

CHECK YOUR  
EXPECTATIONS:  
A REALISTIC WAY  
FORWARD FOR THE  
US-CHINA STRATEGIC  
NUCLEAR RELATIONSHIP

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US PERSPECTIVES  
FROM THE 11<sup>TH</sup> CHINA-US STRATEGIC  
NUCLEAR DYNAMICS DIALOGUE

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## China Foundation for International and Strategic Studies (CFISS)

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# Check your expectations

## A realistic way forward for the US-China strategic nuclear relationship

### US Perspectives

By Ralph Cossa, Brad Glosserman, and David Santoro  
Conference report of the  
11<sup>th</sup> 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. Our dialogue, in other words, focuses 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, North Korea (US and Chinese assessments of the threat and ways to address it), 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.

On the front end of the dialogue, with support from the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA), the Pacific Forum CSIS also held a half-day workshop on August 16 involving a select group of US and Chinese dialogue participants. Aimed to provide support for and deepen the dialogue's work, this workshop sought to: 1) develop common understandings and "rules of the road" in the nuclear, space, and cyber domains (a process initiated at the 10th China-US Strategic Nuclear Dynamics Dialogue, which took place in Beijing in June 2016), and 2) find common objectives and mutually acceptable mid-to-long-term outcomes to address the North Korea nuclear threat. The preliminary results of this work were fed into dialogue proceedings.

This report reflects the views of its authors. It is not a consensus document.

#### Key Takeaways

- The meeting was largely positive; a spirit of cooperation prevailed. Chinese questioned US policy rather than challenged or denounced it and evinced a readiness to find ways to cooperate and work with the United States.
- 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. Yet they are silent when the US explains THAAD is a response to North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats.
- 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.
- 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.
- US and Chinese largely agree on assessments of North Korean nuclear and missile capabilities. The two sides differ in assessments of North Korean nuclear doctrine; Chinese insist that Pyongyang would only use nuclear weapons if its survival is directly threatened, while Americans worry that Pyongyang may miscalculate, engage in nuclear blackmail, or use nuclear weapons first in a crisis.
- Chinese are concerned about the prospect of a North Korean nuclear accident or incident. It is an area where the Chinese appear open to, if not eager for, contingency discussions.
- There are differences of opinion among Chinese on North Korea policy. Some do not share the US sense of urgency and blame US “hostile policy” toward Pyongyang for the deadlock, insisting that Chinese cooperation will hinge on US actions in other areas, including in the South China Sea. Most, however exhibit a readiness to work more closely with the US to further pressure North Korea. All Chinese stress that Beijing’s influence on Pyongyang is limited.

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.

Our Chinese speaker kicked off the discussion stressing that there are no good prospects to solve the North Korea problem, which he noted was an “acute challenge.” Also concerning is the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear program; from a Chinese perspective, President Trump’s repeated comments that it is a “very bad deal” and his suggestion that the United States might abandon it is worrisome. Beijing also worries about the downturn of US-Russia relations, notably in Europe. That might exacerbate tensions, drive Washington to double down on its nuclear modernization program, and could even urge some European countries (especially Germany) to develop their own nuclear arsenals.

Chinese officials trust that there are numerous firebreaks to prevent escalation among the major powers, however. But these firebreaks must be maintained and nurtured. That is why it is paramount that US-Russia nuclear reductions (and the bilateral arms control process more generally) stay alive and continue to advance. 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. While there are already US-China track-1 discussions on these questions, our Chinese colleagues pointed out that track-2 or -1.5 work should be beefed up to support official dialogue.

Our 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. Our US speaker argued that the risk comes from three states: Russia, Pakistan, and North Korea. While Russia's incessant nuclear-sabre rattling is predominantly designed to split the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, these actions will shape Russian responses in time of crisis. Pakistan, for its part, has developed policies asserting that a weaker state (which it is vis-à-vis its rival, India) must act more aggressively and, additionally, that match the capabilities of the stronger state, whether it makes strategic sense or not. Finally, there is a risk that North Korea miscalculates or chooses to use nuclear weapons first in an escalating crisis with the United States and its regional allies.

