

A REALISTIC WAY FORWARD FOR THE US-CHINA STRATEGIC NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP

A CONFERENCE REPORT
OF THE 11TH CHINA-US STRATEGIC
NUCLEAR DYNAMICS DIALOGUE

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**A realistic way forward for the
US-China strategic nuclear relationship**
By **Ralph Cossa, Brad Glosserman, and David Santoro**

**Conference report of the
11th China-US Strategic Nuclear Dynamics Dialogue**

The China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (CFISS) and the Pacific Forum CSIS, with support from the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the Air Force Academy's Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts (AFA/PASCC) on Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, held the 11th "China-US Strategic Nuclear Dynamics Dialogue" in Beijing, on August 17-18. Attended by some 80 Chinese and US experts, officials, military officers, and observers, along with Pacific Forum Young Leaders, all in their private capacity, this annual, off-the-record track-1.5 dialogue examines one specific aspect of the US-China relationship: the strategic nuclear dimension. The dialogue focused on issues ranging from strategic stability, deterrence, and reassurance to nonproliferation and nuclear safety and security. This year, discussions covered US and Chinese comparative assessments of the world's strategic nuclear landscape, the future of US-China strategic stability, US nuclear strategy and policy review, China's military reform and nuclear policy, and options and measures to enhance US-China strategic reassurance, both in general and via specific confidence-building measures (CBMs), notably in the nuclear, space, and cyber domains.

This report reflects the views of its authors. It is not a consensus document. A longer and more comprehensive version is available upon request.

Key Takeaways

- The meeting was largely positive; a spirit of cooperation prevailed. Both Chinese and US participants sought ways to minimize distrust and enhance mutual understanding.
- The Chinese expressed growing comfort with "strategic stability" as an operating principle behind the nuclear relationship amid signals from the US side that this terminology might not be repeated in the next Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). While there is no common definition, the two sides are closer in their understanding of the term.
- Chinese worry that the Trump administration may see China as the US' "number one threat" given the "growing sense of competition" between Washington and Beijing. They also have questions about the nuclear policies and priorities of the administration.
- Both sides agree there needs to be a conceptual framework for the bilateral nuclear relationship, but disagree on which measures to develop.
- Chinese maintain that US ballistic missile defense systems undermine strategic stability. US interlocutors argue that THAAD is a response to North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and does not pose a threat to China's second-strike capability.

- Chinese and Americans understand that they must enhance mutual strategic reassurance beyond the work undertaken between their militaries, notably on crisis management. Participants on both sides made proposals of bilateral confidence-building measures (CBMs). Mutually-acceptable CBMs should be reviewed and validated at the next dialogue round.
- Current reforms of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) are a work-in-progress and remain obscure to many. Chinese nevertheless insist that the reforms will not transform the contours of their nuclear policy. China is committed to a no-first-use (NFU) policy and minimum deterrence; its goal is still a “lean and effective” nuclear force.

Broader key findings are available upon request.

The strategic nuclear landscape

The dialogue began with an overview of the strategic nuclear landscape, focusing on the prospects in South Asia, the Middle East, and Northeast Asia. It also reflected on the significance and implications of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, below referred to as the “Ban Treaty,” and recent developments in deterrence, arms control, and nonproliferation.

From a Chinese perspective, that is Washington and Moscow’s responsibility only, given that they possess the most nuclear weapons worldwide, by far. For its part, China remains a “responsible nuclear-weapon state.” Its approach to nuclear policy has remained unchanged since 1964 (when it first exploded a nuclear device) – it is based on an NFU pledge and, while Beijing is building up its arsenal, it only strives for “lean and effective” forces and, therefore, does not seek to “sprint to parity” with either the United States or Russia.

Three nuclear threats top Beijing’s list: nuclear proliferation, nuclear terrorism, and escalation to the nuclear level emanating from regional conflicts. All three require the improvement of existing nuclear governance mechanisms, and the development of new ones. While crisis-avoidance and crisis-management mechanisms should be established to prevent and better manage regional conflicts, a considerable amount of work should be conducted to strengthen the nonproliferation and nuclear security regimes. A low-hanging fruit is to enhance nuclear-security cooperation, both with the United States and others: Beijing believes that much can be achieved and that the new Chinese nuclear-security center of excellence provides an opportunity to do so.

