



# U.S.-China Relations for the 2030s: Toward a Realistic Scenario for Coexistence

Christopher S. Chivvis, editor

C. Fred Bergsten | Edoardo Campanella | John Culver | Rosemary Foot | M. Taylor Fravel | Eric Heginbotham  
Evan S. Medeiros | Meg Rithmire | George Perkovich | Stephen M. Walt | Stephen Wertheim | Audrye Wong  
*Preface by Mariano-Florentino (Tino) Cuéllar*

© 2024 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. All rights reserved.

Carnegie does not take institutional positions on public policy issues; the views represented herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Carnegie, its staff, or its trustees.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Please direct inquiries to:

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace  
Publications Department  
1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
P: + 1 202 483 7600  
F: + 1 202 483 1840  
[CarnegieEndowment.org](http://CarnegieEndowment.org)

This publication can be downloaded at no cost at [CarnegieEndowment.org](http://CarnegieEndowment.org).

# After Engagement, What? Mapping Future Conceptual Frameworks for U.S. Relations with China

Stephen Wertheim

## Moving Beyond Anti-Engagement

Over the past decade, Democratic and Republican leaders alike have rejected the conceptual framework known as “engagement” that had oriented the United States’ relations with China since the mid-1990s. As the National Security Strategy under Donald Trump put it in 2017, “For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China’s rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others.”<sup>228</sup> The Biden administration’s National Security Strategy of 2022 tells a similar story, lamenting that China now seeks to “reshape” the very international order that enabled its economic growth and geopolitical influence.<sup>229</sup>

In reaching this conclusion, the United States has done more than simply adopt more competitive, conflictual, and sometimes confrontational policies toward China. It has also interpreted Beijing’s actions through Washington’s own matrix of requirements, expectations, and aspirations that previously guided U.S. strategy, concluded that the old approach has failed, and set out to chart a different course. Whether policymakers have developed a new, positive China strategy—an approach that coheres on its own, rather than negating what came before—is debatable. The Trump and Biden administrations have taken different tacks on tariffs, alliances, and more. What is clear, however, is that Washington has resolved not to repeat the perceived failure of engagement. There is now a bipartisan anti-engagement consensus, which opens space for a robust alternative to emerge but does not itself constitute one.

Because narratives of national security play a conspicuous role in shaping the formulation of U.S. policy toward China, this dimension of bilateral relations deserves forthright and forward-looking analysis.<sup>230</sup> Although some scholars have debated whether engagement succeeded or failed, this paper takes the anti-engagement consensus as its point of departure and asks what sort of conceptual framework for U.S. policy toward China could develop over the next decade or so.<sup>231</sup>

## Why Conceptual Frameworks Matter

Conceptual frameworks for bilateral relations, such as the now-discredited engagement approach, consist of two elements besides specific policies themselves. First, they contain an overall strategic logic, or a set of unifying aims, to guide decisions within the U.S. government's policymaking apparatus. Second, they provide a rhetorical account of the same, transmitted to a variety of audiences including the general public. Conceptual frameworks, then, have both substantive and presentational facets. They are consciously conceived and explicitly articulated. U.S.-China engagement is a case in point: in official policy documents, Congressional testimony, and political statements alike, the Clinton administration put forward what it variously called "comprehensive engagement," "constructive engagement," or simply "engagement" to characterize what it sought to achieve vis-à-vis Beijing.<sup>232</sup>

This paper considers several post-engagement frameworks that U.S. policymakers could choose to adopt. Such an exercise offers three main benefits for policymakers: it can help them sharpen their understanding of the strategic alternatives for bilateral relations, grasp and shape how America's domestic political arena influences policy toward China, and influence Beijing's perception and reception of U.S. policy.

First, when a conceptual framework is taken to have failed, policy actors will sometimes "do the opposite" without clearly weighing the ends and end states they seek to achieve. In the case of relations with China, some may seek to get tougher on Beijing through policies that seem directionally appropriate, moving the United States further away from the discredited engagement approach. But such reasoning could produce unintentionally extreme outcomes, such as a de facto containment policy that not all policymakers would reflectively endorse.