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, belligerent Russian rhetoric in the NATO context, 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). Yet they were less clear on the impact that events such as the demise of the START process or INF Treaty might have on China.

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.

Our 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.

Our 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.

Our 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.

Our 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. After nearly a decade of US attempts to sell the concept, the Chinese apparently have now “signed on” to it.

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. Still, the narrow conceptualization was used comfortably by many Chinese, showing significant spread of understanding across their bureaucracies.

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; there was nevertheless increased flexibility about how NFU and mutual vulnerability might be expressed, in public or private. 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 seem to 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 mutual vulnerable situation with China (a message this dialogue has helped deliver in past years). 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." Yet Chinese remained silent when told that a 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.

Some Chinese, however, exhibited an interest in exploring whether there are ways for the United States and its allies to protect themselves from North Korean missile threats without fielding capabilities that are detrimental to China's confidence in its own deterrent. While some hope that US policy is committed to finding this "sweet spot," others argue that there is no signal of US intent to work with China toward that end. Chinese recognition of the impact of North Korea's programs on US strategic choices may be partly behind the expressed interest in finding a way to regulate the strategic relationship.

The discussion ended on a positive note. In an unusual comment, a Chinese Colonel, clearly being developed as the next expert on strategic stability from the PLA, stressed that both sides agreed that they would never use nuclear weapons imprudently. The Chinese typically express this through NFU, while the United States does so through the concept of "last resort."

#### US nuclear strategy and policy review

With the fourth NPR and other associated strategic policy reviews underway (notably the Ballistic Missile Defense Review), our 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, our 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 our 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.

Vis-à-vis China, given that Beijing has rejected the previous administration’s invitation to engage in a practical, substantive, and sustained dialogue on strategic stability (as has Moscow), it is possible that the next NPR will opt to abandon that terminology. It is unclear what language would be used to replace it, however. Our 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.”

Our 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.

In response, Chinese experts expressed concerns in well-prepared and seemingly thoroughly coordinated remarks that the Trump administration may see China as the United States’ “number-one threat” given the “growing sense of competition” between Washington and Beijing. Significantly, several senior Chinese participants maintained, despite US pushback, that Washington may view Beijing as more threatening than the Islamic State. In that context, several Chinese said that they would prefer China not be mentioned in the next NPR rather than being branded as an enemy or potential threat.

Chinese also have many questions about the nuclear policies and priorities of the Trump administration. They wonder if the next NPR will preserve the US priorities set out in 2010 or whether the Trump administration might abandon the commitment to combating nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation, de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons, strengthening arms control, and advancing toward disarmament. US participants made the point that if the Chinese want their views on the NPR to be heard, they need to engage relevant US officials in a track-1 setting – and do so quickly.

## 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, our dialogue included a full session devoted to this issue. Our 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, they were unable to answer basic questions about roles, responsibilities, and outcomes during the questions-answers session. There were, for example, three or four different answers to questions 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. In this discussion, one knowledgeable participant repeatedly asserted that the PLA air force was obtaining a nuclear role.

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. Despite the uncertainty, the following appeared to be the most authoritative interpretation of the new and still changing structure:

- The Strategic Rocket Forces and Strategic Support Force will report directly to the CMC;
- Detachments of both entities can be assigned by the CMC to the new theater commands, but there will not be permanent components as with the ground, naval, and air forces. It appeared that for the Strategic Rocket Force only conventional units will be assigned to theater commands;
- The Strategic Support Force was described as a functional command combining

- cyber, electronic warfare, information systems, and strategic communications. Only in response to a question did the Chinese acknowledge that it would also have responsibilities for military space efforts. They provided no details;
- The Chinese did not respond to questions about the reporting chain for submarine-launched ballistic missiles; and
  - A Chinese speaker confirmed that the PLA air force has been recently re-equipped with a nuclear capability, but provided no details and did not discuss command arrangements.