The US speaker, for his part, identified four major trends in the strategic nuclear landscape, all negative for the United States and China, and by extension for international peace and security. The first trend is the emergence of new threats to the nonproliferation regime. Notwithstanding growing international acceptance of nonproliferation rules and norms, a brief overview of the state of play in this area suggests that there have been one tentative nonproliferation success, one spectacular failure, and one challenge that the international security community does not fully understand yet. The tentative success is the JCPOA. Its implementation is encouraging, but it remains to be seen if this will

continue or if Iranian duplicity and hardline internal politics and/or US concerns with Iranian actions not covered by the agreement (and US internal politics) will doom its fate. The nonproliferation failure, meanwhile, is North Korea – the international community failed to prevent the development of North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs – and the new challenge is the Ban Treaty, which was recently adopted by 122 states, none possessing nuclear weapons or having alliance relationships with states that do. The risk with the latter is that some states may choose to hide behind their support for this new treaty, which included limited obligations, as an excuse to limit their involvement in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty(NPT), which imposes substantial requirements.

The second trend characterizing today’s strategic nuclear landscape is the probable collapse of the arms-control regime between the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia, which has been in place and evolving since 1972. Our US speaker opined that the regime will “almost certainly end in 2021,” when the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, dubbed New START, expires. That would leave the United States and Russia, owners of over 90 percent of the world’s nuclear weapons, without any agreement to regulate their nuclear relations. This is a situation resulting from Russia’s refusal to discuss, let alone correct, its violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, making future arms-control negotiations unlikely and ratification of a new treaty politically impossible. Yet even without the INF issue, there is a long list of problems that would make negotiating a replacement of New START extremely challenging, including limits on ballistic missile defenses (BMDs) in Europe, non-strategic nuclear weapons, or long-range, non-nuclear precision strike weapons, to name a few. Of course, New START can be extended for five years by the US and Russian presidents without legislative action, but the current political climate in both the United States and Russia makes it unlikely.

Increased danger of nuclear use is the third trend. The US speaker argued that the risk comes from three states: Russia, Pakistan, and North Korea. The fourth and final trend is, for lack of better terms, new technologies, new domains (notably space and cyber), and their interconnections and impact on nuclear stability, which are poorly understood and devoid of any specific rules or norms. In the questions-answers session, the discussion focused mostly on Russia. Chinese expressed concerns about the downturn of US-Russia relations, and the implications of the US speaker’s presentation on the likely demise of arms control between Washington and Moscow. While they did not exhibit worries about Russian-Chinese relations, Chinese did not hide their fears about the impact of growing US-Russia tensions both on US nuclear modernization (because that could drive Washington to push for the manufacture of low-yield nuclear weapons) and on US nuclear policy (because Washington may be tempted to lower the threshold for nuclear use).

The risks of nuclear use also came under the spotlight. Unlike Americans, some (though not all) Chinese did not show concerns about the risks of nuclear use posed by North Korea, Russia, and Pakistan or by inadvertent escalation resulting from increasingly complex forms of competition, especially in the nuclear, space, and cyber

domains. More broadly, however, Chinese experts acknowledge that challenges to strategic stability have become more complex and that work is needed to address them.

Strategic stability

Discussions about how the United States and China assess (as well as define and understand) strategic stability have been a core focus of this dialogue. This year the analysis progressed, as both sides addressed the impact of new factors, notably the space and cyber domains, and of Russia on their bilateral strategic relationship.