Directionally driven policymaking could also yield strategic incoherence. Even if engagement is to be rejected as a paradigm, U.S. policymakers have many options for replacing it and benefit from considering these holistically and conceptually rather than only in terms of discrete policies. The engagement approach consisted of multiple and sometimes competing objectives, meaning that there is no single way to negate it. For example, while the United States facilitated China's rise by trading extensively with it and championing its membership in the World Trade Organization, it also maintained and enhanced security alliances in the Indo-Pacific, partly as a hedge against Chinese assertiveness. Did Washington err by empowering a country that was likely to become an adversary? Or did it do too much to breed

suspicion in a country that was likely to become powerful? Either or both could be true. How one answers the question produces different implications for what form a post-engagement policy should take.

Second, since the collapse of the engagement consensus, the U.S.-China relationship has gained in prominence in domestic American politics, and a wider range of actors, especially in Congress, participate in the determination of policy and the framing of debate.<sup>233</sup> Due to the politicization of the relationship, policymakers are increasingly constrained by the narrative and conceptual framework prevalent in the political arena. By better understanding that framework, they can better appreciate the political constraints it imposes and shape and steer it to foster desirable policy outcomes. As Evan Medeiros writes, finding a domestic consensus that will allow for a U.S.-China *modus vivendi* is “now not just a useful condition—but also a critical one—for avoiding conflict between these two geopolitical rivals.”<sup>234</sup>

Third, the conceptual and narrative framework put forward by the United States for its relations with China matters to Beijing and affects its reception of U.S. positions (in addition to influencing U.S. allies and partners and third countries). Chinese diplomats and commentators frequently remark upon the overarching construct with which U.S. leaders characterize the relationship. For example, Foreign Minister Wang Yi has complained that the Biden administration’s “false narrative of ‘democracy versus authoritarianism’” belies its claim that it does not seek to change China’s political system.<sup>235</sup> All other things being equal, U.S. framings perceived to threaten the legitimacy of China’s leadership or internal affairs, or to demean China’s standing as a major world power, may generate friction in the relationship, whereas U.S. framings perceived to show respect and approbation for China, and to welcome its international influence, may produce heightened expectations and goodwill (or at least expressions of goodwill).

## Four Post-Engagement Frameworks

This paper outlines four frameworks that the United States could employ to define its post-engagement policy toward China. The typology offered here, ranging along a continuum from cooperative to hostile bilateral relations, corresponds to the scenarios posited by Medeiros in this collection. For each scenario in U.S.-China relations, the paper explains the conceptual framework that could accompany and enable it, examines how the framework would differ from that of engagement, outlines what would have to happen for the United States to adopt the framework, and briefly suggests how China might receive it. Medeiros’s third and fourth scenarios are collapsed into a single category because the United States would probably use the same conceptual framework, that of competition, in both.

Whereas the scenarios characterize the attributes of U.S.-China relations, the corresponding conceptual frameworks are intended to provide policymakers with options for guiding the formulation of policies and for presenting U.S. objectives to audiences beyond the executive

branch. Because the scenarios are ideal types, the actual state of bilateral relations at any one time will incorporate aspects of multiple scenarios, giving policymakers some latitude to adopt the conceptual framework that seems likely to produce desired effects.

The discussion that follows assumes a close alignment between genuine policy objectives and public rhetoric, but it is worth noting that policymakers could choose to put some degree of distance between them. To mute domestic political criticism, officials could opt to take a harder public line toward an adversary than actual policy reflects. Alternatively, to lower the chances of retaliation from another state, they could profess an accommodating stance that is belied by harsh U.S. policies.

## Scenario 1

**Bilateral relationship:** Condominium

**Conceptual framework:** Solving global problems together

Although cooperation was a watchword of the engagement strategy, it would not be impossible for the United States to adopt a post-engagement approach toward China centered on cooperation. This time, however, cooperation would not be based on the pursuit or expectation of convergence in economic and political systems or even of convergence around common international norms and rules (such as a synthesis of the political and civic rights favored by the United States and the economic and social rights favored by China, as proposed by Rosemary Foot in this collection). To the contrary, the two countries would accept non-convergence in normative areas and focus instead on their mutual interest in addressing “shared fate” challenges, especially climate change, pandemics, economic growth and stability, and nuclear weapons nonproliferation and nonuse. To some degree, this approach would build upon the arguments for “Chimerica” put forward prior to the Great Recession, although it would go beyond the largely economic basis of the Sino-American symbiosis envisioned then.<sup>236</sup> Taking China as it is, the United States would seek to work pragmatically with Beijing to solve global problems together.

