

The 32nd New Buds Salon
The Biden Administration's Policy toward China
and Prospects for Sino-US Relations

May 7, 2021

The Sino-US relationship is one of the most important bilateral relations in the world today. The relationship not only matters crucially to the interests of the two powers, but also to the peace and development of the world. At the beginning of this year, Joe Biden came to power as the US president. Will this bring about a chance to adjust Sino-US relations? Compared with the Trump administration, what are the similarities and differences in the Biden administration's policy toward China? Will Biden continue Trump's policy toward China? The salon invited Prof. Wang Yong, director of Peking University's US Studies Center, to make a keynote presentation titled, "The Biden administration's policy toward China and prospects for Sino-US relations."

Prof. Wang Yong pointed out that the current Sino-US relationship is complicated, and the two countries have formed a global competitive relationship. Therefore, under such complex conditions, objective views can only be drawn by putting the Sino-US relationship under a viable analytical framework. Moreover, the nature of the Sino-US relationship saw fundamental changes during the Trump administration, and the formation of a strategic competitive landscape has been sped up.

In the 100-plus days since Biden took power, academia has been engaged in all kinds of evaluations, but opinions from the experts are divided. The main questions are as follows: Are there differences between Biden's and Trump's policy toward China? If any, what are the differences? Will the threats brought about by the Biden administration be bigger than that of Trump? As for the future tendency of Sino-US relations, Prof. Wang Yong expressed his belief that it should be treated based on the broader and longer-term perspective.

I The pandemic, globalization and Sino-US relations: An analytical framework

The pandemic, to some extent, has demonstrated the degree to which the globalization of the economy has impacted the US and society worldwide, exposing institutional and structural problems hardly seen previously in the US. Overall, economic globalization has boosted global economic growth and benefited each country. However, it has brought about many problems in terms of profit distribution. Although it advanced the formation of the global supply chain, the chain was classified into high-end, mid-end and low-end types. The US initiated and led economic globalization. But it was China that proactively participated in globalization, began from a humble start with low added-value industry and gradually climbed up higher on the global value chain. Both China and the US are the countries that have benefited the most amid economic globalization. But

considering the different development phases and national systems they espouse, they are different in status on the division of the labor chain amid economic globalization, and thus have different results.

Meanwhile, economic globalization has produced two unexpected results in the Sino-US relationship. First, China's economic rise. As it had been planned by the US and the West, the future global political landscape should have seen China located at the bottom of the global supply chain, or, at most, in the middle of the chain. However, Chinese high-tech enterprises represented by Huawei have showcased China's strength in the new economy. China's rise comes from its correct strategic choices (opening-up and adopting a market economy approach). It seized the opportunity of the development of globalization and, at the same time, broke the upstream-downstream relationship of the global supply chain, which has also led to the US and the West "suffering losses" (as they put it). Second, challenges coming from ideology. The economic achievements made by China rightly reflect China's correctness in its adherence to the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and the effectiveness of China's national governance. The advantages of China's system have been particularly prominent. In the eyes of the US and the West, it constitutes a challenge to their ideologies. They previously expected China to undergo a peaceful evolution that would lead to a change in its political system; however, this

illusion has been torn down by China time and time again and has been proved to be wrong.

Now, both the Trump and Biden administrations have recognized these two huge changes, which have led to changes in Sino-US relations and Sino-Western relations. This will also make Sino-US relations very difficult in the future, especially in terms of values and ideologies.

The serious division between the red camp and blue camp in the US also reflects the division between the coastal area and inland area as well as the stratum division between the elites and the ordinary people. Ten percent of the US population possess more than 70 percent of the country's wealth, and the top 50 richest people possess more than half of the country's wealth, a proportion that has worsened amid the pandemic. Over the past three decades, half of the grassroot families in US have seen their net assets decline. Over the past 40 years, the salary level of the US has not changed at all. Factors home and abroad that caused the relative waning of the US include the heavy blow from the epidemic, its declining international influence, the overall division of the political society, protracted race conflict and pervasive gun violence. The US's domestic crisis will spread to its foreign policy. However, the US response was merely to blame the crisis on others to divert people's attention domestically. The approaches it took have included over-issuing of currency and its economic relief programs. Using "competing

against China” to unite the population domestically and contain the rise of China has become the main goal of the US government, while using anti-Asian hatred to divert attention away from the tensions in domestic racial relations.

