

China and the US

- Panel:** Plenary Session III (Orchid Room)
Date/Time: Wednesday, December 12, 2012 / 10:30-11:45
Speakers: Choi Kang, Korean National Diplomatic Academy (Moderator)
Bonnie Glaser, Center for Strategic Studies International Studies
William Overholt, Harvard University
Pan Zhengqiang, China Reform Forum
David Shambaugh, George Washington University
Rapporteur: Dawn Murphy, Princeton University

Panel Short Summary

The purpose of this panel was to examine China's contemporary relations with the United States. Dr. Choi Kang, Dean of Planning and Assessment at the Korean National Diplomatic Academy, initiated the discussion by posing the following questions: What are Chinese and US intensions towards each other? What are potential areas of cooperation between the two countries?

Ms. Bonnie Glaser, Senior Advisor for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, argued that although the new administrations in China and the US are both committed to positive relations, growing mutual suspicions between the two countries is a significant problem. Chinese leadership is particularly suspicious about the US pivot to Asia and the US is increasingly concerned over Chinese economic and trade policies, bullying behavior towards its neighbors, coercive economic diplomacy, lack of contribution to solving global problems, and military development. She also expressed concern that the security dilemma between the US and China is dominating the US agenda towards China.

Dr. William Overholt, Senior Research Fellow at Harvard University, agreed with Ms. Glaser's comments and argued that strategic misperceptions between the US and China are becoming increasingly serious. China perceives that the US is attempting to contain it. The US perceives that China has abandoned its strategy of peaceful rise as demonstrated by recent intimidating behavior towards its neighbors. Dr. Overholt asserted that strategic

*** The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.**

*** The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan China Forum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.**

misperception could be minimized through cooperation on issues of mutual interest, such as select economic issues, the environment, and denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. He also argued that the demonstrated ability of China and the United States to cooperate during the recent global financial crisis was an encouraging sign regarding future relations.

Maj. Gen. Pan Zhenqiang, Senior Advisor to the China Reform Forum, asserted that the root cause of continuous ups and downs in US-China relations is not strategic mistrust but a US lack of definition of the exact nature of US-China relations. In his opinion, mistrust is merely a symptom of this larger problem. The US needs to decide whether it considers China to be a partner or an adversary. In order to ensure positive relations in the future, the two countries should formulate a new vision of the world situation, the rules of the game, and an agreement on the force posture of the two sides.

Finally, Dr. David Shambaugh, Professor of Political Science and International Relations at George Washington University, emphasized that the recent change of leadership in China is unlikely to impact relations between the two countries. Instead, deeper structural factors are driving the dynamics of the relationship. He discussed the impact of external drivers (e.g. a shifting distribution of power in the international system) and domestic drivers (e.g. rising nationalism in China, an insecure party-state in China) on US-China relations. Overall, he argued that the US-China relationship is increasingly competitive (as opposed to cooperative) and the major challenge facing both countries is how to manage that competition.

*** The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.**

*** The views expressed herein are panel overviews of the Asan China Forum. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the author or the institutions they are affiliated with.**