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The U.S.-China Strategic Stalemate in the "Trump 2.0" Era

Jinbang Liu*

Shandong Mayi Youjia Culture and Education Consulting Co., Ltd, Jinan, 250300, Shandong, China

**Corresponding author: Jinbang Liu.*

Abstract

Following Trump's return to office, new developments have emerged in U.S.-China relations. Previous research often uses the term "strategic competition" to characterize bilateral relations since 2017. However, there has been a lack of systematic discussion regarding the intertwined state of competition and stalemate during Trump's second term, as well as the potential for this dynamic to evolve into strategic stability. Building on a review of recent research, this research insists that U.S.-China relations during the "Trump 2.0" era are entering a phase of comprehensive and long-term strategic stalemate. This phase stems from three sources. Firstly, there is a structural contradiction between the United States' efforts to maintain its hegemony and its strategic retrenchment. Secondly, the international order is transitioning toward a "dual-core, multipolar" structure. Thirdly, domestic political polarization in the United States is transmitted to foreign policy through a mechanism of "securitization." Strategic stalemate is unfolding simultaneously across three dimensions: trade, technology, and geopolitical security; as well as institutional rules. It manifests as a complex state characterized by localized "decoupling," "negotiating while clashing" on most issues, and a situation where the risk of conflict "largely does not spill over." Diplomatic engagement between the two heads of state has established a new framework for a "constructive strategic stability relationship between China and the United States." which provides a political framework for moving beyond the current stalemate. Nevertheless, whether this framework proves effective depends on whether both sides can translate principled consensus into sustainable institutional arrangements. Maintaining strategic patience, clarifying the boundaries of competition, and expanding selective cooperation in low-sensitivity areas constitute China's fundamental approach to navigating this phase of strategic stalemate.

Keywords

Trump 2.0, U.S.-China relations, strategic stalemate, constructive strategic stability, great power competition

1. Introduction

Trump initiated his second term in office in January 2025, which brought about a fresh wave of changes in U.S.-China relations. In comparison with his initial tenure, the present Trump administration has put pressure on China with greater speed and in a wider scope of issues, and has actively used policies like tariffs, export bans, and investment limits that led to the continuous decline in bilateral relations over time. Following almost two years of high-intensity strategic maneuvering, the situation has acquired new features: the US has been unable to successfully curb China's development and China has not succumbed to the external pressure to

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change its set development path; the balance of power and policy interactions between the two parties have generally achieved an equilibrium. According to the data provided by the Quantitative Forecasting Group on China-Foreign Relations at Tsinghua University Institute of International Relations, the first term of Trump was a critical stage of a swift deterioration of U.S.-China relations when the bilateral relationship dropped straight to the level of the disharmony of the Obama era to the point of tension and even confrontation. Though bilateral relations did become somewhat warmer with Biden administration, it has not changed the general trend of stagnation [4]. The relevant quantitative research confirms that the long-term low point in the U.S.-China relations is not a consequence of the policy decisions of one administration, but rather is due to more fundamental structural contradictions.

To address the present scenario, Chinese academic circles have proposed the analysis of the idea of the strategic stalemate in recent years. US policy towards China during the "Trump 2.0" phase, or what might be called a "new tripartite framework", includes bringing the national system together, changing the international order, and managing the competition between the US and China. Most researches indicate that the strategic stalemate between the United States and China will continue and that the two nations are slowly moving into a new era of full-scale and long-term strategic stalemate [1]. Strategic stalemate is a condition in which the total power strength of the competitors keeps on approaching each other and neither competitor can easily achieve a decisive advantage at a reasonable cost, resulting in a pattern of long-term tug-of-war and dynamic equilibrium of forces. This notion falls somewhere in between the levels of the so-called strategic defense and strategic counteroffensive with a strong focus on the long-term nature of the competition and the indeterminacy of its final result. It is essential to note that strategic stalemate does not imply a stagnant bilateral relationship. On the contrary, strategic stalemate implies the active engagement of both sides at different levels but the benefits of such engagements decrease over time and make it hard to change the current balance of power by unilaterally acting.

The implementation of the notion of the strategic stalemate is a more realistic point of view in the analysis of U.S.-China relations as it allows evaluating both the antagonistic aspects and the stabilizing tendencies in the bilateral relationship in a balanced way. Earlier mono-dimensional approaches based on the idea of a strategic competition focused on the tendency of rising tensions, easily interpreting any bilateral irritation as the starting point of the full-scale confrontation, whereas single-sided accounts of "détente" are prone to cognitive biases that lead them to overestimate the breakthrough importance of specific diplomatic incidents, neglecting the long-standing constraining impact of structural contradictions on the bilateral relationship. In contrast to these two dimensional views, strategic stalemate does not simply recognize that the competition between the US and China will be long term, but also offers a sensible theoretical basis of limited cooperation and crisis management between the two parties and can be very relevant to the current situation in the U.S.-China bilateral relations in the so-called "Trump 2.0" era [3]. Nevertheless, strategic stalemate is just a middle transitional phase; to get the whole picture of this phenomenon, combining it with an overall analytical model is needed, as well as studying the conditions under which strategic stalemate occurs and the internal dynamics of the transition between the states.