II Results of Trump’s policy toward China: Fundamental changes to the nature of Sino-US relations and the acceleration of the formation of a landscape of strategic competition

Fundamental changes have taken place in the nature of Sino-US relations: from cooperation-oriented to conflict-, competition- or even strategic competition-oriented. China kept a relatively good relationship with the US before Trump took power, and both sides cooperated on many issues, including climate change. But at the later stage of the Obama administration, domestic dissatisfaction with the Democratic party’s policy toward China and Sino-US relations was already evident. The force of US populism now is its ability to impact government policy from the bottom up. During the Trump administration, four dialogue mechanisms were interrupted, with Sino-US trade relations becoming a new field for competition. The US began to treat China as its biggest threat and strategic competitor. With the full-out unfolding of Sino-US competition, relations between China and the US are gradually falling into a new cold war. Within the context of the strategic competition between countries and games between big powers, the cold-war features apparent in Sino-US relations amid the pandemic in

2020 have been increasingly prominent, with competition in political system, ideology, development model and governance model becoming more intense. Before 2008, some experts in American academia believed that under economic globalization, the phenomenon of a “Chimerican country” would appear, namely, the interests of China and America would become enmeshed. Although the US was suffering a large trade deficit in the relationship, in general, it was beneficial to the US, and the US was willing to maintain it, and most economists believed that this relationship was sustainable. But during the Trump administration, the relationship underwent a fundamental change, and the full-out decoupling of the US and China was made a part of its policy agenda.

Centering on the US’s China policy, there has been a confluence of opinion among three influential groups in the US toward China, and public opinion concerning China has deteriorated sharply. Such a situation had never occurred since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US, in 1979. But during the past four years, the situation has changed. First, the hawks in the trade field believe that, in Sino-US trade relations, the US is the one that suffers. The American business community believes that China’s market is becoming more and more closed. The American elite’s attitude toward the Chinese market has changed, and they advocate taking tough measures to open up the Chinese market. Second,

the hawks in the security field, out of extreme ideological considerations, regard China as the biggest challenger to US hegemony and, therefore, advocate measures against China. These people usually come from US security and intelligence departments and the domestic conservative forces, including military-industrial complex forces. Third, the hawks concerned with human rights, with the Democratic Party as their mainstay, are attacking China on issues such as the epidemic, surveillance, and Xinjiang, and they support taking tough measures against China. At the same time, a “New McCarthyism” has emerged on issues relating to China. Moderate elites spoke cautiously and even censored themselves, and the voices of global elites were suppressed by the forces of populism, protectionism, and nationalism.

The epidemic has intensified the competition between the US and China, which is now increasing the risk of a “new cold war.” First, when the epidemic was raging largely in China, the conservative mouthpiece *The Wall Street Journal* published an editorial titled “China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia.” The Trump government wanted to take advantage of the epidemic, believing that it was the best opportunity to recall the US manufacturing industry from China and re-boost domestic manufacturing. However, the pandemic situation got out of hand in the US, and the differences in the approaches of China and the US to dealing with the epidemic and their effects became prominent. The

COVID-19 pandemic intensified the competition between ideologies and political systems. Thereupon, China's anti-epidemic international aid and international cooperation was "politicized" and "demonized." To cover up its insufficient measures taken in its response to the epidemic, the US spared no effort to promote slogans such as the "Chinese virus," "Chinese laboratory leakage," "Chinese man-made virus," "China's responsibility for the virus," and "China should compensate the world for the loss caused by the virus."

Therefore, even after Biden assumed power, it has still been difficult for China and the US to cooperate in fighting against the epidemic due to the heavy anti-China political pressure within the country. Under such conditions, the hawks in the US have felt themselves encouraged to launch a new round of cold war and advance the policy of overall decoupling between the US and China. In terms of public opinion warfare, the White House National Security Council issued a special order to conduct a public opinion warfare against China and use the epidemic to incite hatred against China and divert domestic attention. In terms of ideology, the US is trying to establish a united front to contain China. In the international arena, the US is trying to counteract China's new influence, and its hardliners have created a "white terror" in its opinions toward China. Among them, the "Five Eyes Alliance" is the main force responding to the new cold war policy of the US. By

discrediting China's ideology and political system, they are forcing other countries, from Europe to the Asian-Pacific region, to "choose a side." At the same time, the US is also using its structural power in different areas to try to exclude China from existing global systems, including the currency and the Internet systems.

