

Issue 4

# Bulletin for People- to-People Exchanges

China and the U.S.

Connecting People,  
Understanding the World







Today, China-U.S. relations have become the most important bilateral relations in the world. The strategic competition and cooperation between China and the U.S. have a direct impact on the world order. Since the establishment of people-to-people exchange mechanisms between China and the U.S. in 2010, the two countries have engaged in extensive exchange and cooperation in multiple fields, such as trade, culture, health, and education. With substantial achievements, such exchange and cooperation facilitated the stability and development of China-U.S. relations. However, people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S. encountered setbacks after Donald Trump rose to power. The U.S. suspended China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges on the grounds of so-called national security concerns, such as China threat theory, tightening intellectual property examination, and sharp power, resulting in a trough in China-U.S. cooperation. In the future, China and the U.S. should strengthen crisis and risk control capacity in the field of people-to-people exchange, enhance the construction of people-to-people exchange mechanisms and institutional innovation, and improve mutual trust between Chinese and U.S. peoples, so as to offer substantial support to the stability and development of China-U.S. relations.

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**Cover:** Two China-U.S. mixed doubles table tennis pairs engaging in joint training in Houston, the U.S. for the World Table Tennis Championships

**Source:** China News Service Photo/Liu Guanguan

# 01 The History of the People-to-People Exchange Mechanisms between China and the U.S.

The China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange is a top-level consultation mechanism in the field of people-to-people exchange established with joint concern and support from both heads of state. It went through two stages since its establishment, namely, the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange (2010-2016) and the U.S.-China Social and Cultural Dialogue (2017-present).

In April 2009, then-State Councilor Liu Yandong reached a consensus with then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on opening a new field for China-U.S. relations and deepening people-to-people exchange between the two countries during a visit to the U.S. During then U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to China in November the same year, the two heads of state reached a high degree of consensus regarding establishing a new bilateral mechanism to facilitate people-to-people exchange between the two countries, which was written in the *China-U.S. Joint Statement*.

In April 2010, then-President Hu Jintao proposed five opinions on developing China-U.S. relations during a meeting with then-U.S. President Barack Obama at the Washington Nuclear Security Summit. The third opinion was "maintaining contact at various levels and establishing a China-U.S. people-to-people exchange mechanism as soon as possible."

On May 25, 2010, the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange was officially established in Beijing. Then-State Councilor Liu Yandong and then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Chairpersons from both sides, signed relevant memoranda of understanding on behalf of the two governments and chaired the first round of consultation. The two sides engaged in extensive communication and exchange on the following topics: 1. discussing the significance of deepening China-U.S. people-to-people exchange; 2. defining the orientation of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange; 3. planning the long-term development of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange. China and the U.S. jointly signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange*.

On April 12, 2011, the second round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was held in Washington, which was chaired by then-State Councilor Liu Yandong and then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Chairpersons from both sides together. Over 40 cooperative achievements in six fields, namely, education, technology, culture, women, youths, and sports, were achieved during this meeting.

On May 4, 2012, the third round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was held in Beijing, which was chaired by then-State Councilor Liu Yandong and then-U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Chairpersons from both sides together. Both sides reiterated the significance of people-to-people exchange in the China-U.S. cooperative partnership and agreed to promote China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange as a mechanism with sustainable development.

On November 22, 2013, the fourth round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was held in Washington. Chinese President Xi Jinping and then-U.S. President Barack Obama sent congratulatory letters to fully recognize the significance and achievements of people-to-people exchange between the two countries. In his letter, President Xi pointed out the positive role of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange in promoting the development of China-U.S. relations, which has become an important pillar in this regard. In particular, the implementation of close to 100 achievements under the framework of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange in the past three years effectively intensified China-U.S. people-to-people exchange and injected new vitality into the development of China-U.S. relations. Then-Vice Premier of the State Council Liu Yandong and then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, the Chairpersons from both sides, renewed the memorandum of understanding for the Mechanism during this consultation.

On July 11, 2014, the fifth round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was successfully held in Beijing, the first time that it was convened in conjunction with the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue. Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a key remark while attending the joint opening ceremony, clearly stating that “the foundation of China-US friendship has its roots in the people, and its future rests with the youth.” Premier Li Keqiang of the State Council raised his earnest expectations of strengthening mutual trust and promoting cooperation for China-U.S. people-to-people exchange when he met with major representatives of both sides of the two mechanisms. The two sides reached a consensus on 104 matters during this round of consultation.

On June 25, 2015, the sixth round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was held in Washington, marking the first time that the consultation and the U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue were held concurrently in the U.S. Then U.S. President Barack Obama met with three special representatives – then-Vice Premier of the State Council Liu Yandong, then-Vice Premier Wang Yang, and then-State Councilor Yang Jiechi – and other major members of the Chinese delegation attending the dialogue and consultation at the White House. Liu forwarded President Xi Jinping’s oral message to then-President Barack Obama. The two heads of state fully recognized the significance and achievements of people-to-people exchange between China and the U.S., and expressed their earnest expectations for further deepening China-U.S. people-to-people exchange in the future. The two sides signed 14 cooperative agreements and attained 119 concrete achievements during this round of consultation.

The seventh round of China-U.S. high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange was held concurrently with the eighth round of U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Beijing from June 6 to June 7, 2016. This round features the main thread of “implementing the consensus between the two heads of state and advancing the construction of new major country relations between China and the U.S.” and the theme of “fostering closer bonds between Chinese and American people to shape a better future together.” The basic, guiding role of people-to-people

exchange in China-U.S. relations was given full play. The two sides reached 158 achievements during this round of consultation.

From 2010 to 2016, the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange pooled the power of various parties to ardently promote the attainment of a series of major achievements in the seven fields of education, technology, culture, health, sports, women, and youths between China and the U.S. Its growth out of nothing and development from small to big presented a favorable trend. The implementation of a series of key cooperative projects played a significant role in enhancing the mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples. On this foundation, the construction and development of the China-U.S. people-to-people exchange mechanism entered a new stage and new period with the promotion by Chinese and U.S. heads of state, resulting in comprehensive enhancement and deepening of exchanges between the two countries in social and people-to-people fields.

On April 6, 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping and then-U.S. President Donald Trump decided to establish the U.S.-China Social and Cultural Dialogue during their meeting at Mar-a-Lago. Then-Vice Premier of the State Council Liu Yandong and then-U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson co-chaired the first round of the Dialogue on September 28, 2017. This round included seven major fields of cooperation, namely, education, social development (covering sports, women, youths, and civil society organizations), science and technology, health, subnational, arts and culture, and environment and conservation. It aimed to facilitate the two sides in further promoting social and people-to-people exchange under the framework of comprehensive dialogue mechanisms between the two countries. During this round of dialogue themed “the next 50 years of China-U.S. relations – mutual understanding, co-existence and sharing,” the two sides discussed how to widen channels for facilitating exchanges between Chinese and American peoples, further enhance people-to-people exchange, expand friendly contact between the two peoples, and consolidate the public opinion foundation of bilateral relations, so as to provide more positive power for the long-term healthy development of China-U.S. relations. The first round of U.S.-China Social and Cultural Dialogue released a *Joint Statement* and passed the *Action Plan for the First U.S.-China Social and Cultural Dialogue* to implement over 130 concrete achievements. The achievements included the 100,000 Strong Educational Exchange Initiatives sponsoring 100,000 Chinese students to study in the U.S. and 100,000 U.S. students to study in China in the next four years, the promotion of exchange and cooperation between Chinese provincial and U.S. state administrative departments to implement the “China-U.S. Urban Governance Project” and “U.S.-China Sister Cities Cooperation,” the co-hosting of meetings of the Sino-U.S. Joint Committee on Environmental Cooperation, and the hosting of the “Dialogue of China-U.S. Environmental Think Tanks,” among other events.

