



U.S.–China & U.S.–Iran

Trumpian Disruption and Changes in
the International System

Paul Goldstein

President/CEO
Pacific Tech Bridge

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Trump's Unconventional Approach

- ❖ Trump's view: A different approach than in the past, necessary to sustain U.S. prominent strategic position in a changing world
- ❖ Unconventional public diplomacy
 - ❖ U.S.-China: Restarting trade talks after G-20
 - ❖ U.S.-Iran: Maximum pressure campaign
 - ❖ Public diplomacy bypasses secret backchannels, covert operations, etc.
 - ❖ Unique approach

Traditional U.S. View on Asia

- ❖ George Kennan's mentor John V.A. MacMurray in the famous 1935 memo: U.S. historically views China with sympathy and Japan with suspicion. Predicted war with Japan would result from unrealistic expectations/beliefs about China, and mistrust of Japan.
- ❖ Joseph Grew, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, in 1937: "[The memo dispels] the generally accepted theory that Japan has always been the big bully and China the downtrodden innocent."

John V.A. MacMurray

- ❖ B.A. Princeton, J.D. Columbia Law School (one year ahead of FDR)
- ❖ Posted to Peking (1913-17), Tokyo (1917-18); Head of State Dept. Far Eastern Division (1918-25); Delegate to Washington Conference (1921-22) and inventor of term “The Washington System”; Minister to Peking, 1925-29
- ❖ State Department’s top expert on international law and China’s treaties with foreign powers. Unique in State Dept. for his belief that realism (balance of power) and international law were complementary
- ❖ Resigned from foreign service in 1929, frustrated that his suggestions for reevaluating traditional views of China and Japan were being ignored
- ❖ His law school friend FDR brought him back to State Dept. in 1933, where he wrote his memo. Retired 1944 as Special Asst. to Secretary of State Cordell Hull

Trump–Xi at G–20: Impact on Japan

- ❖ Japan saw the Trump–Xi meeting decisions as a reversal
 - ❖ Is this another Nixon shock?
- ❖ Trump tweeted that Japan should rethink Article IX. The U.S. wants Japan to play larger role in the alliance system
- ❖ U.S.–China competition on three tracks:
 - ❖ Trade
 - ❖ Technology
 - ❖ Security

Trade

- ❖ Trade talks with China are about the future of global prosperity
- ❖ Goals: Reform of the international trading system, WTO, and China's position. Trump seeks new global trading arrangements, both bilateral and in an unconventional multilateral fashion

Technology

- ❖ Core objective defined: To prevent China from achieving its stated goal of global high-tech dominance by 2035. One key focus is reducing IP theft
- ❖ Huawei decision is not a reversal
 - ❖ Technology: national security applications cannot be exported
 - ❖ China obtained low-tech chips totally \$14 billion from Korea, Taiwan, etc.
 - ❖ U.S. chip manufacturers benefit from sales of low-tech chips to China—68% of U.S. chip exports go to China.
 - ❖ Private sector R&D funding generated from sales

Security

- ❖ Containing China
- ❖ U.S.-Japan-India-Australia
- ❖ Europe: France, Germany, and UK
- ❖ UK foreign and security policy post-Brexit: Global Britain?

Key Questions After G-20

- ❖ Have the prospects for global economic growth improved?
- ❖ Have the prospects for reducing geopolitical tensions improved?

U.S.–Iran: Trump’s Public Diplomacy

- ❖ U.S. and Iran: “Maximum pressure” campaigns
- ❖ Deep State; Supreme Leader Khamenei; Islamic Republican Guard Corps (IRGC)
- ❖ Trump: “Look, you can’t have nuclear weapons. And if you want to talk about it, good. Otherwise you can live in a shattered economy for a long time to come.”
- ❖ Trump public diplomacy: Direct negotiations with Iran

Prime Minister Abe's Position

- ❖ Strong Trump-Abe personal chemistry
- ❖ Positives: Abe took initiative. Japanese interests are energy stability, peace and security.
- ❖ Negatives: Media reaction to events (i.e., tanker attack, shooting down of U.S. drone) created a negative perception for Abe

U.S.–Iran Relations and the World

- ❖ Europe: Iran should stay in JCPOA
- ❖ Japan: Energy security, JCPOA
- ❖ Russia: Russo-Iranian divergence of interests.
- ❖ China: Sino-Iranian divergence of interests.
- ❖ U.S. Increased presence in the Persian Gulf

The Trump Presidency

- ❖ Trump is not operating impulsively
- ❖ The president's mixture of hubris, excessive rhetoric, pragmatism, and (at times) serious mistakes, are combined in an experimental approach, which is capable of failure or success
- ❖ His foreign policy and national security team is supporting this policy with verve and flexibility
- ❖ Trump is the ultimate decision-maker. Advisors make recommendations—Trump consults outside friends, business associates and family and decides.