III Biden's China policy and the direction of Sino-US relations

Biden's China policy will be impacted by both domestic and foreign factors. During the Trump administration, middle- and lower-class sentiments were released, which has hugely constrained the Biden administration's China policy. First, the division of the US has intensified and, in the future, the Biden administration will be pressured by supporters of Trump despite of Trump's absence from power. These people were a major strength in US public opinion as well as among middle- and lower-class people. Second, the competition between the parties matters to which party will hold power and status in the future, and the partisan struggle will become more intense. In the US Congress, although the Democratic Party dominated after the election, their edge was very small. But in the Senate, the seats of both parties are similar in number. In this sense, if opinions on a certain decision are divided in the future, the vote of Vice President Harris will be needed to change the relative balance. Therefore, under this political structure, the Biden

administration will inevitably handle its relations with China very carefully. Third, due to the impact of COVID-19, the national strength and “soft power” of the US have been greatly reduced.

Considering the current political situation of the US, especially the increasingly mounting dissatisfaction of the middle- and lower-class, the Biden administration has proposed the concept of a “foreign policy for the middle class.” The US Trade Policy Agenda 2021, released in early March of this year and aiming to consolidate and expand domestic political support, stated that US foreign economic and trade policies should serve the middle class and working class. Taking into account the current impact of protectionism and populism in the US, the possibility of the US returning to the TPP is very low, which provides an opportunity for China and other relevant countries to promote regional integration.

Biden’s China policy will be different from Trump’s. If the US and China can properly handle related issues, a new relationship based on “competition and cooperation” may be formed — that is, competition will be significantly greater than cooperation — and China and the US may avoid a “new cold war.” The main reasons are as follows: First, the adjustment of positioning. The Biden administration’s positioning of China, at least so far, is still as its biggest competitor, but the relationship between China and the US is not a hostile one. Second, the US

is a global power and needs to maintain leadership and influence on all global and regional issues. To do this, it needs China's support, or, at least, it needs China not to oppose it. For example, on the agenda of the UN Security Council, if the actions of the US are to be authorized by the Security Council, it needs to properly handle its relations with China. Third, Biden's voter base is different from that of Trump. Trump's voter base was in the middle and lower classes in the US, whose members could be said to be the losers amid globalization. Biden's voters are more from the winners amid globalization, such as high-tech conglomerates on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley, and Hollywood's DreamWorks. So, what are the attitudes of these forces toward Sino-US relations? They are dissatisfied with the degree of China's market openness and hope that China will open its doors and that China and the US could cooperate. Therefore, before and after Biden came to power, important American business organizations issued three heavyweight reports, all stating that they oppose the complete decoupling between China and the US, that they want to stay in China to continue investing, and that they are optimistic about the Chinese market. In fact, in 2020, the American business community did not divest capital from China, but rather increased their investment in China, and clearly sent anti-decoupling signals to the Biden government. Regarding this, Biden may slowly exert his influence after a period of time, but

currently Biden will be relatively low-key, as he is subject to domestic political pressure.

Biden's China policy attaches importance to alliance diplomacy. Prior to the US-China talks in Alaska, the US wooed its allies, launched a series of dialogues, and strengthened its own momentum. The Biden administration intends to continue the Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy with the establishment of a military alliance as its main goal, balance China's influence in the Asia-Pacific region, and finally encircle and contain China in an Asian version of the NATO plan.

The Biden administration has also continued to play the "human rights card," "values card" and "international rules card" to exert pressure on China and consolidate the US's international status. The establishment of the so-called D10 (G7 plus India, South Korea, and Australia) democratic nations alliance proposed by the UK was supported by the US. At the end of this year, the US and the UK plan to convene a global democracy summit to put pressure on China on issues such as Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

In terms of strategies and tactics toward China, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has proposed a 3C strategy, namely, "Compete, Collaborate and Confront." He believes that competition and cooperation should be available when necessary. Where there are common interests, he has said, the US can cooperate, and it must confront China in aspects where it feels

that China has not abided by international rules. The 3C strategy is a strategy based on competition but does not exclude cooperation. After taking power, the Biden administration emphasized patience with China and was not eager for dialogue. This was because Biden felt he must first restore relations with the US's allies, and only after ganging up to consolidate his foundation could he start a dialogue with China, at which point he could claim to have a dialogue with China in a stronger position. The Biden administration's China policy is still in the review stage, and the complete content of its China strategy has not yet been promulgated. And for many important positions, officials to implement policies have not yet been named. Therefore, it can be said that there is only the basic outline of the Biden administration's China policy, which is that the US must resolutely compete with China, never retreat, and maintain its leading position in regional and global affairs.