It seems exceedingly unlikely, for the foreseeable future, that the United States would orient its China policy around cooperation on world-order issues. Washington would need to reach a modus vivendi with Beijing on all prominent security disputes, including Taiwan and technology, or to decide to prioritize matters of “shared fate” above long-standing security concerns. The salience of the bilateral relationship in U.S. politics would probably have to diminish and be partially subsumed into a focus on transnational and global threats: not only would China be perceived as less threatening, but the China threat would be displaced by other threats, perhaps due to climate-related turmoil, the use of nuclear weapons by a third country, or a global economic recession.

A framework of solving global problems together would require American policymakers to alter the general concepts with which they position their country in the world, especially when speaking to domestic political audiences. The United States would have to discard or deemphasize its traditional concern with maintaining global primacy (unless China suffered a debilitating economic downturn) and imagining an exceptional role for itself in international politics. Washington would also have to accept a somewhat pared-down version of international order in place of its preference for a thicker, “liberal” order.<sup>237</sup>

U.S. leaders would not have much modern precedent to draw upon if they positioned China, an authoritarian and non-Western great power, primarily as a global co-leader. The United States never established such a robustly cooperative disposition toward the Soviet Union. Under such presidents as Theodore Roosevelt and George W. Bush, it sometimes valued Great Britain as a partner in global policing, but such cooperation was underpinned by a sense of shared liberal values or racial/cultural heritage, neither of which can be invoked in relation to China.

China is likely to welcome a framework of solving global problems together, which treats China as a great power on a par with the United States. Moreover, such a framework would resonate with Beijing’s slogans of seeking “win-win cooperation” and building a “global community of shared future.”<sup>238</sup> China could claim to have pulled the United States toward its vision for global affairs.

## Scenario 2

**Bilateral relationship:** Détente

**Conceptual framework:** Competitive coexistence

The second scenario posits a framework of competitive coexistence, positioning China primarily as a competitor and a real but manageable challenge to the United States. This framework would accompany and reinforce a bilateral relationship that had achieved or was at least moving toward détente, marked by stable, predictable patterns of interaction and mutual respect for vital interests.

Competitive coexistence would be in every way less ambitious than the engagement approach, at once more accepting of China as it is and more pessimistic about the upper limits of the relationship. The United States would not expect, much less promote, the liberalization of China’s political system, and it would work to establish the terms by which the two countries could coexist as great powers with growing economies embedded in global trade and finance. At the same time, Washington would accept an essentially competitive bilateral dynamic, and seek to manage but not transcend divisions on a host of issues. In this way, competitive coexistence differs not only from the old engagement framework but also from the first scenario of solving global problems together.

Coexistence is already present in the Biden administration's statements, albeit in a subordinate position to strategic competition, and several scholars have proposed competitive coexistence as a guiding framework.<sup>239</sup> In order to elevate competitive coexistence to centrality in U.S. discourse and policymaking, however, the United States would probably have to become more concerned about the risk of military conflict with China than about the loss of its competitive position to its rival. It would also need to be reasonably confident that, through a mixture of deterrence and accommodation, it would get Beijing to exercise mutual restraint and utilize crisis communication channels. Unlike in the first scenario, China could remain highly salient in American politics, as the Soviet Union remained during *détente*, but U.S. political actors would need to decenter the Taiwan issue or to develop a stronger consensus that avoiding war requires the United States to maintain the One China policy and deter provocative actions from both Beijing and Taipei.