## North Korea

Because North Korea's missile and nuclear progress have come to pose a growing and increasingly intolerable threat to the United States, it became a top foreign-policy issue for Washington and, by extension, for the US-China relationship, a fact underscored during the Trump-Xi Mar-a-Lago Summit. This year's dialogue, as a result, devoted two sessions on North Korea: one that compared US and Chinese assessments of the threat and one that discussed the US and Chinese roles and potential cooperation to address the issue, both in peacetime and during a crisis.

### Threat assessment

Our Chinese speaker explained that North Korea had mastered key nuclear-weapon designs by 2013 and that it has been able to standardize nuclear weapons since last year. To him, it is safe to assume that Pyongyang possesses 400-600 kilograms of weapon-grade uranium. Also safe to assume is that Pyongyang is now capable of mounting nuclear warheads on missiles and that it is "probably" able to design a gun-type weapon.

Regarding North Korea missiles, Pyongyang has numerous short- and medium-range missiles, including missiles it can launch from submarines. Now that it has conducted two ICBM tests, it is clear that Pyongyang can threaten the US homeland, and "potentially deter" Washington.

Beijing's goal remains the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, even though the prospects are dim, at least in the foreseeable future. Dialogue is important to try and get there, however, and China stands ready to help the United States in any way it can. In the immediate term, a priority for US-China cooperation should be ensuring that North Korean nuclear assets are safe and secure. As our speaker put it: "nuclear safety and security haven't been given sufficient attention. A nuclear accident in North Korea would be disastrous. And there is always the possibility that terrorists get hold of weapon-grade materials."

Our US speaker stated that North Korea is estimated to have a plutonium stockpile of 32-54 kilograms, a quantity sufficient to produce 6-8 bombs, and that it can produce one additional bomb's worth of weapon-grade plutonium per year. North Korea also has indigenous sources of uranium, has revealed a production-scale (2,000

centrifuges) uranium-enrichment plant at Yongbyon, and likely has a second undisclosed plant elsewhere on its territory. Its uranium-enrichment facilities likely give Pyongyang the ability to produce 150 kilograms of highly-enriched uranium per year, which is sufficient for producing approximately 6 new nuclear bombs, and its stockpile of highly-enriched uranium could be anywhere between 300-760 kilograms. All in all, the US Defense Intelligence Agency assumes that North Korea has 60 nuclear weapons and utilizes composite pits that combine plutonium and highly-enriched uranium. Given North Korea's modernization efforts, one estimate also suggests that Pyongyang could have as many as 100 bombs in 2020.

Also significant are North Korea missile development. The country is estimated to have hundreds of short-range ballistic missiles (of 120-1,000 kilometers) and fewer than 100 launchers; approximately 200 medium-range ballistic missiles (of 900-1,500 kilometers) and less than 50 launchers; and an unknown number of intermediate-range ballistic missiles (of 2,500-4,500 kilometers) with less than 50 launchers. Pyongyang has also successfully tested submarine-launched ballistic missiles, which have ranges of 1,000-2,000 kilometers. Moreover, and significantly, Pyongyang now has ICBMs in its inventory – missiles with a range of up to or possibly more than 12,000 kilometers.

North Korea has made its nuclear arsenal an integral part of its national strategy, which it claims exists primarily to deter aggression from the United States and constitutes no threat to other states. To Pyongyang, denuclearization is now only possible following a switchover in the US "hostile policy," likely interpreted to include the removal of US troops from South Korea and mutual disarmament with the United States.

Finally, echoing our Chinese speaker, our US speaker suggested that there is every reason to be concerned with North Korea's apparent absence of safety practices and protocols at its nuclear facilities. He opined that cooperation on nuclear safety among technical specialists may be the least politically burdensome project to introduce in the current environment.