The US speaker explained that a decade of track-1.5 dialogue has produced mutual understanding of each country's assessment of the strategic-stability concept. We have learnt that China takes both a broad and a narrow view of the concept: it looks at the strategic nuclear offense/defense equation, in particular the impact of current and possible future developments in US BMD and non-nuclear strike capabilities on the credibility of China's deterrent, and the broader strategic environment, where Beijing is concerned that the United States and its allies allegedly seek to constrain China's re-rise. The United States, for its part, focuses mainly on the narrow dimension of strategic stability and, in so doing, has refused to publicly acknowledge mutual vulnerability with China, even though Washington has so far chosen not to counter Beijing's qualitative and quantitative build-up of its arsenal; this is in part because US regional allies fear that this could embolden Beijing to press its territorial claims in the region. Our US speaker nevertheless noted that the United States also has a broad outlook of strategic stability in that it worries about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and long-range weapons to states opposed to US-backed regional orders, the renewal of major-power rivalry (most evident between the United States and Russia and lurking in the background of the US-China strategic relationship), and more generally about the emergence of competing ideas for the international security order with the rise of both Islamic and authoritarian models of governance.

Moving beyond mutual understanding of strategic stability is important, especially because the challenges have become increasingly complex, with new forms of competition in the maritime environment, cyber space and outer space, and in artificial intelligence and autonomous systems. These challenges impact crisis stability: they may be significant incentives in a military crisis to strike first and decisively in the space and cyber domains, for instance. Others impact arms-race stability, as both countries (and others) seek new advantages.

From a US perspective, track-1.5 dialogue between the United States and China has laid solid foundations for track-1 dialogue, which is essential to avert future strategic military competition between the two countries, assuming it can produce agreement on the specific requirements of strategic stability. It is especially important to begin such dialogue now because the Trump administration is forming its views on these questions, both generally and in the context of the US-China strategic relationship in particular. Several views exist in the administration: some advocate continuity and a commitment to strategic stability as the organizing principle of the bilateral strategic military relationship,

while others believe that the United States should reject strategic restraint and counter China's nuclear and conventional modernization and diversification efforts.

The US speaker concluded by pointing to three key differences between the United States and China. Washington is preoccupied by Russia's rejection of the European security order and its development of an approach to regional war that apparently envisions the employment of nuclear weapons and other strategic means to achieve war termination on terms favorable to Moscow.

Washington is also increasingly worried about the deteriorating situation in South Asia, where India and Pakistan are embarked on nuclear build-ups in support of increasingly belligerent doctrines and where the risks of nuclear terrorism seem to be rising. Beijing, however, does not seem to share these concerns: Russia's evolving military posture is barely mentioned by Chinese experts and there is little evidence of strong and sustained Chinese engagement in South Asia to reduce nuclear dangers. Finally, Washington and Beijing also do not see eye-to-eye on the question of regional challengers like North Korea arming themselves with nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. While Washington has been highly motivated to negate the strategic deterrent of such challengers by developing and deploying both offensive and defense forces, Beijing believes that these forces are also (if not primarily) aimed at negating Chinese forces. This is an enduring disagreement, which, significantly, Washington also has with Moscow.

The Chinese speaker stressed that it is difficult, if not impossible, to discuss strategic stability solely in the US-China context. There are now many nuclear-armed states and any focus on the US-China relationship must include or be based on a thorough understanding of how these (old and new) actors, as well as other factors, impact that relationship. Moreover, echoing the US speaker, he pointed out that there are two views of strategic stability – the narrow view and the broad view – and that Americans tend to prefer the former and Chinese the latter.

The speaker nevertheless opted to focus on the narrow view, insisting that Beijing takes the question seriously. To Chinese, the goal is to build a secure second-strike capability and, therefore, their principal worries are any developments that could undermine that capability. Reiterating an earlier Chinese speaker, he stated that China's build-up should not be seen as an attempt to reach parity with the United States and Russia. From a Chinese perspective, however, US "recognition" of China's capability is important. In other words, and as our speaker explicitly stated, acknowledgement by Washington of the existence of US-China mutual vulnerability is important, especially given that, as many experts have pointed out, it is a fact. Not doing so suggests to Beijing that it should ramp up its modernization efforts, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to be taken seriously, which can be achieved "by following the principles of stability." This is all the more important as maintaining strategic stability is increasingly complex with the emergence of the new space and cyber domains and the associated risks that escalation in one domain might lead to escalation in another.