In particular, U.S. political actors would have to change their current discourse about China in two major ways. First, politicians and commentators would need to raise awareness of the political, military, and economic costs that Americans would bear in a war against China, making clear that such a conflict would look nothing like the previous decades of U.S. wars against weaker adversaries.<sup>240</sup> The business community could be one driver of such an effort if it becomes alarmed by the risk of war or fears that economic decoupling will spiral out of control or negatively impact entire sectors of the economy. Policy experts could draw upon the United States' history with the Soviet Union to "get to *détente*," whether in reaction to a startling event akin to the Cuban Missile Crisis or in the anticipation of one.

Second, the United States would have to alter the political narrative, conveyed in the Trump and Biden national security strategies, that blames China for not fulfilling Washington's expectations during the era of engagement, namely that Beijing would liberalize economically and politically, act as a junior partner to the United States in global affairs, and choose not to develop military power that challenges U.S. positions in Asia. Instead of solely blaming China, the United States would have to accept that it harbored unrealistic expectations that exceeded the requirements of U.S. national security. Doing so would create the political space to accept coexistence with Beijing on terms that support U.S. interests but are less favorable than in prior decades.

Although competitive coexistence would primarily be a negative framework—centered on avoiding catastrophe—it could also connote a positive agenda for enabling humanity to coexist on a safe and habitable planet. Under this rubric, the United States could seek to work constructively with China to avert or mitigate existential risks caused by climate change, pandemics, nuclear weapons, and advanced technology such as artificial intelligence. Embracing this positive dimension of competitive coexistence would encounter many of the same challenges as adopting the first scenario's frame of solving global problems together. But these challenges would be mitigated by nesting cooperation within a primarily competitive framing. Moreover, if the United States were satisfied with its position in relation to China and globally, then competitive coexistence could be consistent with U.S. preeminence in the international system, albeit not with unipolarity.

Competitive coexistence would meet China halfway. Although Beijing objects to defining the bilateral relationship in competitive terms, it routinely holds up the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, articulated by Zhou Enlai in 1953, as a basis for its orientation toward international affairs, and it employs “peaceful coexistence” as one of its main frames for relations with the United States.<sup>241</sup> An editorial in the Chinese Communist Party’s *Global Times* in November 2023, however, expressed concern that competition and coexistence were contradictory.<sup>242</sup>

## Scenarios 3 and 4

**Bilateral relationship:** Strategic competition, from muddling through to outright rivalry  
**Conceptual framework:** Competition

In the third and fourth scenarios, the U.S.-China relationship would continue to deteriorate but stop short of an acknowledged cold war in which the United States seeks to contain, if not roll back, Chinese power. Although Washington would likely frame the relationship in terms of competition, “*constraint*” might be the more precise concept. The United States would work to constrain China’s options in the Indo-Pacific and beyond without outwardly aiming to suppress China’s rise or prevent the expansion of China’s international influence. As Secretary of State Antony Blinken put it in 2022, “We cannot rely on Beijing to change its trajectory. So we will shape the strategic environment around Beijing to advance our vision for an open, inclusive international system.”<sup>243</sup>

Whether in the guise of great-power competition or strategic competition, competition has been the watchword for the United States’ approach toward China across the last two administrations. Yet competition has a nebulous character that is somewhat unstable and might not prove durable. Conceptually, U.S.-China competition is largely defined by what it is not. As the Biden administration repeats, competition is not containment or a new cold war. Washington hopes to cooperate with Beijing on discrete issues and seeks to keep competition from veering into conflict. Competition also begs questions: Over what are the United States and China competing? Do the competitors accept a common set of rules, are they competing over who gets to define the rules, or is the competition a zero-sum contest for power? To what end is the United States competing with China? Is it possible to “win” or transcend the competition or is competition effectively endless?<sup>244</sup> Because competition has an indeterminate quality, it may give way over time to the more definitive concepts of coexistence or containment, which, unlike competition, are familiar to Americans from the Cold War.