### Response options

Our US speaker identified four response options to address the North Korea nuclear challenge: regime acceptance, regime transformation, regime destabilization/change, or regime removal/reunification. There are three ways to "accept" the regime. One is to "do it their way," i.e., give North Korea what it wants: accept that it will pursue both economic development and nuclear weapons and that there will not be any denuclearization until and unless Washington agrees to a bilateral peace treaty, which Pyongyang insists must include an end to the US-South Korea alliance and a withdrawal of US forces from, and the US security umbrella over, the Korean Peninsula. That option is unacceptable, however, because it would cut Seoul out of the discussion, not to mention that normalizing relations with Pyongyang would damage and maybe kill the NPT, plus fuel proliferation. Another, slightly better option is to de facto accept North Korea's nuclear-armed status and focus on deterrence and containment. Yet that option, too, would create more problems that it would solve because public opinion in Seoul



already runs strongly in favor of an independent South Korean nuclear-weapon capability. A third option is to encourage Seoul and Pyongyang to focus on peaceful coexistence through the creation of a North-South federation or confederation. That approach would not directly address the nuclear issue but could help set the stage for negotiations.

Next to regime acceptance is regime transformation, which appears to be the policy of the current and several past US administrations. It also includes several options. One is the conclusion of a “freeze-for-humanitarian-assistance” agreement. That would not solve the problem (and the only verifiable freeze would be a halt to missile and nuclear tests, while both prohibited programs would churn on unimpeded), but it could help keep the situation from getting worse and would provide space for diplomacy. Another option is a “freeze-for-freeze” agreement advocated by Beijing (and rejected by Washington), which would involve a suspension by North Korea of missile and nuclear activities in return for a freeze or reduction in the scope and nature of the military exercises conducted by the United States and South Korea. In theory, that option could lead to deeper US-China cooperation and bear fruit, yet only if there is a genuine process of denuclearization, which at some point would include intrusive verification measures. Simultaneous bilateral dialogues between the United States and North Korea and between South Korea and North Korea, with the former taking the lead on denuclearization and the latter on peace treaty discussions, is another approach. Next on the list is to keep sanctions in place and hope for the best, or move toward a serious tightening of such sanctions to bring the North Korean economy to the brink of economic collapse; UN Security Council Resolutions 2321 and 2371 are steps in that direction. Of course, and as always, sanctions are not a silver bullet and are only effective if they are properly implemented. The problem is that so long as Pyongyang is convinced that Beijing will not turn off its life support, it is difficult to have much confidence that sanctions will do their job.

Our US speaker explained that Rear Admiral Joe Vasey (USN, ret.), founder of the Pacific Forum CSIS, put forward a two-step proposal that straddles the regime transformation and regime destabilization/change approaches. The proposal includes a grand bargain with Pyongyang where the United States would offer a mini-Marshall Plan and security assurances (ideally backed by China and Russia) in exchange for complete and verifiable denuclearization. If Pyongyang rejected the proposal, the United States would seek regime transformation and collapse. That latter approach is often equated to military action, yet there are several overt and covert steps that the United States and others can take to destabilize and replace the Kim Jong-Un regime, including, for instance, propaganda broadcasts aimed at the North Korean people and other ruling elite explaining the opportunity their leader rejected.

The ultimate approach is regime removal/reunification via the use of force. Our US speaker noted that in recent weeks many have talked about waging a “preventive war” on North Korea, with some arguing that Pyongyang would not respond to US surgical strikes aimed either at its forces (if they can be found) or at national command authorities. This is highly uncertain and risky. Also risky would be marching on

Pyongyang to remove the regime, which is well within the reach of US and South Korean capabilities.

Our Chinese speaker stressed that it is critical that China and the United States begin by discussing if they have shared goals when it comes to dealing with North Korea. Also paramount is to be clear about Pyongyang's goals which, from a Chinese perspective, are self-protection (North Koreans have drawn lessons from Iraq and Libya) and self-enhancement – they want to both create a war-prone situation and sign a peace treaty. If this is accurate, that means nuclear weapons help North Korea “live better”: Pyongyang will threaten nuclear use to create fear and avoid war, and it will use its weapons to force the conclusion of a peace treaty.