In December 2017, the White House released a National Security Strategy which defined China as a strategic competitor. The U.S. abandoned the engagement strategy to adopt hardline China policies, restricting personnel exchange between the two countries on the grounds of national security. The social and people-to-people dialogue between China and the U.S. has basically stalled since then. After the Biden government came to power, the exchanges with China in such fields as education and health have improved, but people-to-people exchange at the official level has not resumed. China-U.S. people-to-people exchange is still at a low ebb.

# 02 Major Relevant Institutions of China-U.S. People-to-People Exchange

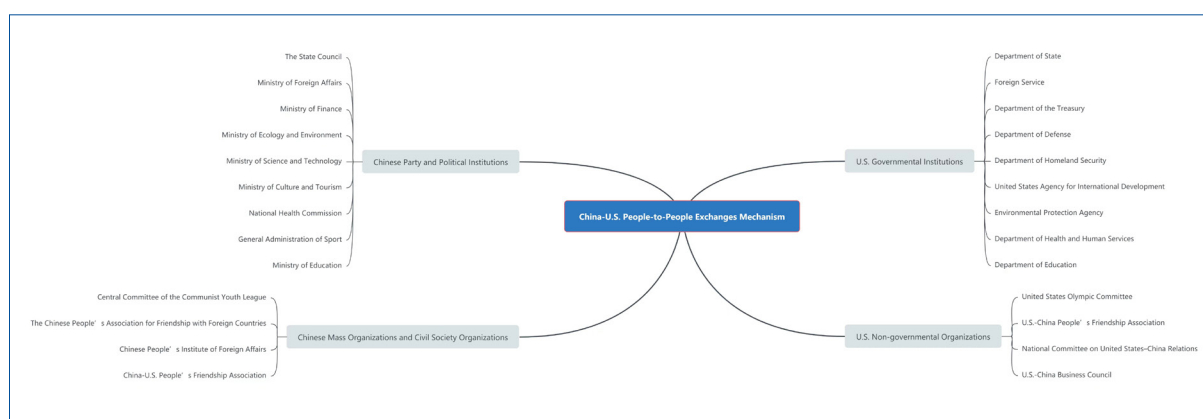


Figure 1 Relevant institutions of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange

Relevant Chinese institutions involved in China-U.S. social and people-to-people dialogue include the State Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Ecology and Environment, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, National Health Commission, General Administration of Sport, and Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, as well as the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, and China-U.S. People's Friendship Association, among others. The secretariat of the Chinese side of the Mechanism is set up in the Ministry of Education.

Relevant U.S. institutions involved in China-U.S. social and people-to-people dialogue include the Congress of the United States, Department of State, Foreign Service, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Education, United States Agency for International Development, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, United States Olympic Committee, U.S.-China People's Friendship Association, National Committee on United States-China Relations, and U.S.-China Business Council, among others.

## 03 Top-level Design of China-U.S. People-to-People Exchange

On November 11, 2010, then-Chinese President Hu Jintao met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama in Seoul. The two heads of state extensively exchanged opinions on China-U.S. relations and key international and regional issues of common concern. They both recognized the significance of China-U.S. relations on both countries and the world, and agreed to promote greater development of China-U.S. relations together.

During then-Chinese President Hu Jintao's state visit to the U.S. from January 18 to January 21, 2011, he engaged in a meeting with then-U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington to discuss China-U.S. relations and key international and regional issues of common concern. The two countries issued a joint statement indicating that "China and the U.S. shall dedicate a concerted effort to build a cooperative partnership featuring mutual respect and win-win results." Both parties fully recognized the significant contributions of local exchange and cooperation between the two countries on facilitating the development of China-U.S. relations, and reached a consensus on further adopting positive measures to promote people-to-people exchange. They also announced the establishment of the China-U.S. Governors Forum to support various levels of local governments of the two countries in conducting exchange and cooperation in a series of fields.

On November 12, 2011, then-Chinese President Hu Jintao met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama in Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii, U.S. The two heads of state candidly and extensively exchanged views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of common concern. They reached a broad consensus indicating that they will work together to constantly advance the China-U.S. cooperative partnership by actively engaging in contacts between the two peoples, continue to encourage provinces, states, and cities in the two countries to intensify friendly exchange, expand economic and technological cooperation, and enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples.

On June 19, 2012, then-Chinese President Hu Jintao met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama in Los Cabos. The two heads of state extensively exchanged opinions on China-U.S. relations and key issues of common concern. Hu stated that China and the U.S. should actively advance local exchange and cooperation, and consolidate and expand contact in such fields as politics, economics, security, people, education, and youths.



From June 7 to June 8, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama in Annenberg Estate, California. Both sides agreed to work together in establishing new major country relations featuring mutual respect and win-win cooperation, strengthening cooperation in a wide range of fields such as trade, energy, environment, human, and subnational, and deepen the situation of all-round integration of interests, so as to bring benefits to the Chinese and U.S. peoples as well as all peoples in the world.

From November 10 to November 12, 2014, then-U.S. President Barack Obama attended the APEC Informal Senior Officials' Meeting in China and paid a state visit to China. During the visit, Chinese President Xi Jinping engaged in an extensive, candid, and constructive meeting with then-President Obama. The two heads of state recognized the role of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange and gave high praise to the agreement between the two sides to issue 10-year multiple entry visas for business and tourism purposes and 5-year multiple entry visas for overseas students from each other. They believed that the agreement will offer great convenience to personnel exchange and facilitate exchange and cooperation in various fields between the two countries, with a far-reaching positive impact on the development of bilateral relations.

From September 22 to September 28, 2015, President Xi Jinping went for a state visit to the U.S. During his visit, President Xi visited Lincoln High School Tacoma and emphasized his hopes for the youths in the two countries to intensify exchanges, foster friendship, and continue to add to the edifice of China-U.S. relations. In the same period, President Xi, when attending the third China-U.S. Governors Forum held in Seattle, pointed out that he attached great importance to China-U.S. people-to-people exchange. Relatives become closer with more contact while friends become more intimate with more exchange. The more frequent the non-governmental exchanges between China and the U.S., the firmer the foundation for bilateral friendship and the more prosperous the practical cooperation between the two countries. Various provinces and states should engage in exchange and cooperation in a broad range of fields such as education, tourism, sports, and youths, and support more contact among peoples in all walks of life.