Both US and Chinese presentations and the subsequent discussion revealed that while there is still no clear-cut common definition of strategic stability, the United and China are noticeably closer in their common understanding of the term and its requirements.

There are differences between the US and Chinese approaches, however. As the presentations have shown, many Americans favor a narrow view of the concept centered on the strategic offense/defense relationship, including, but not limited to, the nuclear domain. Chinese, for their part, note an interaction between this narrow view and a broader view, which also includes the greater strategic environment, where Beijing is concerned that the United States and its allies seek to constrain China's re-rise.

Both sides agreed that there needs to be a "new model" for the bilateral nuclear relationship or, as one Chinese participant put it: Washington and Beijing should build a "constructive nuclear relationship." They noted that alternative foundations to strategic stability, especially those beyond a treaty-based approach, would need to be nurtured over the long-term. In one version supported by several Chinese, the new model would not be treaty-based, but depend strictly on crisis-avoidance and crisis-management mechanisms and rely heavily on track-1.5 discussions.

Regardless of its format, to build such a relationship, several US participants stressed that pursuing specific measures in an action-oriented process of engagement is paramount.

Chinese and US participants disagreed, however, on which measures to develop and implement. Chinese continue to emphasize statements of US intent, and still call both for a bilateral NFU agreement and an explicit statement by the United States that it accepts mutual vulnerability as the basis of the strategic relationship. US experts, meanwhile, emphasize transparency about capabilities, and continue to call for improved Chinese performance in this regard. While neither side sees a role for bilateral arms control at this time, they both agree that CBMs have a role to play in improving the strategic nuclear relationship.

Significantly, most Chinese understand that at present "strategic stability" is – and will likely remain for the foreseeable future – the closest the United States will come to articulating a recognition that it is in a mutually vulnerable situation with China. Abandonment of this term by the Trump administration, therefore, would require extended discussions and new creative language to provide the same level of assurance. Whatever term proposed to replace it should still characterize the relationship in something other than Cold War arms race terms.

This discussion gave an opportunity to Chinese to reiterate their longstanding stance that US BMD systems undermine strategic stability. They stressed that Beijing especially worries about the Trump administration's stated plan to develop robust, multi-layered, and state-of-the-art systems and highlighted concerns about an "open ended architecture." Americans argued that a missile defense build-up is unavoidable given

North Korea's nuclear and missile progress and, therefore, that it would be helpful to know "how much is too much" for Beijing.

US nuclear strategy and policy review

With the fourth NPR and other associated strategic policy reviews underway (notably the Ballistic Missile Defense Review), the dialogue sought to unpack the key US concerns that these reviews will address and how the United States will likely define the role of nuclear weapons in that context, both in general and for the US-China strategic military relationship in particular. Focusing solely on the NPR, the US speaker described how the international security environment will shape the review and gave a personal assessment on its likely conclusions with regard to 1) extended deterrence and assurance; 2) US-China strategic nuclear relations; and 3) US nuclear modernization.

The content of the next NPR, like previous ones, will be determined by the international security environment. While the 2010 NPR was drafted at a time when that environment was relatively benign, the situation is vastly different today. Three areas of concern stand out. The North Korea nuclear threat is now much more advanced. The US (and NATO's) assessment of Russia has also changed significantly. Finally, while not as much has changed since 2010, China's continuing nuclear and conventional modernization, as well as its more assertive role in East Asia and beyond, cannot be ignored.

In this context, the NPR is likely to maintain and even seek to strengthen regional security architectures in Europe and Asia. In other words, as the US speaker put it, extended deterrence and assurance of allies will undoubtedly remain "alive and well." Practically, that means Washington is likely to seek more frequent, deeper, and higher-level consultations with allies. It is also likely to continue to encourage allies to develop and deploy greater conventional strike capabilities as well as defensive systems.

The US speaker suggested that insights into the Trump administration's possible direction may be gleaned from the report on "A New Nuclear Review for a New Age" (National Institute for Public Policy, April 2017) given that many participating authors are likely to have a role or be influential in the ongoing NPR. Significantly, the report notes that "continued ambiguity [vis-à-vis China] seems the most prudent US policy," adding that "US policy makers must recognize that it is unlikely to resolve Chinese suspicions of future US strategic intent – although the same would be true even with a declared US policy commitment to mutual vulnerability."

