China

Analyzing China’s strategic intentions and foreign policy behaviors

Stimson’s China program actively pursues precision in the deliberation, elaboration, and assessment of China’s strategic intentions and foreign policy behaviors to reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings, misperceptions, and miscalculations. We seek to foster transparent interaction and improve understandings of relevant actors’ strategic considerations—not only China and the United States, but also other states in and outside the region.

CHANGING DYNAMICS, EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP

The changing dynamics between the United States and China is reshaping the international system. The intersection of China’s growing ambition for global influence and U.S. overseas engagement is where the two countries are forced to contend with how their national interests, goals, and worldviews converge and diverge. Historical, cultural, and political differences as well as misunderstandings of each other’s strategic intentions risk potentially catastrophic escalation across military, economic, and political realms.

The way China interacts with the international community will help to define the 21st century’s political, economic, military, and governance norms worldwide. As the largest trading partner of the United States and several dozen other countries, China wields significant influence in the global economy; as a major investor with growing portfolios on every continent, China is positioned to deepen its partnerships with developing nations. Conflict with China would have disastrous consequences reaching every part of the world. Working to prevent such a conflict is a critical component of the relationship between the United States and China.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH DIALOGUE

Recognizing that dialogue is key for developing better understanding among regional actors, we work to expand interaction between the Chinese foreign policy community and their counterparts in other countries. We aim for a
nuanced and realistic understanding of Chinese strategic intentions valuable for policymakers, practitioners, and experts, to counter the hot rhetoric of rapidly developing current events. Basing our analysis of Chinese policy on extensive desk and field research, we allow experts, officials, and the public access to Chinese perceptions and thought processes on international relations. Our engagement of actors on all sides of the complex issues in Chinese policy, such as on China’s approach to the Korean peninsula and Southeast Asia reinforces a foundation of mutual understanding and willingness to talk that is central to cultivating a productive relationship with China.

Through research, dialogues, and outreach activities, the China program’s unique approach builds deep interpersonal connections and actionable analysis and paves the way for pragmatic solutions to the problems inherent in great-power relations in the 21st century. We balance our approach between closed-door Track 2 and 1.5 dialogues that encourage frank sharing of policy perceptions, and public-facing commentary and events that broaden U.S. exposure to different voices on Chinese policy. We deliver expert reports directly to key policymakers and experts to influence future policy-making, and we provide in-depth, private consultations for policymakers and researchers in China, the U.S., and other countries on current policy developments.

The China program leverages a rare insider and trans-Pacific perspective to disseminate objective and trusted analysis in English, accurately interpreting Chinese understandings of the world. The director of the program, Yun Sun, leverages a broad network of officials, policymakers, scholars, and other experts in the region to develop a comprehensive picture of pressing issues in Chinese policy.

Our method has a proven track record of increasing interactions and interest in collaboration among Chinese and other participants through dozens of private and public conversations every year.

Contact

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