In terms of high-tech trade with China, the US is likely to introduce a "small yard, high fence" policy, that is, to take care of its most critical and important technologies. This is actually the US's striking a balance between national security and its interests. In this regard, the US began by demonstrating a tough stance and introducing more restrictive measures on Chinese technology companies, such as Huawei and ZTE. In dealing with 5G issues, the Biden government has not relaxed, but further increased restrictions on the acquisition of overseas parts

and components by Huawei and ZTE's 5G equipment, while expanding restrictions on other Chinese companies. US high-tech companies oppose the "decoupling" between Chinese and American technologies, but advocate strengthening restrictions on China's most advanced technologies.

Geopolitical competition may become more complicated, and new uncertainties have been seen in surrounding situation. The US may use disputes over the territory or territorial waters between China and its neighboring countries to achieve its goal of "dividing and conquering." In addition, the US will further promote the implementation of the "Indo-Pacific strategy" and return to Asia. It is foreseeable that there will be more complex triangular relations in the future, which will eventually involve both China and the US.

China and the US may strengthen cooperation in areas such as climate change and public health, which is accompanied by competition. The Biden administration has escalated the issue of climate change to the height of national security, and strives to implement the concept of climate change in all aspects of national policies. Last year, China made a commitment to strive for peak emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Compared with other countries, China's goal has the shortest timeframe in which to reduce emissions and subjects it to the greatest pressure. The US may put pressure on China to accelerate China's emission reduction process while restricting

China's status as a developing country. However, due to financial aid and new energy technologies, the US's ability to promote climate change diplomacy has seriously declined. On the other hand, China and the US have not yet seen the possibility of cooperation on public health issues, and issues such as virus tracing and epidemic management will still be explosive in the future.

The US will promote the reorganization of the global supply chain and, to a certain extent, decouple from China. In the later period of the Trump administration, Mike Pompeo, Wilbur Ross, Peter Navarro and others already promoted a "Partnership for Economic Prosperity" initiative, which is decoupling from China, tried to build an ideological fence and form a supply chain that could guarantee supply in markets such as the US. The Biden administration has accepted that initiative to a certain extent and is continuing to promote it. Using the "Xinjiang cotton" incident, it launched political and economic sanctions against China on the grounds of human rights, and then used this as an excuse to put pressure on those Western business circles that invest in China and have economic partnerships with China to gradually withdraw from the Chinese market and stop the use of raw materials and parts from China, and finally achieved the goal of excluding China from the global supply chain. At first, the US hoped that India would replace China, but due to the outbreak of the epidemic in India, the

possibility of replacing China in the global manufacturing industry was very thin. But the cotton issue may be the beginning of the US promotion of decoupling from China on the global supply chain.

Wang Yong pointed out that the Biden diplomatic team is different from the Trump team and required China's patience and wisdom to respond to it. Biden's diplomatic team represented the Establishment of the US, while Trump was anti-Establishment with many of his foreign policies having no rules. The Biden team had a wealth of talent and strong management capabilities, which should not be underestimated. In addition, it was clear that the policy predictability of the Biden team was stronger than that of the Trump.

In the face of the pressure exerted by the Biden administration on China, China should show its attitude: cooperation will benefit both, and struggle will hurt both. It is hoped that the US can take a correct view of China's peaceful development, and that China and the US can carry out fair and healthy competition based on rules while not engaging in zero-sum competition. However, on issues related to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, China should draw a red line and resolutely fight against sabotage. On the human rights ideological front, China must resolutely fight to expose the ugly history of human rights violations in the US.

IV The future of Sino-US relations: Opportunities and

challenges

According to Wang Yong, the US strategy of “New Cold War” toward China was restricted by many factors and difficult to achieve. Sino-US relations would not morph into one like the US-Soviet relations during the Cold War.

First, there were many differences between China and the former Soviet Union, which would make it impossible for the US to implement a new cold war. For example, in terms of economic scale and comprehensive economic strength, China is far ahead of the former Soviet Union. China is far more integrated into the global economy and far more involved in international institutions than the former Soviet Union. Moreover, China’s ideological goals are limited. The former Soviet Union was promoting world revolution and meddling in international affairs all around the world, while China’s main goal is to promote international cooperation and economic globalization, instead of pushing the Chinese model.