While Chinese observers have reacted to the emergence of the competition frame in a variety of ways, Chinese officials have often objected to “so-called strategic competition,” in Wang Yi’s phrase, for downplaying the need for cooperation and for pushing for “vicious competition that aims at each other’s demise.”<sup>245</sup>

## Scenario 5

**Bilateral relationship:** Cold war (with hot elements)

**Conceptual framework:** Containment (with elements of rollback and regime change)

The final scenario posits a U.S.-China cold war, defined as a full-spectrum global rivalry marked by the pervasive risk of outright superpower conflict and the bifurcation of the international economic and technological order. The United States would seek the containment of Chinese power and might well openly declare that it is waging a new cold war, as some U.S. politicians and analysts already do.<sup>246</sup> In this scenario, unlike under conditions of mere competition, Washington would regard a gain by Beijing as a loss for itself. It would eschew diplomatic accommodations with China, judging them impossible to achieve unless they advantaged the other side.

The United States could officially adopt a frame of cold war-style containment if the bilateral relationship continues to deteriorate and reaches a new level of enmity. That threshold could be crossed due to a military crisis in the Western Pacific, another pandemic, or an escalation of the trade war, derisking measures, or sanctions. Internal factors could also incline the United States to adopt such a framework. If Democratic and Republican leaders outbid each other on getting tough with China—whether because they regard it as a threat, fear being labeled as weak, or believe that rallying the country against an external foe counteracts domestic divisions—they could generate higher threat perceptions of China, more confrontational policies, and spirals of recrimination and retaliation. To some extent, this dynamic is underway today, but it could go much further. As of April 2024, while eight in ten Americans expressed unfavorable views of China, half labeled it a competitor (50 percent) as opposed to an enemy (42 percent) of the United States.<sup>247</sup> Forty-nine percent deemed “limiting the power and influence of China” to be a top long-range priority in U.S. foreign policy. Dealing with China ranked seventh on the list, behind addressing such threats as terrorism, illegal drugs, and weapons of mass destruction, and just below “limiting the power and influence of Russia.”<sup>248</sup> In addition to indicating that most of the U.S. public has yet to view China in highly adversarial, cold war-like terms, the polling data suggests that the rhetorical frame adopted by U.S. leaders matters in shaping public perceptions.

A containment frame has conceptual roots in the modern history of U.S. foreign policy. In the U.S. imagination, China could slot into the role of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Like Moscow then, Beijing today can be interpreted as an illiberal, expansionist great power hostile to the United States and threatening to its way of life. A similar transposition occurred at the outset of the Cold War: the United States applied to the Soviet Union its previous objective of containing the Axis powers from the late 1930s and early 1940s.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, the prescription of containment arguably flows from the original logic of engagement. Under engagement, containment was arguably meant to be available as a contingency plan: if China grew powerful but declined to liberalize, to become a responsible stakeholder, or to acquiesce in U.S. military dominance of the Indo-Pacific, then the United States could use its regional security alliances and force posture to switch to a policy of

containment. Not for nothing have several analysts used the portmanteau “conengagement” to characterize U.S. strategy prior to the Trump administration.<sup>250</sup> Both the Cold War narrative and the “failure of engagement” narrative enhance the appeal of adopting a containment framework toward China.

Although a familiar concept, containment may be less stable than some assume, opening the door to the more radical aims of rollback and regime change. During the Cold War, advocates of containment faced the persistent criticism that the strategy put the United States on the defensive, ceding the initiative to the adversary to define where and when Washington would take action and condemning much of humanity to indefinite captivity.<sup>251</sup> The more aggressive alternative of rollback influenced several administrations, appearing in President Dwight Eisenhower’s use of covert operations to overthrow governments suspected of communist sympathies and President Ronald Reagan’s provision of aid to anti-communist guerillas.<sup>252</sup> Because China today is the world’s leading trading country and has an economy closer in size to that of the United States than the Soviet Union ever possessed, a strategy of containment may seem more dissatisfying and futile than the containment of Soviet-backed communism did.

Containment does not rule out the objective of regime change either. In devising the original doctrine of containment, diplomat George Kennan held out hope that the Soviet system would bear “within it the seeds of its own decay,” implying that containment could produce the eventual collapse or transformation of the regime.<sup>253</sup> Likewise, the United States adopted a policy of containment with an objective of regime change toward Saddam Hussein’s Iraq in the 1990s. When containment did not seem to be making sufficient progress, whether by weakening Saddam’s grip on power or by eliminating Iraq’s threats to the region, policymakers debated a strategy of rollback and ultimately, after 9/11, opted for direct invasion.<sup>254</sup>

China would therefore likely interpret an avowed U.S. containment framework as a sign of deep hostility. Some Chinese leaders would find confirmation of their long-standing suspicion that the United States seeks to “contain, encircle, and suppress” their country, to quote President Xi Jinping.<sup>255</sup> In this scenario, China should be expected to redouble its efforts to influence third countries by complaining that the United States is seeking to contain China, overthrow its government, and divide the world into blocs.