Building upon an earlier Chinese speaker, our Chinese speaker stressed that China wants to maintain peace and stability and denuclearize the Peninsula. Today, more than ever, Beijing worries that the United States (and South Korea) might be tempted to strike North Korea, which would likely escalate into a serious regional war. Another concern for Beijing is onward proliferation from North Korea. In these circumstances, and understanding that China's leverage on North Korea is “extremely limited,” our Chinese speaker pointed out that dialogue is the “only viable option.” He added, however, that North Korea has “reasonable concerns” and that the more the United States deploy strategic assets on or near the Korean Peninsula, the more likely it is that Pyongyang will stick to its arsenal and seek to perfect it.

The presentations and subsequent discussions on North Korea highlighted that Americans and Chinese largely agree on assessments of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile capabilities. While it has crossed many important technological thresholds, North Korea likely does not yet have the capability to place a nuclear warhead on an ICBM and hit US mainland targets. Significantly, Chinese noted North Korean missile-test failures prior to May of this year and openly wondered if US cyber operations were to blame. Successes since then, however, suggest that Pyongyang has remedied the problem or learned from past failures (or that the United States, having demonstrated this capability, is now saving it for when it really matters).

The two sides differ in assessments of North Korean nuclear doctrine, with Chinese insisting that Pyongyang is not suicidal and would only use nuclear weapons if its survival is directly threatened. Americans worry that Pyongyang may miscalculate, engage in nuclear blackmail, or use nuclear weapons first in a crisis, especially if they feel that they are in a “use-them or lose-them” situation. Chinese were more concerned about understanding US redlines and US views about the credibility of employing military options. While avoiding redline discussions, Americans stressed military options were “last-resort” measures, but that the Pentagon (as is the case for any country's defense department or ministry) has been tasked to prepare for all, including worst-case, scenarios.

All agreed that sanctions alone will not drive Pyongyang to denuclearize, but that they were an important instrument in pressing it to “make the right choice.” Pyongyang,

through its Byungjin policy, seeks both economic development and nuclear weapons and must be made to understand it cannot have both. Americans questioned how tightly China has enforced sanctions in the past, noting that secondary sanctions would not be necessary if Beijing clamped down on Chinese firms violating the UN sanctions regime. Chinese argued that others, including Russia and Ukraine (and even Europe, Japan, and South Korea) secretly provide assistance, highlighting a New York Times report that Hwasong-14 engines originated in Russian-influenced Ukraine.

Chinese concerns about the prospect of a nuclear accident or incident resulting from poor safety and security practices at North Korean nuclear facilities were reiterated several times in the questions-answers session. Americans stressed that addressing this problem is difficult to reconcile with UN sanctions requirements and risks legitimating North Korea's nuclear program. Yet this is one area where Chinese appear open to (if not eager for) contingency discussions. Questions were raised as to whether Pyongyang would accept safety assistance even if offered.

Significantly, there are differences of opinion among Chinese on North Korea policy. Some do not share the US sense of urgency and blame US "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang for the deadlock, insisting that Chinese cooperation will hinge on US actions in other areas, including in the South China Sea. Most, however, exhibit a readiness to work more closely with the United States to further pressure North Korea; suggestions included five- (or three- or four-) party talks and even discussions on contingencies, although only a minority endorsed the latter.

All Chinese stress that Beijing's influence on Pyongyang is limited, however. Several acknowledged that a common vision and shared objectives on this issue is essential to promote deeper cooperation. [As previously mentioned, the Pacific Forum CSIS, with support from DOE/NNSA, is working on a project to develop common objectives and mutually acceptable mid-to-long-term outcomes.] At any rate, the Chinese clearly believe that denuclearization ultimately requires finding a way to deal with what they see as North Korea's sense of insecurity.

#### 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.

US speakers recommended specific space and cyber CBMs. For space, both the United States and China have an interest in raising the threshold for kinetic anti-satellite attacks (in part because such attacks would create space debris); because the first kinetic

anti-satellite attack is likely to provoke a retaliatory anti-satellite attack (including potentially in other domains), creating more debris and causing disruption for other; and because the use of kinetic anti-satellite weapons would likely result in escalation to war. Therefore, while from a US perspective an NFU pledge should be ruled out because neither side would believe the other, a joint statement clarifying how both countries understand the dangers of using kinetic weapons in space would be helpful in that it would foster a common understanding on this issue and ease the pressure to strike first to avoid being put at a disadvantage. This is a project that can take roots at the track-1.5 level.