The US speaker concluded by stressing that the United States is in the process of replacing its nuclear forces and the recapitalization of the nuclear triad set in motion by the previous US administration is likely to continue under the current administration. The key question is whether the next NPR will find that new, additional, or differently-deployed nuclear capabilities are necessary to deal with current and future threats. This is a question that comes to the fore in the context of deterring Russia and an increasingly capable North Korea.

China's military reforms and nuclear policy

Given the limited amount of information about China's ongoing military reforms and its implications for nuclear policy, the dialogue included a full session devoted to this issue. A Chinese speaker explained that China's reforms have three goals. First, they are meant to help China better meet its security challenges, notably its territorial and maritime disputes and domestic-stability issues. Second, they are intended to adapt to deep and rapidly-changing domestic and economic changes. Third, and finally, China's military reforms strive to adapt Chinese forces to the changed and changing international security environment, and to develop new concepts and capabilities to be able to fight and win tomorrow's wars.

Practically, the reforms conducted so far have focused on leadership changes. Multiple departments now report directly to the Central Military Commission (CMC). There is also an ongoing reform of command-and-control mechanisms in the four services, and a new "Strategic Support Force" was established. Chinese forces have also been reduced by ten percent and their composition and training have changed to adapt to current requirements. As far as nuclear policy is concerned, however, China's approach remains unchanged: the goal is self-defense against "nuclear-weapon countries" and the reduction of nuclear dangers wherever they are; our speaker echoed earlier Chinese comments that Beijing does not want to engage in or feed arms races.

To Americans, the current reforms, which several Chinese described as "the most profound and comprehensive in the history of the PLA," remain a work-in-progress and rather obscure. While there was clarity from the Chinese that centralization of power under the CMC was a core goal, many questions remain unanswered, notably about command-and-control arrangements for the new Strategic Rocket Force. Moreover, the Strategic Support Force was characterized as merely a collection of pre-existing offices, and of secondary importance.

Echoing the speaker, Chinese participants all insisted that the reforms will not transform the contours of their nuclear policy. China is committed to NFU and minimum deterrence; its goal is still a "lean and effective" nuclear force.

Strategic reassurance and confidence-building measures

The concluding session of our dialogue was devoted to identifying actions that Washington and Beijing should take to build mutual strategic reassurance, both generally and by concluding specific CBMs.

From a US perspective, it is high time to enhance bilateral strategic confidence because the United States and China may soon find themselves in a "lose-lose" situation given mutual uncertainties, concerns, and suspicions. Beijing is concerned about the impact of US military capabilities (notably BMDs), while US worries about the scope, purpose, and end points of China's nuclear modernization program and its space and cyber capabilities. Both also fear the other's political-military agenda in Asia and beyond.

Moreover, there are several wildcards that could derail the relationship, including US responses to the North Korea nuclear threat.

A working vision to strengthen US-China strategic reassurance should be based on several core principles, including no fear of threats to core/historic interests, no fear of first attack on strategic assets, strategic competition without arms-racing, resilience to third-party strategic spillovers, and effective crisis-avoidance and crisis-management capabilities. That requires confidence on both sides, notably confidence in one's strategic deterrent, in the other's intentions, in one's own and the other's political-institutional capability to engage and, for the United States, in its allies.

US speakers suggested that the United States and China strengthen strategic reassurance step by step. Initially, Washington should engage Beijing about its ongoing NPR process and explain its deterrence-defense choices to address the North Korea threat. In return, Beijing should confirm that it does not seek parity with the US (and Russian) nuclear arsenals and it should deepen its cooperation on North Korea. Subsequently, Washington and Beijing should agree to annual data exchanges on each other's programs, plans, and deployments. Washington should also reaffirm limits on specific capabilities, while Beijing should agree to limit future MIR-ing and submarine-launched ballistic missile deployments. Both sides, in addition, should enhance crisis-management mechanisms and conduct a joint study on the benefits, costs, and risks of adopting a mutual NFU policy. Looking to the future, Washington and Beijing should commit to a mutual no-first-attack pledge on strategic systems, agree to a mutual strategic restraint package on offensive and defensive systems, and work on an all-encompassing joint study on mutual strategic reassurance to define broad "rules of the road." Also critical is for Washington and Beijing to build habits of cooperation to strengthen their ability to withstand crises emanating from external factors, notably third actors, and to improve nonproliferation and nuclear safety and security implementation.