The current body of knowledge has presented several analytical directions, but some of them remain unexplored. The first one concerns the mechanism of forming a strategic stalemate. There are available explanations in the existing literature on the basis of the United States wanting to keep its hegemonic position, changing structures of the international system, and the spillovers of United States domestic politics, but the internal linkages among these three explanatory routes are yet to be clearly explained. Secondly, strategic stalemate has varying features in different fields of issues; the rationale behind stalemate in economic, trade, and security, and institutional domains is not the same. An entirely holistic generalization would threaten to conceal the conflicting tensions at various levels. The third one is the strategic stalemate future. After the U.S.-China leaders' meeting in Busan in October 2025 and the Beijing meeting in May 2026, the new construct of the US-China strategic stability relationship as a constructive relationship has become a formal reality. The scholarly society should reestablish the theoretical paradigms to account for the connection between the state of stalemate and strategic stability [3].

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2. The Logical Foundations of Strategic Stalemate

2.1 The Structural Paradox of Hegemonic Maintenance and Strategic Retrenchment

The underlying cause of U.S.-China strategic impasse is the irreconcilable contradictions that lie in the very essence of the U.S. hegemonic policy. A great power competition is, itself, a multidimensional contest where material power, network power, and ideological power are interrelated. In response to the relative erosion of its hegemonic power, the US has tried to preserve its current privileges by means of the concept of "hegemonic renewal". The modern industrial strategy, the composite alliance system, and the so-called "New Washington Consensus" proposed by the Biden administration aim to solidify material power, increase network power, and fix ideological power, respectively. The same analytical model can also be used to understand the second term of Trump. The tariff policies, the manufacturing reshoring, and the transactional pressure on the allies were all a continuation of the logic of hegemonic renewal at the strategic level. Nevertheless, based on the instruments of policy, the current administration has demonstrated a stronger inclination towards unilateralist actions. These policies have only served to diminish U.S. network power and ideological power even more, and have led to an acute disconnection between the aim of maintaining hegemony and the methods used to do so- which also explains why the U.S. approach to China has failed to deliver the intended outcomes [10].

The long-term policy of strategic retrenchment has gone hand-in-hand with the preservation of hegemony in the U.S. Strategic retrenchment is an act of international conduct whereby a major power decreases its commitment of significant strategic assets overseas. Assuming that the same retrenchment could be actively performed under the current conditions, it would indicate prudence and moderation in the strategic planning of a great power and contribute to a more or less peaceful transfer of power. But in practice, these retrenchment policies frequently fail to be accepted and when introduced, they are likely to undermine the confidence of allies in the credibility of US security guarantees [7]. The retrenchment strategy of the Trump administration had strong unilateral and transactional traits on the one hand, it insisted on allies taking on a larger portion of the expenses; on the other hand, it refused to further engage in spending on the alliance network. This is an intrinsic conflict between strategic retrenchment and the continuation of hegemony: to preserve hegemony, different resources need to be mobilized in the alliance system, but the drive towards retrenchment keeps destroying the very basis on which this system is built, eventually leaving U.S. rivalry with China in the dilemma of mismatched goals and capabilities.

2.2 The "Dual-Core, Multipolar" Transformation of the International Order

The background to the current strategic deadlock has its origins in a radical change in the state of the international order. The era of globalization after the Cold War has ended, and the world is slowly moving towards a new "dual-core, multipolar" order where the interests of nation-states take the center stage. The changing nature of the international order has altered the very essence of U.S-China relations and both nations must continue to rebalance all aspects of their bilateral ties. As the two core powers within a multipolar landscape, this assessment forms the basis on which the present bilateral relations are interpreted. The two-layered meaning of the term, "dual-core, multipolar" refers to the fact that China and the United States have far more comprehensive national power and global influence than any other major players, and their relationship has great potential to define the overall direction of the international order, whereas multipolar points to the growing independence and ability to act of other power centers. No matter how much the US and China try to mimic the Cold War relationship between the US and the USSR, they cannot form an extremely cohesive bloc or alliance. Not only does such a formation weaken the feasibility of the US containing China, but it also limits the space available to China as it attempts to increase its own strategic space. The result of this is that the two nations compete with each other in what is known as a state of reciprocal restraint where no party can unilaterally decide the outcome [2].