On March 31, 2016, President Xi Jinping met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama at the fourth Nuclear Security Summit upon his arrival in the U.S. by special plane. The two reached a consensus on key issues such as climate change and the global economy, and committed to properly arrange high-level visits and dialogue mechanisms between the two countries and deepen cooperation in a wide range of fields such as trade, human, and cybersecurity.

On September 3, 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with then-U.S. President Barack Obama who arrived in China to attend the G20 Hangzhou Summit. Both sides fully recognized the significant role of intensifying people-to-people exchange between the two countries in increasing mutual understanding and friendship, and agreed to continue promoting and implementing relevant exchange and cooperation projects.

From April 6 to April 7, 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with then-U.S. President Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago, Florida. Xi stressed that people-to-people exchange is the foundation of relations between the two countries. The two peoples have been holding friendly sentiments towards each other. The two sides should step up people-to-people exchange, intensify friendly contact between the two peoples, promote intercollegiate cooperation, facilitate cooperation in tourism,

expand art exchanges, strengthen sports cooperation, engage in medical and health collaboration, and consolidate the public opinion foundation of bilateral relations, so as to provide more positive power for the long-term healthy development of China-U.S. relations. In particular, the social and cultural dialogue mechanism not only deepened or advanced concrete agendas in multiple fields such as education and overseas study, technological cooperation, environmental exchange, cultural exchange and heritage conservation, a community of common health for mankind, and social development between China and the U.S., but also marked that the two countries had scaled new heights in promoting people-to-people exchange based on the principles of mutual respect, equal exchange, and win-win outcome.

From November 8 to November 10, 2017, then-U.S. President Donald Trump paid a state visit to China. The two sides agreed to continue tapping into the strategic guiding role of head-of-state diplomacy in bilateral relations by intensifying contact at the high level and various other levels and giving full play to the role of the four high-level dialogue mechanisms. They also pledged to expand cooperation in a broad range of fields such as trade, military, law enforcement, and people on the basis of mutual benefit, keep disputes under control on the basis of mutual respect, strengthen mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples, and enhance communication and coordination regarding major international and regional issues, so as to strive for greater development of China-U.S. relations.

On December 1, 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping had a dinner with then-U.S. President Donald Trump in Buenos Aires, Argentina upon invitation. During their meeting, they exchanged views on issues of common concern and made plans for China-U.S. relations in the next stage. Cooperation is the best choice for China and the U.S., two major countries with substantial influence sharing key responsibilities in promoting peace and prosperity in the world. The two sides agreed to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in various fields and enhance educational and people-to-people exchanges. Then-President Trump welcomed Chinese students to study in the U.S. Both sides agreed to take active measures to step up cooperation in such fields as law enforcement and drug prohibition, including the control over fentanyl substances.

On March 20, 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Harvard University President Lawrence Bacow at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing. President Xi stressed China's proposal for mutual learning, encouragement for overseas students, and support for educational exchange and cooperation between China and other countries, with the hope of attaining more positive achievements in China-U.S. people-to-people exchange.

From June 28 to June 29, 2019, heads of state of G20 members gathered in Osaka, Japan to convene the 14<sup>th</sup> G20 Leaders' Summit. During the meeting of Chinese and U.S. heads of state held on June 29, Chinese President Xi Jinping and then-U.S. President Donald Trump agreed to extensively exchange opinions on fundamental issues concerning the development of China-U.S. relations, the current China-U.S. trade frictions, and international and regional issues of common concern on equal grounds. Xi stressed that China wishes the U.S. to treat Chinese enterprises and overseas student with equality and maintain normal exchanges between the two peoples. Trump stated that there are many outstanding students in China and that the U.S. has always welcomed Chinese students to study in the U.S.

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, we have encountered obstacles at the top-level design of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. In June 2020, the U.S. temporarily suspended the entry of some Chinese students and researchers on F and J visas “associated with the Chinese military” into the country. The U.S. accused China of using these students to obtain “sensitive American technology and intellectual property”<sup>1</sup> to enhance its military modernization efforts. Entering 2021, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi continued to call for the resumption of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges and hoped that the U.S. would lift sanctions on China in the field of people-to-people exchanges.

On December 4, 2020, the U.S. State Department issued a statement terminating five China-U.S. cultural exchange programs funded by the Chinese government.<sup>2</sup> These five programs were initiated and implemented by Chinese non-governmental organizations and civil groups with the support and funding of the Chinese government. However, the U.S. interpreted them for political purposes as “fully funded by the Chinese government and used as tools for soft power propaganda.”

In June 2021, the U.S. Senate passed the United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021 (USICA), viewing China as a formidable competitor that needed to be guarded against. The legislation strictly restricted U.S. scientists from establishing research connections with China, cutting off exchanges between scientific and technological talents from both countries.<sup>3</sup>

On November 16, 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a three-and-a-half-hour video conference with U.S. President Joe Biden. Xi Jinping pointed out that we should promote the development of both China and the U.S. and that maintaining a peaceful and stable international environment, and effectively responding to global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic require healthy and stable China-U.S. relations. China and the U.S. should respect each other, coexist peacefully, and achieve win-win cooperation. He also emphasized that there are extensive common interests between China and the U.S. in many fields such as education, technology, and local affairs. The two countries should learn from each other, complement each other's strengths, and “make a bigger cake” (realize more benefits) through China-U.S. cooperation.

On March 18, 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a video call with U.S. President Joe Biden. Xi Jinping pointed out that as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the world's two largest economies, China and the U.S. should strengthen communication and dialogue at various levels, and China-U.S. relations should move forward on the right track.

2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué between China and

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<sup>1</sup> “Proclamation on the Suspension of Entry as Nonimmigrants of Certain Students and Researchers from the People's Republic of China,” The White House, May 29, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-nonimmigrant>, 2022-09-29.

<sup>2</sup> 这五个项目分别为“政策制定者教育中国行项目”（Policymakers Educational China Trip）“美中友好项目”（U.S.-China Friendship Program）“美中领导者交流项目”（U.S.-China Leadership Exchange Program）“美中跨太平洋交流项目”（U.S.-China Transpacific Exchange Program）“香港教育文化项目”（Hong Kong Educational and Cultural Program）。

<sup>3</sup> “S.1260-Endless Frontier Act,” 117th Congress (2021-2022), 2022年6月8日, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1260>, 2022-10-09.

the U.S. On February 28, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the commemorative conference for the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué and looked forward to the future of China-U.S. relations. He mentioned the significant importance of people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries, stating that “we should promote contact, communication, and cooperation in various fields and levels, strengthen exchanges between local provinces and states, cities, as well as between private entities, think tanks, media, and enterprises of the two countries, invigorate the enthusiasm of exchanges between the peoples of both countries and enhance the friendly ties between China and the U.S.”<sup>1</sup>

In May 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping replied to a letter from Ms. Sarah Randy, a friend from Iowa, encouraging Ms. Randy and other old friends from Iowa to continue sowing the seeds of friendship and making new contributions to the friendly relationships between the people of China and the U.S.

