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Contemporary International Relations

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Special Report

Editor's Note: From 2017 to 2021, the Trump administration transformed US–China policy by imposing an omnidirectional containment against Beijing. Against this backdrop, the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and the Brookings Institution, jointly agreed to strengthen exchanges on the status quo and future of China–US relations with the primary goals being to avoid conflict, promote cooperation, build healthy, stable bilateral relations, and explore a new framework for benign China–US interactions. Toward this end, a two-year “Track II Dialogue” on China–US relations was launched in 2019. The CICIR and the Brookings Institution have conducted five rounds of small closed-door meetings for candid, in-depth, and constructive exchanges focused on the sensitive issues, important dynamics, long-term tendencies, and a general framework for China–US relations. The two organizations agreed to respectively launch their own reports. This report gives preliminary thoughts on China–US relations from the CICIR task force.

CICIR Report: Mutual Respect, Equality, Mutual Benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence
—Exploring a New Framework for the Complex China–US Relations *CICIR* 1

European Studies

The EU's Strategic Predicament after Withdrawal from Perspective of Afghanistan
Zhang Jian 20

The EU has significant geopolitical and security interests in Afghanistan, including prevention of the resurgence of refugees, combating terrorism, improving the EU's image, exporting Western values, and increasing its geopolitical weight by transforming Afghanistan. The Taliban's renewed control of Afghanistan is a heavy blow for the EU, and it brings uncertainty to security and geopolitical issues. These changes highlight the long-standing strategic predicament of the EU: excessive dependence on the US, which prevents the EU from realizing its own strategic autonomy; a long-term values-oriented diplomacy that compresses its own strategic space so that a pragmatic cooperation system in the supposed post-American era is difficult to take shape; mechanism and authority limitations that aggravate the conflict between ideal and reality and prevent the EU as a whole from exerting its due international influence.

International Politics and Security

The Historical Logic of the Resurgence of the Afghan Taliban *Yan Wei* 39

In the wake of the Afghanistan War, the Taliban quickly regrouped and set up a horizontal organizational structure in which their ethnic composition became increasingly diverse

and their ideology appeared more pragmatic and moderate. The Taliban accommodated the political culture and demands of the vast rural and tribal communities of Afghanistan and hence mobilized the Afghan society. By contrast, the Afghan government failed miserably in its efforts to centralize power and develop rural areas. Ultimately, the Taliban filled the power vacuums in the countryside and returned to power during the withdrawal of US troops from the country. Nevertheless, a long list of challenges is awaiting the Taliban toward power sharing, political inclusiveness, and economic growth in Afghanistan.

Comparison of Global Governance Strategies of China and the United States

Wu Zhicheng and Li Ying 61

With the profound changes taking place in the international power structure and the accelerated changes occurring in the world that have not been seen in a century, the discord between China and the US in the realm of global governance is becoming increasingly prominent. Moreover, the raging COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the divergences between the two countries in terms of global governance strategy, which, in the context of intensifying competition among major countries, have exerted a profound impact on global governance cooperation and the reform of the global governance system.

Analysis of the US–ROK Alliance’s Cooperation Related to China

Sun Ru and Wang Fudong 85

Since the Biden administration took office, the US–ROK alliance has significantly increased China-related factors. The enhancement of China-related cooperation by the US–ROK alliance is a result of the promotion of the United States, the adjustment of the foreign policy of South Korea, and the internal development of the US–ROK alliance. In the future, the United States and South Korea will maintain the momentum of this China-related cooperation, which will place immense pressure on China. However, the US–ROK alliance is facing constraints in this regard, because South Korea remains hesitant to follow the United States to contain China. Conversely, China continues to hold a large policy space to meet the challenges of the US–ROK alliance.

Asia-Pacific Economy

Analysis of Economic Cooperation between China, USA, Japan, and ASEAN

Cheng Xiaoyong and Huang Yangzi 110

Since China’s Belt and Road Initiative was introduced, the rapid development of China–ASEAN economic cooperation has aroused suspicion from the United States and Japan. The cooperation between China and ASEAN has rapidly grown in trade volume, tourism, infrastructure construction, and other fields, but its advantages in some fields are not yet apparent, and there is no evidence of crowding out the United States and Japan overall. The economic cooperation between China, the United States, Japan, and ASEAN is experiencing a dynamic adjustment process in long-term competition that is unlikely to lead to exclusive monopoly circumstances.

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