Second, the US social and economic system has major flaws, such as domestic division, deteriorating political polarization, and deepening relative decline. Economic globalization has exacerbated social problems in the US, bringing about a widening gap between the rich and the poor, racial tensions, demographic changes, and serious firearms offences. The US national debt has reached the second-highest in history, only after its peak debt during the World War II. The

domestic economy is living beyond its means, and Trump's tax cut plan will only aggravate the country's fiscal deficit and tax level. After Trump took office, serious conflicts arose between liberals and conservatives in the US, generating social and political divisions. As a result, it is difficult for the country to reach a general consensus. However, it should be noted that the US elite desperately needs an "external enemy" in the face of domestic division. So, China should be on the alert for the US to take it as an enemy to divert domestic conflicts.

Third, China's ace in the hole is its domestic market, and it needs to play the card well. China has become the world's largest consumer market. In particular, China has a growing middle class of about 500 million people, which has a huge impact on the economy. US companies urgently need to explore the Chinese market. Under such circumstances, China's greater market opening-up will increase its leverage in foreign relations, which will continue to be an important driving force for the stability of Sino-US relations. In the new competitive situation, "market for technology" would likely be continued in the future.

Fourth, China's economy is resilient, independent with obvious advantages in the political system. Such advantage can turn "crisis" into "opportunity" for development and help China gradually gain the initiative in the fierce competition. China has the great ability of its government to intervene in its economy, and its State-owned economy is strong. China successfully dealt

with the East Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the global financial crisis in 2008. The country's COVID-19 response has also demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of its economy. The new development pattern of "dual circulation" would help enhance China's innovation capacity and enhance economic autonomy.

Fifth, the key to cope with the pressure brought by the China-US competition includes expanding reform and opening-up, improving the business environment, accelerating market-oriented reform and improving the national governance system. The competition between China and the US is inevitable. In essence, it is a competition between the two countries' political systems, cultures and business environments. If China can properly use the pressure from the US, it can, to some extent, force domestic reforms, help enhance economic autonomy and scientific and technological innovation, and improve the balanced growth of enterprises of different ownership. As a result, China's national governance system and international competitiveness would both be enhanced.

After the speech, Wang Yong had an in-depth exchange with the participant teachers and students on identity politics, cross-Strait relations, energy security and other issues.

Associate professor Wang Suolao, deputy director of PKUIAS, gave his concluding remarks on the lecture. According to Wang Suolao, Wang Yong started the lecture from the

epidemic globalization and China-US relations, and went on to discuss the results of Trump's policy toward China, Biden's China policy and the upcoming trend of China-US relations, and the future of such relations. He said that Wang Yong's lecture well integrated the visions of the target countries, the US, China, and the globe, representing his comprehensive application of methods in international relations, diplomacy and international political economy. The whole lecture was logical, informative, clear and solid, which fully reflected the harvest of Wang Yong's years of research in the academic field. Also, this lecture was of great significance for the audience to better understand the dialogue policy of the Biden administration and the direction of China-US relations.

The 33rd New Buds Salon
Great Changes in the Past Century

May 11, 2021

The world has been undergoing profound changes unseen in a century, while China has transformed itself from a country with regional impact into one with international influence. It is imperative for China to understand and study the world so as to better cope with the changes in the global landscape. On the occasion of the third anniversary of its establishment, the Institute of Area Studies, Peking University (PKUIAS), together with the university's School of Economics and School of Foreign Languages, held a series of New Bud Salon themed "Senior Diplomats' Opinions on Great Changes in the Past Century." This session invited Li Jinzhang, member of the Strategic Advisory Committee of PKUIAS and former Chinese ambassador to Brazil, to deliver a keynote report on "A Brief Review on Changes in the Past Century."

Ambassador Li previously worked for a long time on China's diplomacy frontlines with Latin America, and served as China's ambassadors extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Mexico and Brazil. From 2003 to 2011, he served as assistant to the foreign minister and vice foreign minister. He was familiar with both the top-level design and the strategic planning of China's foreign policy. Also, he had in-depth and unique insights into the economic and social conditions in Latin America.

Ambassador Li's keynote had three parts, namely, "profound changes unseen in a century," "China-US relations" and "the situation in Latin America."