To Americans, it also is paramount that the United States and China conclude CBMs for specific "strategic capabilities" because while such capabilities can help support important objectives (notably deterrence), they also carry an inherent risk of triggering unintended effects and reactions that can endanger peace and security. While there is no clear-cut definition, strategic capabilities are generally defined as capabilities that can achieve decisive outcomes in a short time and in a way that can outpace deliberate decision-making. Such outcomes include disrupting or destroying economic, social, and military systems; causing widespread physical and psychological effects; and/or changing the status quo. Capabilities capable of such outcomes include nuclear weapons, some conventional strike weapons, and some type of BMDs. Space systems are more complicated: satellites are important supporting systems that help make other strategic capabilities more effective and some weapons can degrade, disrupt, or destroy satellites (an attack on satellites can create debris and have consequences on other satellites, triggering effects on many systems). The cyber domain is also complicated, but offensive cyber operations can potentially cause comparable physical and psychological effects as kinetic attacks.

Chinese speakers insisted that strategic reassurance and CBMs must be understood in the broader context of seeking to maintain strategic stability between China and the United States. From a Chinese perspective, at issue are US BMD and conventional-prompt-global-strike capabilities, the proliferation of “de facto nuclear-armed states,” and the growing possibility of serious crises breaking out that could escalate to the nuclear level. Fortunately, efforts by both Beijing and Washington to try and develop a “new type” of strategic nuclear relations have borne fruit: the nature of the bilateral relationship is vastly different from that of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which was unambiguously adversarial and based on mutual assured destruction. Chinese speakers quickly added, however, that it was important for China and the United States to “remain mutually vulnerable.”

Chinese believe that there are several ways to strengthen China-US strategic reassurance. One is to ramp up bilateral consultations in several key areas; that should be based on mutual respect and should take into account each side’s core interests. Another would be to flesh out the requirements of strategic stability, a process which would help build trust. In addition to accepting mutual vulnerability as the basis for the relationship, the United States should, as the stronger party, be more proactive than China.

General observations, concluding thoughts, and next steps

Despite an emerging environment seemingly giving way to growing tensions in the bilateral relationship, our dialogue was largely positive.

There remain fundamental differences in US and Chinese perspectives on several key strategic nuclear issues, however. It is important, therefore, not to expect too much, too soon. This suggests that continued engagement is important and likely to bear fruit down the line.

Significantly, the meeting identified several areas ripe for stronger US-China cooperation. Nonproliferation and nuclear safety and security are two such areas.

In thinking about next steps, at the top of the list is working out the ins and outs of a “new model” to regulate the US-China strategic nuclear relationship. This is an obvious topic for further discussion. Doing so requires not only in-depth analysis of the narrow and broad bilateral relationship, but also of the interconnections and interactions of that relationship with other key state. More work is also needed to identify more specific CBMs.

APPENDIX A



The Eleventh China-US Dialogue on Strategic Nuclear Dynamics
A CFISS-Pacific Forum CSIS Workshop
August 17-18, 2017, Beijing, China
Four Season's Hotel, Beijing

CONFERENCE AGENDA

August 17, 2017

09:00-09:10 Opening Remarks

Moderator : Li Ning
Chinese side: Qian Lihua
US side: Cecil Haney

09:10-10:45 Session 1: Assessment of world nuclear situation

Are we entering a second nuclear era; if so, why? What are regional nuclear prospects in South Asia, the Middle East, and Northeast Asia? What is the significance of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons? Are there any arms control initiatives of note? How do all or any of these factors impact nuclear deterrence and decisions to build nuclear arsenals?