For cyber, even if the United States and China choose to be responsible and restrained custodians of cyber capabilities and elect not to use them against each other, they are at risk if other countries are reckless. From a US perspective, therefore, Washington and Beijing have an opportunity to show leadership by addressing complex questions, including: What constitutes responsible conduct for possession and potential use of offensive cyber operations? What types of targets should be off-limits? Is it feasible for major powers to agree that critical civilian infrastructure and financial networks are off-limits? What are the appropriate steps for ensuring that a military cyber operation will not spread and have unintended effects? How would the United States and China cooperate if a third party unleashes a strategic cyberattack that spreads? These are questions which, again, can be addressed at the track-1.5 level.

Our 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. Our Chinese speakers quickly added, however, that it was important for China and the United States to “remain mutual 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.

More specifically, our Chinese speakers suggested that Beijing and Washington 1) put out a public joint statement on strategic stability; 2) establish a 2+2 dialogue on strategic stability; 3) discuss redlines on nuclear use; 4) conduct reciprocal visits/inspections of BMDs, supersonic weapons, or military reactors; and 5) improve current discussions on space and cyber by focusing them on avoiding arms races and

crisis instability. Regarding space, possible CBMs could include commitments not to weaponized this domain, not to attack space assets, and work to define dual-use space capabilities and enhance information-sharing on space awareness technology. Regarding cyber, a priority should be to conclude an agreement not to target critical infrastructure, which would need to begin with defining what “critical infrastructure” is.

Overall, Chinese and Americans seemed to understand that they must enhance mutual strategic reassurance beyond the work undertaken between their militaries, notably on crisis management. Significantly, compared to past meetings, there was much less Chinese insistence that it is up to the United States, the stronger party, to do the most work and make the most concessions to make CBMs work. Meanwhile, the group’s efforts to develop a US-China memorandum on “US-China Rules of the Road in Cyber Space, Outer Space, and Nuclear Deterrence” continued, with additional assistance from DOE/NNSA.

#### 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. It was free of the usual complaints about US behavior. US support for Taiwan, freedom-of-navigation operations, or limits on engagement were barely mentioned by our Chinese colleagues, and there were only a few scattered references to the US deployment of Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense batteries to South Korea, a subject that dominated earlier meetings.

By and large, Chinese questioned US policy rather than challenged or denounced it and evinced a readiness to find ways to cooperate and work with the United States. Significantly, in contrast to previous meetings at which they complained about US alliances in Asia, dismissing them as “Cold-War legacies” and devices that empowered or encouraged regional countries to challenge China, Chinese participants talked little about US alliances and the resulting implications for US policy, such as extended-deterrence commitments.

Some Chinese were clearly still using vetted talking points, however, and there remain fundamental differences in US and Chinese perspectives on several key strategic nuclear issues. It is important, therefore, not to expect too much, too soon from Beijing. Yet there was also a diversity of views within the Chinese team, especially when it came to dealing with North Korea, interpreting both US and Chinese overall policies and strategies, and discussing the implications of PLA reforms on the strategic arena. 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. Because both sides evinced concern that the Ban Treaty could provide a fig leaf to opposition to the NPT and even undermine it, both sides also talked about an opportunity for the United States and China, along with the other P-5 countries, to work together to

head off that possibility. Chinese, however, did not respond to US urging that China should join the United States and United Kingdom in emphasizing that the Ban Treaty does not express customary international law.

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 states, notably Russia, India and Pakistan, US regional allies, and “rogue states” (North Korea and Iran). Contingency planning regarding North Korea, in general and specifically as regards a joint response to a nuclear accident or incident, also appears overdue. More work is also needed to identify more specific CBMs, including outside of the military-to-military channel. During that discussion, our CFISS interlocutors expressed a commitment to continue and even deepen and expand the dialogue to increase its relevance. The US side concurred, stressing that this track 1.5 effort, regardless of how useful, cannot however substitute for official dialogue.

## 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

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#### 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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