I Profound changes unseen in a century

At the beginning of his speech, Ambassador Li fondly recalled his participation in the working meeting of foreign diplomatic envoys in December 2017. At the meeting, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), elaborated on the trend of the times and the international situations from a strategic perspective, and made it clear that China is facing profound changes unseen in a century. Xi quoted a line from a poem by the Tang poet Wang Bo — "the passage of time never stops, but flies fast" — to point out that changes in the world pattern are on the rise; the world pattern is becoming increasingly balanced and the Western monopoly on global affairs is gradually being broken. Although it would take a long time for the international power balance to change, the trend is already taking shape and is irreversible. From a strategic, global and historical perspective, the General Secretary made a scientific judgment on the direction of the international situation in the new era and pointed out the direction for China's diplomacy. Reviewing the development of the world situation and China's diplomatic practice in recent years, this point has been increasingly proved.

Ambassador Li expressed his belief that the "profound

changes unseen in a century” were mainly seen in the following aspects: the acceleration of China’s rise; the relative decline of the US; worsening international disorder; great changes in human production and life caused by new scientific and technological information; and the global COVID-19 pandemic, the like of which has not been seen in a century, which has served as an accelerator for major changes.

Ambassador Li Jinzhang stated that the current changeable situation was far from being a foregone conclusion. To go from the situation of changeability to one that is relatively fixed will take the world a long period of time. How to deal with the challenges brought about by such changes, how to seize the opportunities presented by those changes, what kind of international system to establish, and what kind of international order to maintain, etc., are questions of great relevance to the destiny and future of countries around the world, and must be answered by all countries in the world. In the context of globalization, the interests of various countries have become intertwined, the formation of international relations is subject to diversification, and the inherent chaotic period of international relations has caused variability. Therefore, the changing scene occurring before our eyes seems dizzying and even shocking.

II China-US relations

Ambassador Li pointed out that in order to clarify current international relations, it is most important to identify the main

contradiction and its main aspect. The main contradiction, or the biggest variable, in the profound changes unseen in a century, is the relationship between China and the US. With regard to the evolution and direction of China-US relations, he made the following remarks.

1. What factors have brought China-US relations to where they are today?

Over the past 40 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the US, the two countries have experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, but the overall relations have experienced a period of steady, upward development. However, in recent years, especially since Trump took office, the relationship has undergone a dramatic upheaval. Trump openly declared that the biggest threat to the US was China, which was the first time in the US history that China had been identified as the number one adversary of the nation. Trump's all-out attack on China has brought bilateral relations to their lowest point since the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Ambassador Li expressed his view that Biden's actions in his first 100 days in office have shown that he has not only fully accepted Trump's approach to China, but has gone even further. If anything is different, the strategy has become clearer, the layout more comprehensive, the tactics more flexible and the means more cunning. A policy of opposing China or even hostility has become a basic consensus of the two parties in the

US, and even the whole society. It can even be said to be the basic state policy of the US. Although there are many differences between China and the US, China hopes to maintain its dignity through political negotiations and properly handle the differences on the basis of safeguarding its own sovereign interests.

Ambassador Li pointed out that the main responsibility for the current low ebb in Sino-US relations lies with the US side.

The main reason for the current low ebb in relations lies in a strategic miscalculation made by the US. It believes that the contest between socialism and capitalism ended with the conclusion of the Cold War, and that the Western liberal and democratic system had climbed to the commanding height of human ideology as the last form of political governance. The US mistakenly believed that China would collapse like the former Soviet Union, and therefore adopted prevention and containment policies against China.

The strategic confusion of the US is another reason. Despite severe setbacks in socialism, the Communist Party of China has been leading the Chinese people in unswervingly following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and has made remarkable achievements. Scientific socialism is full of vitality in China in the 21st century. As a result, the US is confused about the effectiveness of its China policy.

A third reason is that the US is experiencing strategic

anxiety. According to its logic, a thriving China will surely surpass the US and replace its status on the world stage, and the century-old hegemony of the US would no longer exist. In history, both the former Soviet Union and Japan experienced rapid development, and thus became a thorn in the flesh of the US. So, they were bullied by the US in every way possible.

The fourth reason also lies in the US' strategic decisions. Determining that socialist China is its main rival, the US has kicked off a power struggle with China. Conflicts, frictions and struggles between China and the US will become the new normal and be routine during the whole process of modernization. There is no way to avoid it, and China can only see this through to the very end, Ambassador Li said.