On November 14, 2022, Chinese President Xi Jinping met with U.S. President Joe Biden during the G20 Leaders’ Summit held in Bali. Xi Jinping emphasized that “we oppose the politicization and weaponization of economic, trade, and technological exchanges.” Both leaders agreed that “the diplomatic teams of both sides should maintain strategic communication and conduct regular consultations.” They also recognized the importance of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges and encouraged expanding interactions between people from various fields in both countries.<sup>2</sup>

On November 15, 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping held a China-U.S. summit meeting with the U.S. President Joe Biden at the Filoli Estate in San Francisco, U.S.A. The two Heads of State had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on strategic and overarching issues critical to the direction of China-U.S. relations and on major issues affecting world peace and development. President Xi Jinping said that at this meeting in San Francisco, China and the United States should assume a new vision and build five pillars together for bilateral relations, which include jointly promoting people-to-people exchanges. President Xi said that the two sides should increase flights, advance tourism cooperation, expand subnational exchanges, strengthen educational cooperation, and encourage and support greater interactions and communication between the two peoples. The two presidents agreed to promote and strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the two countries in various areas including China-US government talks on artificial intelligence (AI) and the establishment of a working group on counternarcotics cooperation. They agreed to resume on the basis of equality and respect high-level military-to-military communication, the China-US Defense Policy Coordination Talks and the China-US Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meetings, and to conduct telephone conversations between theater commanders. They also agreed to commit to work toward a significant further increase in scheduled passenger flights early next year; and expand educational, student,

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<sup>1</sup> 外交部：《王毅向“上海公报”发表50周年纪念大会发表讲话》，2022年2月28日，[https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjzbzhd/202202/t20220228\\_10646168.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjzbzhd/202202/t20220228_10646168.shtml)，2022-09-29。

<sup>2</sup> 人民日报：《习近平同美国总统拜登在巴厘岛举行会晤》，2022年11月14日，<https://wap.peopleapp.com/article/6921647/6783201>，2022-11-14。

youth, cultural, sports and business exchanges<sup>1</sup>.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Joe Biden exchanged congratulatory messages on January 1, 2024 to mark the 45th anniversary of the two countries' diplomatic relations. In his message, Xi said that the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States is a major event in the history of bilateral and international relations. Over the past 45 years, the China-U.S. relationship has gone through ups and downs and moved forward on the whole, which has not only enhanced the well-being of the two peoples, but also promoted world peace, stability and prosperity. History has already proven and will continue to fully prove that mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation are the right way for China and the United States to get along with each other as two major countries, and that should be the direction of joint efforts made by China and the United States in the new era. In his message, Biden said that since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1979, the ties between the United States and China have facilitated the prosperity and opportunities of the United States, China and the world<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《习近平同美国总统拜登举行中美元首会晤》，2023年11月16日，[http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-11/16/c\\_1129977979.htm](http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-11/16/c_1129977979.htm)，2023-11-16。

<sup>2</sup> 新华网：《中美两国领导人互致贺信庆祝两国建交45周年》，2024年1月1日，<http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/20240101/ba330eb16f7d4102af8c48e2a1585bca/c.html>，2024-01-01

## 04 Achievements of High-Level Consultations on China-U.S. People-to-People Exchanges from 2010 to 2017

Since the establishment of the China-U.S. High-Level Consultation Mechanism on People-to-People Exchange in May 2010, seven rounds of consultations have been held consecutively from 2010 to 2016. This mechanism has promoted a series of significant achievements in the field of cultural exchanges between China and the U.S. As a result, China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges have displayed an unprecedentedly positive momentum, moving towards a more systematic, institutionalized, and strategic direction.

The outstanding achievements of the seven rounds of high-level consultations on China-U.S. cultural exchanges are as follows. The number of ongoing China-U.S. people-to-people exchange projects has steadily increased. In the second round in 2011, there were only four ongoing projects. This number rose to 13 in 2012, and 11 in 2013, surged to 34 in 2014, reached 49 in 2015, and peaked at 59 in 2016. Besides, the institutionalization level of China-U.S. cultural exchanges has continuously improved. Five achievements were institutionalized during the first round of high-level consultations on China-U.S. cultural exchanges in 2010. This number gradually increased, especially after 2014, with 12 in 2011, 16 each in 2012 and 2013, 53 in 2014, 66 in 2015, and as many as 84 in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventh round of high-level consultations on China-U.S. cultural exchanges in 2016 alone, China and the U.S. signed 12 cooperation agreements and achieved 158 cooperation outcomes, covering seven areas: education, science and technology, culture, health, sports, women, and youth. In addition, the two countries held 17 diverse supporting events, such as the China-U.S. University Think Tank Forum and the China-U.S. University Astronomy Summit Forum, showcasing the great vitality of bilateral cultural exchanges and their increasingly extensive social impact.<sup>2</sup> In the same year, under the initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping and then-U.S. President Barack Obama, the 2016 China-U.S. Tourism Year was successfully celebrated. China and the U.S. carried out various tourism promotion and people-to-people exchange activities, which not only injected strong

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<sup>1</sup> 潘亚玲：《中美人文交流四十年：回顾与展望》，《美国问题研究》2018年第2期，第29-50页。

<sup>2</sup> 外交部：《第八轮中美战略与经济对话和第七轮中美人文交流高层磋商成果吹风》，2016年6月12日，<https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cgct/chn/zgyw/t1370614.html>，2022-08-04。

momentum into the tourism cooperation and economic development of both countries but also significantly enhanced the understanding of each other's culture among their people.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2017, during their meeting at Mar-a-Lago in Florida, Chinese President Xi Jinping and then-U.S. President Donald Trump jointly decided to establish the China-U.S. Social and Cultural Dialogue. The first round of the dialogue took place in September of the same year. The China-U.S. Social and Cultural Dialogue covered seven major areas of cooperation: education, science and technology, environmental protection, culture, health, social development, and local cultural cooperation. Over 130 specific outcomes were achieved through this dialogue.<sup>2</sup>

From 2010 to 2017, the fruitful achievements in China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges played an important role in deepening mutual learning, enhancing understanding and trust, and promoting friendship between the two countries. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center in 2017, the percentage of Americans with favorable views of China increased from 37% in 2013 to 44% in 2017. Compared to the previous generation, younger Americans had more favorable opinions of China. According to a survey report released in March 2018 by the Gallup consulting company, the favorability rating of China among Americans reached 53%, surpassing 50% for the first time in nearly 30 years and setting a new historical record.<sup>3</sup>