## Conclusion

The frameworks of competitive coexistence, strategic competition, and cold war-style containment are the most probable successors to engagement. The United States could potentially arrive at each framework in a decade’s time, and for each, one could construct a plausible narrative to explain why and how Washington would get there. Given the mutual interests and economic and ecological interdependence that bind the two powers, it might seem logical that Washington would alight upon competitive coexistence after a period of adjustment to a stronger and more assertive China. Or because strategic competition is

already in place and avoids the policy and political downsides of the alternatives, its continuation may be most likely. Or the deterioration in bilateral relations may be expected to continue until a cold war-style framework, not unappealing to Americans who recall defeating the Soviet Union, locks into place.

These are all credible trajectories that would produce very different U.S. orientations toward China. That each appears plausible should caution against fatalism in U.S.-China relations, empowering policymakers and stakeholders to make choices about which kind of post-engagement future they seek. For those who place a premium on reducing the chances of a hot or cold war and preserving space for cooperation—without going back to engagement—a framework of competitive coexistence offers a way forward.

- 216 Audrye Wong, “Political Demonstration Effects: Authoritarian Informational Statecraft and Public Support for Democracy,” working paper, May 10, 2023.
- 217 Patrick J. Chester and Audrye Wong, “Divide to Conquer: Using Wedge Narratives to Influence Diaspora Communities,” forthcoming, *Security Studies*.
- 218 Rob Gillies, “Canada expels China diplomat for alleged threats to lawmaker,” *Associated Press*, May 9, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/canada-china-expel-diplomat-59270dfe597673e23b51f083213da9f5>.
- 219 Audrye Wong, “Crafting Payoffs” and “How Not to Win Allies and Influence Geopolitics.”
- 220 Matt Ferchen and Mikael Mattlin, “Five Modes of China’s Economic Influence: Rethinking Chinese Economic Statecraft,” *The Pacific Review* 36, no. 5 (2023): 978–1004.
- 221 Peter Campbell and Patricia Nilsson, “Mercedes-Benz boss urges Brussels to cut tariffs on Chinese EVs,” *Financial Times*, March 11, 2024; Judy Dempsey, “Scholz’s Visit to China Confirms Germany’s Political Weakness,” CEIP Strategic Europe, April 16, 2024, <https://carnegiendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2024/04/scholz-visit-to-china-confirms-germanys-political-weakness?lang=en&center=europe>; Andreas Rink and Sarah Marsh, “German spy agency warns companies against being too ‘naive’ on China,” Reuters, April 24, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-spy-agency-warns-companies-against-being-too-naive-china-2024-04-24>.
- 222 Konstantinas Andrijuškas, “An Analysis of China’s Economic Coercion Against Lithuania,” Council on Foreign Relations, May 12, 2022, [https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Andrijuškas\\_An%20Analysis%20of%20China%E2%80%99s%20Economic%20Coercion%20Against%20Lithuania\\_0.pdf](https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Andrijuškas_An%20Analysis%20of%20China%E2%80%99s%20Economic%20Coercion%20Against%20Lithuania_0.pdf).
- 223 Josh Taylor, “Meta closes nearly 9,000 Facebook and Instagram accounts linked to Chinese ‘Spamouflage’ foreign influence campaign,” *The Guardian*, August 29, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/aug/30/meta-facebook-instagram-shuts-down-spamouflage-network-china-foreign-influence>.
- 224 Gregory Eady et al, “Exposure to the Russian Internet Research Agency foreign influence campaign on Twitter in the 2016 US election and its relationship to attitudes and voting behavior,” *Nature Communications* 14, no. 62 (2023).
- 225 Audrye Wong and Meir Alkon, “Political Demonstration Effects.”
- 226 Hannah S. Chapman et al, “Under the Veil of Democracy: What Do People Mean When They Say They Support Democracy?” *Perspectives on Politics* 22, no. 1 (March 2024): 97-115.
- 227 Kenton Thibaut, “Chinese Discourse Power: Capabilities and Impact,” Atlantic Council, August 2, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/chinese-discourse-power-capabilities-and-impact/>; Bryce Barros, Nathan Kohlenberg, and Etienne Soula, “China and the Digital Information Stack in the Global South,” German Marshall Fund, June 15, 2022, <https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/china-digital-stack/>.