US Moderator: Ralph Cossa
Chinese speaker: Sun Xiangli
US speaker: Linton Brooks

10:45-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 Session 2: Assessment of world strategic stability

How does each country assess strategic stability? Do traditional analyses still work? Or are there new factors that impact strategic stability, such as cross-domain issues, conventional-nuclear relations, new missile defense capabilities, and new advanced munitions and technologies such as lasers? How do we assess the US-Russia strategic nuclear relationship?

Chinese Moderator: Qian Lihua
US speaker: Brad Roberts
Chinese speaker: Li Bin

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session 3: American nuclear strategy and policy review

How will the US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) proceed? What are key US concerns in this version? How will it likely differ from previous NPRs? How does the US envision the role of nuclear weapons in the competition among great powers? How will the US define the Sino-US nuclear relationship in the new NPR? How will US nuclear modernization proceed? What role will be played by US extended deterrence? Is US thinking about extended deterrence changing? If so, why?

US Moderator: Brad Roberts

US speaker: Elaine Bunn

Chinese discussant: Fan Jishe

15:30-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45-17:15 Session 4: China military reform and nuclear policy

How is China's military reform unfolding and what is its likely impact on China's nuclear policy? How are force modernization plans proceeding and how is nuclear strategy changing, if at all? How does China assess the nuclear environment on its periphery? How is China's nuclear policy adapting to changing dynamics in the US and in Russia and India?

Chinese Moderator: Li Ji

Chinese speaker: Ouyang Wei

US discussant: Chris Twomey

17:30 Dinner out

August 18, 2017

09:00-10:30 Session 5: North-East Asia nuclear issue (I)

How does each country assess the security situation on the Korean Peninsula generally? How does each assess DPRK nuclear capabilities? What is the significance of the 2017 missile tests and hardware displayed at the April military parade? Is there agreement on the DPRK theory of nuclear war fighting? How does each country assess North Korea's nuclear safety?

US Moderator: Bates Gill

Chinese speaker: Wu Jun

US speaker: Scott Snyder

10:30-10:45 Coffee Break

10:45-12:30 Session 6: North-East Asia nuclear issue (II)

How does each country anticipate responding to a nuclear crisis involving the DPRK? How can the two countries work together to politically contain or manage a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula? What are their priorities in a crisis? How can the two countries, either alone or together, deal with DPRK WMD capabilities in a crisis? What role does each country envision for other countries –

the ROK, Japan, Russia – in addressing both sets of challenges? Do both countries’ objectives and desired/acceptable outcomes coincide?

Chinese Moderator: Li Ning

US speaker: Ralph Cossa

Chinese speaker: Yang Xiyu

12:30-14:00 Lunch

14:00-15:30 Session 7: Sino-American strategic mutual confidence and strategic stability

What are key issues as the two countries attempt to build strategic confidence? What is the relationship between confidence and strategic stability? What can the other country do to help build your confidence? What can each country do to reassure the other? What external factors – i.e., not part of the bilateral relationship – affect China-US mutual confidence? How can we address factors identified in session 2? What are the alternatives to strategic stability as an organizing concept in the relationship?

US Moderator: Chris Twomey

Chinese speaker: Lu Yin

US speaker: Lewis Dunn

15:30-15:45 Coffee Break

15:45-17:15 Session 8: options and measures for Sino-American CBM and Strategic stability

Can the two countries agree on “rules of the road” for the nuclear, cyber, and outer space domains? Does the ‘no first use’ doctrine have a role to play and if so, how? What can be done to minimize the influence of a strategic competition mindset and keep our strategic relationship on a positive trajectory and stable footing?

Chinese Moderator: Yang Mingjie

US speaker: Vince Manzo

Chinese speaker: Zhang Tuosheng

17:15-17:30 Closing Remarks

Moderator: Ralph Cossa

US side: Cecil Haney

Chinese side: Qian Lihua

17:40 Dinner out

APPENDIX B



The Eleventh China-US Dialogue on Strategic Nuclear Dynamics
A CFISS-Pacific Forum CSIS Workshop
August 17-18, 2017, Beijing, China
Four Season's Hotel, Beijing

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