In the field of education, China and the U.S. have carried out high-level, in-depth, and practical cooperation, with several key projects receiving positive responses from both societies. The two countries actively built mechanisms for exchanges such as the China-U.S. University Think Tank Forum and the China-U.S. State Provincial Education Leaders Dialogue. They also organized special events for young students, including the China-U.S. Young Maker Competition (CUYMC) and the China-U.S. Thousand Schools Partnership. Furthermore, they gradually implemented study exchange programs such as the Fulbright Program, 100 Thousand Students to Study in China, 10 Thousand Chinese Students to Study for Doctoral Degrees in the U.S., and the Chinese Bridge Program that supported 10,000 people to visit China for research. In the friendly atmosphere of promoting people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S., the number of Confucius Institutes in the U.S. increased from 72 in 2010 to 110 in 2016.<sup>4</sup> During this period, the Chinese Bridge Program was organized annually in China, and the National Chinese Conference was held annually in the U.S. The events attracted thousands of American education officials, school principals, education experts, and Chinese teachers each year, effectively spreading Chinese culture in American society. Under the influence of Confucius Institutes, by 2016, the total number of people learning and using Chinese in the U.S. reached 2.8 million, with Chinese becoming the second most popular foreign language after Spanish. However, due to the Trump administration's restrictive policies on people-to-people exchanges, the number of

<sup>1</sup> 新华网：《汪洋出席 2016 “中美旅游年” 闭幕式并致辞》，2016 年 11 月 21 日，[http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-11/21/c\\_1119957887.htm?isappinstalled=0](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-11/21/c_1119957887.htm?isappinstalled=0), 2022-08-04。

<sup>2</sup> 中国新闻网：《首轮中美社会和人文对话发表联合声明》，2017 年 09 月 29 日，<http://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2017/09-29/8344192.shtml>, 2022-08-04。

<sup>3</sup> 中国新闻网：《首轮中美社会和人文对话发表联合声明》，2017 年 09 月 29 日，<http://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2017/09-29/8344192.shtml>, 2022-08-04。

<sup>4</sup> 环球网：《“美国人反对孔子学院”？这些“老美”表示自己未曾听说过》，2017 年 11 月 10 日，<https://world.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrK5IfG>, 2022-10-10。



Confucius Institutes in the U.S. stopped growing in 2017 and subsequently decreased annually.

In the field of science and technology, China and the U.S. have closely collaborated in basic research and personnel exchanges across various disciplines. They conducted scientific research cooperation through platforms such as the China-U.S. Clean Energy Research Center and strengthened researcher exchanges through programs such as the China-U.S. Science and Technology Personnel Exchange Program, Young Chinese Scientists Visiting the U.S. Program, and China-U.S. Young Scientist Forum. Multiple joint working groups were established under the China-U.S. Science and Technology Commission, which held regular meetings and exchanges. With the support of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the U.S. State Department, and the National Science Foundation, the China-U.S. Science and Technology Personnel Exchange Program and the Young Chinese Scientists Visiting the U.S. Program served as important mechanisms for people-to-people exchanges in the field of science and technology. Hundreds of young researchers from top U.S. universities conducted joint research in China under the guidance of Chinese mentors, while dozens of outstanding young Chinese science and technology professionals went to the U.S. to learn about technology management systems and the operation of research institutions, gaining practical experience. Meanwhile, China and the U.S. jointly established an international technology transfer center and an innovation and entrepreneurship cooperation platform, effectively promoting China-U.S. industry-university-research collaboration and facilitating the application of scientific and technological achievements between the two countries.<sup>1</sup>

In the field of culture, cooperation between government cultural institutions in China and the U.S. has grown closer, and various cultural exchange activities have been frequently carried out at the grassroots level. China's Ministry of Culture has signed multiple cooperation agreements with U.S. federal cultural institutions such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services and has collaborated with cultural organizations like the Smithsonian Institution and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The two sides jointly launched cultural exchange projects such as the China-U.S. Cultural Forum, China-U.S. Librarian Professional Exchange Program, China-themed activities of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and China — The Art of a Nation, which attracted over a million participants. At the same time, local governments and cultural associations in China and the U.S. played an essential role in promoting cultural exchanges. Events like Chinese Arts in New York, the Chinese New Year Celebration in Chicago, San Francisco Grand Parade, and North American Chinese Spring Festival Gala in Los Angeles helped improve American people's understanding of traditional Chinese culture. In 2013, the Take Me to China and Terracotta Warriors: Painted Armies of the First Emperor exhibitions at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis showcased Chinese artifacts and local customs. In 2014, the Visual and Sound: Chinese Series art event, co-organized by China's Ministry of Culture and New York University's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, displayed Chinese cultural treasures like pottery and drama to local visitors.<sup>2</sup>

In the field of sports, China and the U.S. have engaged in constructive sports exchanges and cooperation, with increasingly diverse themes and participants, and more exchange mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> 人民日报：《7 专家谈中美人文交流：为中美注入更多正能量》，[http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-06/04/nw.D110000renmrb\\_20160604\\_1-11.htm](http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2016-06/04/nw.D110000renmrb_20160604_1-11.htm), 2022-10-09。

<sup>2</sup> 沈胡婷等：《文明》2016 年第 6 期，第 137-142 页。



During this period, sports events between the two countries have been frequent and diverse, with basketball and volleyball matches attracting attention. Notably, Beijing Oriental Sports Management Co., Ltd. and the U.S.-China Cultural Exchange Association have cooperated in organizing the China-U.S. Super Women's Volleyball Match for four consecutive years since 2011, making valuable explorations in the normalization of sports events between the two countries. In addition, China and the U.S. have enjoyed a rich variety of exchanges in mass sports, involving activities such as martial arts, golf, Sanda (Chinese kickboxing), international chess, and bridge.<sup>1</sup> Among these, Chinese martial arts have been widely appreciated by people from both countries. The Chinese martial arts delegation visited the U.S. for performance tours in 2011 and 2014 and participated in the China-U.S. Young Martial Arts Athlete Training Camp organized by the United States of America Wushu Kungfu Federation (USAWKF) in 2015, attracting numerous American spectators and participants.<sup>2</sup>

In the field of health, China and the U.S. have carried out various forms of cooperation in areas such as health policy, infectious disease control, and chronic disease prevention. Through personnel exchange programs like the China-U.S. 100 Hospital Presidents Mutual Visit Program and the China-U.S. Thousand Backbone Healthcare Providers Exchange Program, the medical communities of the two countries have enhanced mutual understanding and experience sharing. Additionally, through seminars and activities like the China-U.S. Health Summit, China-U.S. City Forum of Health, China-U.S. Hospital Management Seminar, and the Annual Meeting of the Directors of CDCs of China and the U.S., both countries have strengthened the exchange of health policy information. Furthermore, with the cooperation of the charity communities in both countries, several medical treatment projects have been carried out continuously. For example, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has joined forces with various Chinese sectors to address global health challenges. Since 2015, it has cooperated with the Chinese Ministry of Commerce to provide medical and agricultural development support to African countries. In 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation established the Global Health Drug Discovery Institute (GHDDI) with Tsinghua University and the Beijing Municipal Government to assist the health sector development of developing countries.<sup>3</sup> The Smile Train America, in collaboration with the China Charity Federation, initiated the Smile Train Cleft Lip and Palate Repair Charity Project in China in 1999. Since 2015, the project has been jointly funded by China's national medical insurance/rural cooperative medical scheme and the Smile Train. The project provides technical training for medical staff in relevant areas and offers free surgery to impoverished cleft lip and palate patients in China.<sup>4</sup>