## Chapter 11

- 228 The White House, “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” December 2017, 25, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.
- 229 The White House, “National Security Strategy,” October 2022, 8, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>.
- 230 To use the term, albeit somewhat differently, of Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of U.S. National Security* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- 231 Alastair Iain Johnston, “The Failures of the ‘Failure of Engagement’ with China,” *The Washington Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (2019): 99-114. See also Zhengqing Yuan and Qiang Fu, “Narrative Framing and the United States’ Threat Construction of Rivals,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 13, no. 3 (September 2020): 419-453.

- 232 For “comprehensive engagement,” see *U.S. Policy Toward East Asia and the Pacific: Hearing Before the House International Relations Committee*, 104<sup>th</sup> Cong. (1995) (statement by Winston Lord before the Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs, February 9, 1995), [https://1997-2001.state.gov/current/debate/us\\_china\\_pol\\_relations.html](https://1997-2001.state.gov/current/debate/us_china_pol_relations.html) and Kenneth Lieberthal, “A New China Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, November 1, 1995, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/1995-11-01/new-china-strategy>. For “constructive engagement,” see Brian Knowlton, “Citing ‘Constructive Engagement,’ He Acts to Counter Critics in Congress: Clinton Widens Defense of China Visit,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1998, <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/12/news/citing-constructive-engagement-he-acts-to-counter-critics-in-congress.html>. For “engagement,” see William J. Clinton, “Remarks to the United States Institute of Peace,” April 7, 1999, UC Santa Barbara American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-the-united-states-institute-peace>.
- 233 Christopher S. Chivvis and Hannah Miller, “The Role of Congress in U.S.-China Relations,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 15, 2023, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Chivvis\\_Congress\\_and\\_China.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Chivvis_Congress_and_China.pdf); Robert Sutter, “Domestic Politics, Congress, and U.S. Hardening to China,” *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs* 8 (2022): 37-46, <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/1065415/Sutter.pdf>.
- 234 Evan S. Medeiros, “The New Domestic Politics of U.S.-China Relations,” Center for China Analysis, Asia Society Policy Institute, December 2023, 65, <https://asiasociety.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/ASPI%20CCA%20The%20New%20Domestic%20Politics%20of%20U.S.-China%20Relations.pdf>.
- 235 Wang Yi, “The Right Way for China and the United States to Get Along in the New Era,” Asia Society, September 22, 2022, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt\\_665385/zyjh\\_665391/202209/t20220923\\_10770469.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/202209/t20220923_10770469.html).
- 236 See Niall Ferguson and Moritz Schularick, “The End of Chimerica,” Harvard Business School, Working Paper 10-037 (October 2009), [https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/10-037\\_0fd7d5e-ce9e-45d8-9429-84f8047db65b.pdf](https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/10-037_0fd7d5e-ce9e-45d8-9429-84f8047db65b.pdf).
- 237 Jessica Chen Weiss and Jeremy Wallace, “Domestic Politics, China’s Rise, and the Future of the Liberal International Order,” *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (Spring 2021): 635-64.
- 238 Wang Yi, “Win-win Cooperation Should Remain the Goal China and the United States Both Pursue,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, September 23, 2022, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/wshd\\_665389/202209/t20220924\\_10771028.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/202209/t20220924_10771028.html). See also Wang Yi, “A Global Community of Shared Future: China’s Proposals and Actions,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, September 26, 2023, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx\\_662805/202309/t20230926\\_11150122.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202309/t20230926_11150122.html).
- 239 For the Biden administration, see Antony J. Blinken, “The Administration’s Approach to the People’s Republic of China,” U.S. Department of State, May 26, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china>; Kurt Campbell and Jake Sullivan, “Competition Without Catastrophe,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 1, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/competition-with-china-catastrophe-sullivan-campbell>. For scholars, see Joseph Nye, “America Should Aim for Competitive Coexistence with China,” *Financial Times*, November 16, 2023, <https://www.ft.com/content/00d06e5c-7bb0-460e-904e-942498bccb4>; Evan Medeiros, “A Fragile Equilibrium in U.S.-China Relations and Navigating Competitive Coexistence with Evan Medeiros,” Georgetown University Initiative for U.S.-China Dialogue on Global Issues, June 14, 2022, <https://uschinadialogue.georgetown.edu/podcasts/a-fragile-equilibrium-in-u-s-china-relations-and-navigating-competitive-coexistence-with-evan-medeiros>; and Mel Gurtov, “Engagement and Competitive Coexistence with China,” *Global Asia* 18, no. 1 (March 2023): 96-105.
- 240 Stephen Wertheim, “World War III Begins With Forgetting,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/opinion/america-world-war-iii.html>. See also Sulmaan Wasif Khan, “China and the U.S. Are Numb to the Real Risk of War,” *Foreign Policy*, May 12, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/05/12/china-us-taiwan-strait-war-nuclear-weapons-military-biden-xi-history>.
- 241 “Build a new international order on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, undated, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/ziliao\\_665539/3602\\_665543/3604\\_665547/200011/t20001117\\_697829.html](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/200011/t20001117_697829.html).