2. How will China handle its future relations with the US?

In Ambassador Li's view, China needs to take care of the following issues while dealing with the huge contradictions and differences in China-US relations.

First, China must have the determination to fight and show its national confidence. As long as the Chinese people are united under the leadership of the CPC Central Committee and firmly advance along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, no force in the world can hold back the rise of the Chinese nation.

Second, China needs to concentrate on its own development and make solid progress. Only by strengthening its

overall national strength and achieving all-around high-quality economic and social development can China take the initiative amid the changing world situation, foresee its rivals' moves around the globe, and keep its authority.

Third, China should be more aware of potential dangers and view the international situation in a scientific way. Development is the theme of the world, and opportunities still outweigh challenges. However, uncertainties are increasing amid the major changes in the world, which requires China to have a bottom-line thinking, take precise precautions, not overestimate itself, and always be aware of potential dangers.

Fourth, China should dare to show its power, but also be good at keeping a low profile. On issues concerning China's core interests of sovereignty, security and development, such as the Taiwan issue and the South China Sea issue, China should draw a red line that cannot be touched. On such issues, China must take a clear-cut stand, fight bravely and never retreat. It is the brave who win when confronted. Peace cannot be begged, but can only be achieved through fighting.

Fifth, China should pursue innovation-driven development to strengthen its weak links. Scientific and technological innovation is the core element of international competition. China's technological prowess has come a long way, but as we can see from some incidents such as Huawei, there are still areas where the US can "seize the throat" of China. So, China needs

to make good use of the new development stage, apply the new development philosophy, build a new development pattern, and make breakthroughs in scientific and technological innovation.

Ambassador Li stressed that China's diplomacy is not only about China-US relations. China should promote the establishment of new international relations in handling international affairs, build a community with a shared future for mankind, and safeguard the interests of the Chinese people in global governance and multilateral affairs. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China should make more friends, expand its circle of friends, deepen extensive cooperation and promote cultural development. Great changes can bring great opportunities, and seizing the opportunities can usher in great victories around the world.

III The situation of Latin America

Ambassador Li pointed out that in the first decade of this century, some major Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, developed into emerging powers and achieved a collective rise together with China and other major developing countries. It broke the monopoly of Western developed countries on international affairs and promoted a new balance in the world pattern. However, at the current stage, Latin America is likely to fall into new dangers and will take a long time to break the development bottleneck. That is because many Latin American countries have been suffering violent upheavals

in their political system as well as severe economic recession, deepening social fragmentation, and the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic.

In the long run, Latin America has abundant natural resources and vast territory, which offers material foundation for economic development, and it also has rich historical experiences. If Latin America can take advantage of the great changes and carry out a thorough reform of its political systems, economic structure and social governance, the great changes unseen in a century will become a historic opportunity for Latin America's development.

With regard to China-Latin America relations, Ambassador Li expressed his belief that China and Latin America had no complicated historical grievances but many common interests in the changing world. Latin America is an important force that China can draw on. In recent years, both sides have attached great importance to bilateral relations. General Secretary Xi Jinping has visited Latin America four times. The level of cooperation between the two sides has been continuously improved, and the convergence of interests has been constantly strengthened, with bilateral trade volume exceeding \$300 billion and bilateral investment over \$200 billion.

Looking into the future, the prospect of China-Latin America relations is optimistic. Small actions by the US cannot hinder them. When the younger generation of China comes to

the frontlines of diplomacy, they should do more to consolidate the foundation of China-Latin America relations. This would surely turn the Latin America region into an important support force for China's diplomacy, Ambassador Li said.

After his speech, Ambassador Li answered questions from the audience on China-Latin America economic and trade cooperation, China's policy toward Latin America, the career development of Spanish and Portuguese majors and other issues. He also had an in-depth exchange of views with the students on how to lay a solid foundation for future Latin American studies.

Dong Jingsheng, professor with Department of History, Peking University, spoke highly of Ambassador Li during his final remarks on the salon. He said that through his personal experience, Ambassador Li provided an in-depth analysis of the current international situation, China-US relations and China-Latin America relations, demonstrating their interconnection, interaction and influence on each other. Ambassador Li also put forward valuable suggestions for students on how to study Latin American history and culture, which was very inspiring and instructive.