In the field of women's affairs, the All-China Women's Federation and the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues within the U.S. Department of State serve as the leading agencies. They have organized several rounds of China-U.S. Women's Leadership Exchange and Dialogue on topics closely related to women, such as employment, charity, science and technology education, private sector

<sup>1</sup> 王晓云、杨占东：《中美体育交流的成果、特点与趋势探析》，载《体育文化导刊》2018年第2期，第34-37、52页。

<sup>2</sup> 沈胡婷等：《文明》2016年第6期，第222-224页。

<sup>3</sup> 全球健康药物研发中心：《关于我们：全球健康药物研发中心》，<http://www.ghddi.org/zh/about>，2022-10-09。

<sup>4</sup> 沈胡婷等：《文明》2016年第6期，第200-201页。

cooperation, health, domestic violence, and economic empowerment. These events have established an important communication platform for exchanges and cooperation between China and the United States in the field of women's affairs. At the same time, China and the U.S. have actively cooperated in areas such as women and sustainable development, raising awareness of breast cancer, and capacity-building for female leaders. A series of education and training programs for women have been implemented. Among them, the China-U.S. Breast Cancer Prevention Education and Training Pilot Project was jointly carried out by the All-China Women's Federation and Goldman Sachs from 2012 to 2016. Health promotion activities were conducted in three pilot areas, namely Tianjin, Hunan, and Sichuan. The project introduced professional knowledge and community promotion experience on breast cancer from the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and Harvard University. By exploring medical knowledge popularization methods suitable for China's national conditions through bilateral cooperation, the project has played a positive role in raising awareness of breast cancer prevention and treatment for nearly two million women in the pilot areas.<sup>1</sup>

In the field of youth affairs, the All-China Youth Federation and the American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) have cooperated to carry out China-U.S. Young Leaders Exchange visits. Both China and the U.S. send delegations of young leaders under 40 years old for reciprocal visits each year. During their visits, they interact extensively with people from various fields, such as politics, economy, and culture in both countries. Through activities such as the China-U.S. Young Thinkers Forum, China-U.S. College Student Leaders Exchange Program, China-U.S. College Student Internet Forum, and World Youth Lecture Hall, in-depth exchanges have been conducted, effectively enhancing mutual understanding and trust between young Chinese and American leaders. Among the many youth exchange activities, the China-U.S. College Student Internet Forum held in Wuzhen, Zhejiang Province in 2015, had a significant impact. More than 300 students from 12 American universities, including Harvard University, Yale University, and Stanford University, as well as more than ten Chinese universities such as Tsinghua University, Peking University, and Zhejiang University, gathered together. They discussed development opportunities in the Internet era, Internet shared governance, and other topics, sharing their dreams for the future of the Internet.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 沈胡婷等：《文明》2016年第6期，第175页。

<sup>2</sup> 沈胡婷等：《文明》2016年第6期，第184-185页。

# 05 The State of China-U.S People-to-People Exchanges Since 2017

Since the beginning of the 21st century, driven by the huge demand for China-U.S. economic and trade cooperation, people-to-people exchanges between China and the United States have made continuous progress and breakthroughs, effectively promoting the stable development of bilateral relations. However, as China's comprehensive national strength grows, the U.S. has become increasingly concerned that China's rise will pose a challenge to its international status, leading to a rapid decline in relations between the two countries. At the end of 2017, the Trump administration launched the National Security Strategy Report, positioning China as a "strategic competitor." The current U.S. President, Joe Biden, also mentioned in a speech on May 26, 2022, that he would adopt "investment, alliance, and competition"<sup>1</sup> as three means to deal with China, using "integrated deterrence" to effectively compete with China. On October 12, the Biden administration officially released its National Security Strategy report, defining China as "the only competitor with both the intention and the ability to reshape the international order" and considering China as the "most serious geopolitical challenge"<sup>2</sup> to the U.S.

Against this backdrop, the strategic competition between China and the United States has spilled over into the field of cultural exchanges. After Donald Trump came into office, his administration implemented restrictions on people-to-people exchanges with China, setting limits on personnel exchanges between the two countries under the pretext of national security. It also conducted strict reviews and restrictions on cultural exchange projects such as Confucius Institutes, bilateral scientific and technological cooperation, and Chinese media and branches established in the U.S. As a result, China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges have faced serious difficulties since 2017.<sup>3</sup> Although the Biden administration has rescinded the Suspension of Entry as Nonimmigrants of Certain Students

<sup>1</sup> "The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China", U.S. Department of the State, May 26, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>, 2022-08-10.

<sup>2</sup> "Fact Sheet: The Biden-Harris Administration's National Security Strategy", The White House, October 12, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/10/12/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-administrations-national-security-strategy/>, 2022-10-28.

<sup>3</sup> 毛维准、王钦林：《大变局下的中美人文交流安全化逻辑》，《国际展望》2021年第6期，第34-55页。

and Researchers from the People's Republic of China issued by the previous administration, it still maintains a cold attitude towards China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. The strategy of "exclusive yards with high walls" in high-tech areas has also affected overseas study, exchanges, and academic discussions in science and engineering disciplines.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is necessary to point out that although we have encountered setbacks in the cooperation of people-to-people exchanges between China and the U.S. in recent years, since 2017, people-to-people exchanges between the two countries in the fields of education, sports, culture, health, and social development have still maintained a certain resilience and vitality.

In the field of sports, the sports communities in China and the U.S. have been making efforts to create exchange opportunities. In August 2018, the 5th China-U.S. Sports Forum was held in Beijing, with the theme of "Exploring the Future of the Sports Industry." The forum brought together well-known figures from the sports industries of both countries to exchange and share experiences on issues related to sports, culture, education, talent, investment, and technology. They discussed various strategic cooperation approaches in areas such as business development, talent training, and event operations.<sup>2</sup> On November 29, 2021 (Beijing time), at the 2021 World Table Tennis Championships in Houston, the Chinese-American mixed doubles pair Lin Gaoyuan/Lily Zhang won a bronze medal in the semifinals. This was the first World Table Tennis Championship medal for the U.S. team since the 1959 World Table Tennis Championships in Dortmund. Another Chinese-American mixed doubles pair, Kanak Jha/Wang Manyu, had also made it to the top 16. The first Chinese-American cross-national mixed doubles competition continued the history of "the small ball moving the big ball."<sup>3</sup>

In the cultural field, the Chinese and American people have been engaging in friendly exchanges through various types of activities. In November 2021, with the support of the National Radio and Television Administration of China, the Chinese Consulate General in Los Angeles, and the Government of Los Angeles County, we had the China-U.S. Film and Television Cooperation Summit Forum jointly held by the China-U.S. Film Festival, the China-U.S. Television Festival, and several business associations in two venues, one in Los Angeles and the other in Beijing. Industry professionals from both countries engaged in face-to-face discussions through video connections. They exchanged ideas and discussed topics such as Challenges Faced by the Film and Television Industry in the Post-pandemic Era, New Opportunities Brought by Technological Innovation, and Prospects for China-U.S. Film and Television Cooperation, making new contributions to promoting the

