uncertainties to China-US Relations: Young Chinese," Renmin wang, October 9, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/1009/c90000-9506915.html .

⁴⁶ "Editorial: China, US Have Little Possibility to Go into Strategic Confrontation," Renmin wang, August 2, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0802/c90000-9487090.html.

⁴⁷ "Editorial: China, US Have Little Possibility to go into Strategic Confrontation," Renmin wang, August 2, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0802/c90000-9487090.html . Also see Zhang Zhihao, "US Law Criticized as Stoking Conflict," *China Daily*, August 15, 2018, www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201808/15/WS5b7332eaa310add14f385c0a.html .

Zhang quotes Senior Colonel Zhao Xiaozhuo: "It is not in China's interest to return [America's] hostility because China does not seek global hegemony, nor does it want unnecessary conflicts or arms races."

⁴⁸ "Editorial: China, US Have Little Possibility to go into Strategic Confrontation," Renmin wang, August 2, 2018, en.people.cn/n3/2018/0802/c90000-9487090.html . For similar sentiments, also see Fu Ying, "Can China-U.S. Relations Step Back From the Edge?" Bloomberg, October 30, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-10-30/can-china-u-s-relations-step-back-from-the-edge> ; Zhang Zhihao, "US Law Criticized as Stoking Conflict," *China Daily*, August 15, 2018, www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201808/15/WS5b7332eaa310add14f385c0a.html .

⁴⁹ He Yafei, "US-China Relations: From Cooperating Rivals to Competing Rivals," *The Diplomat*, August 30, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/us-china-relations-from-cooperating-rivals-to-competing-rivals/> . He Yafei is former vice minister at the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former vice minister of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council.