- 242 “US’ domestic politics biggest source of uncertainty for future China-US relations,” *Global Times*, November 19, 2023, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302107.shtml>.
- 243 Blinken, “The Administration’s Approach to the People’s Republic of China.”
- 244 See Zack Cooper, “Does America Have an Endgame on China?” *Foreign Policy*, December 14, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/12/15/does-america-have-an-endgame-on-china>.
- 245 Minghao Zhao, “Is a New Cold War Inevitable? Chinese Perspectives on US–China Strategic Competition,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12, no. 3, (August 2019): 371–394. See also Yi, “The Right Way for China and the United States to Get Along in the New Era.”
- 246 Examples include Hal Brands, “America Can Contain China with an Alliance of Five,” *Bloomberg*, November 2, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/features/2022-11-02/japan-australia-india-the-us-and-the-uk-can-contain-china>; and Matt Pottinger and Mike Gallagher, “No Substitute for Victory: America’s Competition With China Must Be Won, Not Managed,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 10, 2024, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/no-substitute-victory-pottinger-gallagher>.
- 247 Christine Huang, Laura Silver, and Laura Clancy, “Americans Remain Critical of China,” Pew Research Center, May 1, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/05/01/americans-remain-critical-of-china>.
- 248 Jacob Poushter and Laura Clancy, “What Are Americans’ Top Foreign Policy Priorities?” Pew Research Center, April 22, 2024, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/04/23/what-are-americans-top-foreign-policy-priorities>.
- 249 Stephen Wertheim, *Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2020), 97-99.
- 250 Zalmay M. Khalilzad et al., *The United States and a Rising China: Strategic and Military Implications* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999); Jay Solomon, “U.S. Increasingly Pursues Two-Track China Policy,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 17, 2005, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB113218528726599525>; Justin Logan, “China, America, and the Pivot to Asia,” Cato Institute, January 2013, <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/china-america-pivot-asia>.
- 251 For example, the 1952 Republican platform called for the “end of the negative, futile, and immoral policy of ‘containment.’” “Republican Party Platform of 1952,” July 7, 1952, UC Santa Barbara American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-party-platform-1952>.
- 252 Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America’s Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).
- 253 George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/george-kennan-sources-soviet-conduct>.
- 254 Joseph Stieib, *The Regime Change Consensus: Iraq in American Politics, 1990–2003* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
- 255 Damien Cave, “An Anxious Asia Arms for a War It Hopes to Prevent,” *The New York Times*, March 23, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/world/asia/asia-china-military-war.html>.