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<sup>1</sup> 例如，2022年8月9日拜登政府正式签署的《芯片与科学法案》（The Chips and Science Act of 2022）就是美国联合日、韩等产业优势国加大人才培养力度，利用价值观与国家政策围堵中国的显著体现。可以预计的是，在此举下，中美在高科技上的零和性将愈发突显，美方对我国“卡脖子”的举措无疑将更加常见，中美在科技领域的人文交流也愈发遥遥无期。参见“FACT SHEET: CHIPS and Science Act Will Lower Costs, Create Jobs, Strengthen Supply Chains, and Counter China”，The White House, 2022.8.9, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/>, 2022-08-10。

<sup>2</sup> 人民网：《2018 第五届中美体育论坛即将举办 探索产业发展新引擎》，2018年7月25日，<http://sports.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0724/c202403-30166742.html>, 2022-08-10。

<sup>3</sup> 新京报：《首次“中美混合乒乓”，“小球推动大球”的故事仍在延续》，2021年11月30日，<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1717821138294498444&wfr=spider&for=pc>, 2022-11-17。

development of the audiovisual industries in both countries.<sup>1</sup> In addition, on the occasion of Chinese traditional festivals like the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival in recent years, hundreds of young Chinese and American artists from more than a dozen universities across the U.S. have joined hands to organize multiple virtual concerts. Through the bond of music and art, they have bridged the gap between language and culture, sending friendly signals and promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchanges between the people of China and the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

In the field of health, Chinese and American academia continue to engage in dialogues and exchanges on medical and health-related issues. The China-U.S. Track II Dialogue on Healthcare, jointly organized by the National School of Development at Peking University and the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, has been held annually since 2017. From July 20 to 22, 2022, the China-U.S. Track II Dialogue on Health was held online. Liu Guo'en (Gordon Liu), Boya Distinguished Professor at Peking University and Dean of the Peking University Institute for Global Health and Development, and Steve Orlins, Chairman of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, delivered speeches as the Chinese and American conveners, respectively. Nearly 30 top experts and industry representatives in the medical and health fields from both countries deeply explored the theme of Cooperation and Innovation Driving Current and Future Health Crisis Response Capabilities. In November 2019, the 9th China-U.S. Health Summit was held in Wuhan, Hubei. More than 1,000 representatives from industry, academia, research, government, and business sectors attended the summit. With the theme of Healthy China, Healthy Hubei, the summit focused on the improvement of people's health and global health development.<sup>3</sup> In December of the same year, the China-U.S. Global Health Bilateral Academic Seminar, jointly sponsored by the National Natural Science Foundation of China and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was held in Beijing. More than 160 experts and scholars from domestic and foreign government departments, international organizations, top universities, and research institutions participated, conducting in-depth exchanges in terms of global health, health economics, healthcare management, and drug innovation. They provided numerous innovative and practical suggestions for solving global health issues.<sup>4</sup> In addition, charitable activities in the medical field, such as the Smile Train China Cleft Lip and Palate Repair Charity Project, continue to be carried out, providing love and care, and selfless assistance to countless Chinese patients and their families. These activities have become successful examples of international cooperation in the field of medical charity.<sup>5</sup>

In the field of social development, China and the U.S. have engaged in friendly dialogues on topics such as youth and environmental protection. In 2011, the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

<sup>1</sup> 首都广播电视节目制作协会：《新挑战、新机遇、新起点——中美影视合作高峰论坛在北京和洛杉矶成功举办》，2021年11月5日，[https://www.cbbpa.org.cn/Detail/889\\_5301](https://www.cbbpa.org.cn/Detail/889_5301)，2022-08-06。

<sup>2</sup> 新华社：《中美人文交流：虽遇逆流 仍具韧性》，2021年5月23日，<http://home.xinhua-news.com/rss/newsdetail/0f1064d529a24e38f17a541bb5900b47/1621839193887>，2022-08-06。

<sup>3</sup> 湖北省人民政府：《近千名中美专家齐聚武汉 献计“健康中国”“健康湖北”》，2019年11月3日，[http://www.hubei.gov.cn/zwgk/rdgz/rdgzqb/201911/t20191103\\_1418894.shtml](http://www.hubei.gov.cn/zwgk/rdgz/rdgzqb/201911/t20191103_1418894.shtml)，2022-10-09。

<sup>4</sup> 北京大学中国卫生发展研究中心：《中美全球健康双边学术研讨会在京召开》，2019年12月16日，<https://www.cchds.pku.edu.cn/zxxw/109379.htm>，2022-10-09。

<sup>5</sup> 慈善公益网：《“微笑列车中国唇腭裂修复慈善项目”纪实》，2022年6月8日，<https://www.csgyb.com.cn/news/redian/20220608/33648.html>，2022-10-09。

initiated the China-U.S. Young Scholars Dialogue project. By June 2022, the dialogue had been held 19 times, inviting more than 200 young scholars from various universities and research institutions in China and the U.S. It has become an important platform for exchanges between young scholars from both countries and has proposed many constructive suggestions to promote the stable development of China-U.S. relations.<sup>1</sup> In August 2021, the Commerce Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality, the South Coast Air Quality Management District of California, and Invest Hong Kong jointly organized the China-U.S. High-Level Dialogue on Green Ports and Low-Carbon Cities. More than 20 enterprises and institutions from both countries participated in the event through both online and offline channels. Focusing on green, low-carbon, and energy-saving environmental protection themes, they explored paths and opportunities for China-U.S. environmental protection cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 中国国际问题研究院：《我院举办第十九届中美青年学者对话会》，2022年7月2日，[https://www.ciis.org.cn/xwdt/202207/t20220702\\_8614.html](https://www.ciis.org.cn/xwdt/202207/t20220702_8614.html)，2022-10-09。

<sup>2</sup> 深圳特区报：《深圳举办中美绿色港口和低碳城市高端对话会》，2021年8月14日，[http://sztqb.sznews.com/MB/content/202108/14/content\\_1079064.html](http://sztqb.sznews.com/MB/content/202108/14/content_1079064.html)，2022-10-09。

# 06 Outlook for China-U.S. People-to-People Exchanges

Today, the ever-changing global situation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have brought significant impacts on global development. In this context, China and the U.S., as two major powers in the world, should cooperate to overcome difficulties, support each other, and address the current global challenges together.

Looking back on history, we see that the development of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges has been arduous and of cross-generational significance. Jia Qingguo, a professor at the School of International Studies and director of the Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding at Peking University, believes that "China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges not only need to bridge the enormous gap between different civilizations and systems but also need to transcend the troubles brought about by asymmetrical relations. In most of the history of asymmetrical exchanges between the two countries, the Chinese have both admired and resented the U.S., while Americans have both respected and looked down on China."<sup>1</sup> In such difficult circumstances, history has witnessed the deep connections between John Leighton Stuart and Yenching University, the profound feelings of Xie Xide for the Center for America Studies of Fudan University, the precious friendship between the Fairbanks and Liang Sicheng couples like "neighbors across the world", and Pearl S. Buck's promotion of Chinese culture by translating the title of "Water Margin" (one of the four great classical novels in China) as "All Men Are Brothers". The ice between China and the U.S. gradually melted under the influence of people-to-people exchanges. Such exchanges, as the foundation of bilateral relations, have played an important role in the process of breaking the ice and establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries, and are an important pillar in promoting the development of China-U.S. relations. The practical significance of this should be valued by all sectors of society in both countries. Looking forward to the future, we should continue to regard China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges as a "lubricant for increasing trust and dispelling doubts," which plays an important role in bilateral relations and helps lay a solid cultural and civil foundation for the turnaround of China-U.S. relations.

With this concept and pursuit, China has already made unremitting efforts in the field of people-

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<sup>1</sup> 中美人文交流研究基地编：《雁过留声：中美人文交流的记忆》，北京大学出版社 2012 年版，序，第 2-3 页。



to-people exchanges. In the official field, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi mentioned China-U.S. relations at the 2022 Two Sessions press conference. He pointed out: "In an era of interdependence and globalization, how the two major countries of China and the U.S. find the right way to coexist is not only a problem that human society has never encountered before but also an equation that the two countries must jointly solve. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué. Looking back on history, we see that both China and the U.S. have adhered to the spirit of seeking common ground while reserving differences, replacing confrontation with cooperation, benefiting the people of both countries and promoting world peace and prosperity. Looking forward to the future, both sides should return to the original intention of breaking the ice, set off again, and replace the 'Three Cs' of competition, cooperation, and confrontation with the 'Three Principles' of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and win-win cooperation. This will promote a rational and pragmatic course for U.S. policy toward China and a return to the right path of healthy and stable China-U.S. relations."<sup>1</sup>

In semi-official and non-governmental fields, China has also moved against the tide, promoting the continuation and development of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. On May 31, 2022, on the occasion of the 99th birthday of former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs held an online seminar on Kissinger and China-U.S. Relations. Over 600 people from various sectors in both China and the U.S. attended a video conference to discuss and exchange views on bilateral relations.<sup>2</sup> On June 26 of the same year, on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the birth of American writer Pearl S. Buck, the 2022 Pearl S. Buck International Symposium was held in Jiangsu, sponsored by Jiangsu University and co-organized by the China Institute of International Studies and the Zhenjiang Pearl S. Buck Research Association. Over 200 experts and scholars from home and abroad participated in the conference to explore the importance of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges and called for building mutual trust between China and the U.S. through these exchanges.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, some insightful scholars in the U.S. are still calling for strengthening bilateral cultural exchanges between China and the U.S. Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, a renowned liberal arts college, has said that differences and competition do not affect the harmonious coexistence and cooperation between two great countries, "precisely when we face problems in political and economic relations, cultural and musical exchanges can play a key role in promoting understanding and peace." Daniel B. Wright, a well-known American expert on China, believes that the story of China-U.S. ping-pong diplomacy, where "the small ball moves the big ball," has important implications for the development of bilateral relations. In the context of current disagreements between China and the U.S. in security and trade, both sides should maintain people-

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<sup>1</sup> 外交部：《国务委员兼外交部长王毅就中国外交政策和对外关系回答中外记者提问》，2022年3月7日，[https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjzbzhd/202203/t20220307\\_10649045.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjzbzhd/202203/t20220307_10649045.shtml)，2022-08-05。

<sup>2</sup> 中国人民外交学会：《外交学会成功举办基辛格与中美关系研讨会》，2022年5月31日，<http://www.cpifa.org/article/2228>，2022-08-06。

<sup>3</sup> 参考消息网：《为中美人文交流架设更多“人桥”——“2022 赛珍珠国际学术研讨会”侧记》，2022年6月30日，<http://www.cankaoxiaoxi.com/in-depth/2022/0630/2484240.shtml>，2022-08-06。



to-people exchanges as a “strategic oasis.”<sup>1</sup>

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of relations between China and the U.S. Over the past fifty years, China-U.S. relations have weathered numerous challenges and have demonstrated a pattern of intertwined interests, characterized by “you in me and me in you.” General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized that people-to-people exchanges, political mutual trust, and economic and trade cooperation constitute the three pillars of China’s major-country diplomacy. Looking forward to the future, we may consider the following three aspects to advance the unique role of China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges in helping put China-U.S. relations back on a healthy and stable development track.

First, strengthen institutional innovation and mechanism transformation in China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly pointed out that the foundation of China-U.S. friendly relations lies in the people, and the hope lies in the youth. People-to-people exchanges play a stabilizing and foundational role in the development of China-U.S. relations. To continuously consolidate the social and public foundation of China-U.S. friendly relations, both countries can consider designing a highly flexible mechanism arrangement of people-to-people exchanges at national, local, and social levels: on one hand, “break down” the national-level people-to-people exchange goals, innovate exchange methods, focus “downward” on the grassroots level of society, and emphasize the importance and initiative of the grassroots communities in promoting China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges; on the other hand, “aggregate” local- and social-level people-to-people exchange projects, conduct detailed research on the needs of different regions on both sides, and coordinate exchanges in various fields such as education, science and technology, environmental protection, culture, health, and social development, allowing non-governmental actors to exert a greater influence in this process.<sup>2</sup>

Second, enhance the role of Track II diplomacy in promoting China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. As a complement to official government diplomacy, Track II diplomacy, with its flexible organizational approach, often achieves results that are difficult to attain through official channels. Against the backdrop of a need for increased political mutual trust between China and the U.S., Track II diplomacy can serve as a low-risk channel for dialogue. Through forums, academic seminars, informal talks, and other formats, such diplomacy provides a valuable platform for think tank experts, university scholars, non-incumbent officials, and private individuals to interact. This not only helps both sides reduce misinterpretations and increase understanding but also allows the transmission of opinions through media channels, thus creating a favorable public opinion environment for people-to-people exchanges between the two countries.

Third, improve the crisis prevention and management capabilities concerning China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges. Governments, media, think tanks and university research institutions should collaborate to establish an early warning mechanism for China-U.S. people-to-people exchanges.

<sup>1</sup> 新华社：《中美人文交流：虽遇逆流 仍具韧性》，2021年5月23日，<http://home.xinhua-news.com/rss/newsdetailink/0f1064d529a24e38f17a541bb5900b47/1621839193887>, 2022-08-05。

<sup>2</sup> 潘亚玲：《中美人文交流四十年：回顾与展望》，《美国问题研究》2018年第2期，第29-50页。

They should develop an objective and comprehensive evaluation index system for bilateral people-to-people exchange projects and monitor trends in public opinion and sentiment during the exchanges between the two countries, aiming to identify potential risks and issues as early as possible.<sup>1</sup> Once a problem is identified, relevant parties should, on the basis of fully considering the social and cultural differences between the two sides, follow pre-developed crisis response measures to quickly dispel public misunderstandings about the issue and maintain mutual understanding and trust between the two peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> 潘亚玲：《中美社会和人文对话机制：既有基础与战略路径》，《美国问题研究》2017年第2期，第79-97页。

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