The transformation of the nature of U.S.-China relations due to the change in the international order has been a gradual trial and error and increasing knowledge. The nature of the relationship has since 2017 been defined by various formulations such as strategic competition, responsible competition and finally constructive strategic stability. It shows how the old substance of the relationship still rubs against the new structure of the international order. The bilateral relationship turns out to be unbalanced when the substance of the relationship does not keep up with the changes in its nature, taking the form of increased friction and escalation of confrontation. A new condition of stability will only be achieved through re-alignment of the substance of the

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relationship to the altered structural environment. This reasoning offers an order-based explanation of strategic stalemate: stalemate is an intermediate state between the death of the old order and the creation of the new order, and it is also a necessary phase that the two parties have to go through before finding ways to co-exist within the confines of structural limitations.

2.3 The International Transmission of Domestic Political Polarization and "Securitization"

This is also closely related to major changes within the U.S. domestic political scene. Under the current conditions in the world, zero-sum and indeed negative-sum games become more prevalent and the lines between them are blurring, which directly negates the possibility of international cooperation. Decision-makers in different states are focusing more on preventing possible losses instead of actively pursuing profits, and the further increase in values-oriented diplomacy leads to the development of block and inward-looking tendencies in international relations [9]. The idea of pan-securitization is strongly socially rooted in the United States, and this political polarization continues to make a hard-line attitude towards China the only issue that unites both parties. The growing security narrative lends credibility to an array of restrictive actions against China. The Trump Administration hastened the withdrawal of the US policy of global strategy, began a trade war with China, stepped up pressure on China in the field of high technology, and transactional diplomacy with neighboring allies. On the one hand, these policies are based on the fact that the US has been excessively expanding its hegemony and the cost of sustaining it is increasing; on the other hand, they are motivated by factors like increased domestic political polarization and re-vindication of trade conservatism [6].

It should be noted that domestic political factors in the United States not only encourage the tendency to confront China but, to a significant degree, also limit the smooth implementation and concerted development of its foreign strategy. In the midst of political polarization, the making of U.S. foreign policy is frequently significantly shaped by the political beliefs of the chief of the executive branch. Simultaneously, the cross-checks and balances between the legislative and executive branches, the different viewpoints between the federal government and the states, as well as the complicated interconnection among overseas allies and other domestic interest groups all lead to high levels of uncertainty in the realisation of its strategy towards China. This imbalance has led to the emergence of a clear imbalance: the United States has adopted a very tough position in pressurizing China, but strategic assets and stability of political accord necessary to support such a position are challenging to preserve over the extended period. This imbalance is directly manifested in the ever-growing rivalry between China and the United States; nonetheless, in the long term, the genuine influence of the United States' strategy has gradually become less effective. These factors collectively serve as major drivers of the development of the strategic deadlock between China and the United States [10].

3. The Multidimensional Unfolding of Strategic Stalemate

3.1 "Decoupling," "Negotiating While Fighting," and Economic Countermeasures in the Economic, Trade, and Technology Sectors

Looking at the U.S.-China strategic competition during the "Trump 2.0" era, the highest intensity has been in the economic, trade, and technology sectors, where the stalemate between the two sides is most pronounced. A review of U.S.-China relations after the beginning of Trumps second term shows that its stability is in reality based on three co-existing dynamics: First, on matters related to core national competitiveness, decoupling is proceeding; Second, on concrete and tangible issues, the two sides are both in a state of negotiating and clashing; And third, in areas where no party wants to get entangled in conflict, attempts are made to keep a status of minimal spillover [3]. In critical industries like semiconductors, artificial intelligence and quantum technology, limiting actions are still being increased and this clearly indicates that no party may afford to give up on issues of core competitiveness; however, the issue of agricultural trade, tariff reduction, and market access may be re-negotiated again and again precisely due to the fact that there is a place to negotiate and compromise at the level of concrete interests. Observing the many cycles of economic and trade talks since 2025, you will see that the procedure has had its fair share of ups and downs, with tariffs initially skyrocketing and later on subsiding- this clearly depicts the working of the so-called negotiate while fighting mechanism.

Since the early days of the U.S.-China economic and trade rivalry, the logic of action in the Chinese response strategy has been constant and orderly. Based on intensity and type of action, economic counter-

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measures by China may be classified into three levels of intensity which, in order of greatest to least intensity, are retaliatory counter-measures, targeted counter-measures and offsetting counter-measures. In practice, in the context of the strategic competition, in the event that China determines that its core national interests are at risk, or that the risks to the established strategic goals have steadily increased, China will prioritize higher-intensity counter-measures as a means of mounting a reciprocal response [8]. The key raw materials, rare earths at the center of them, are unique and irreplaceable strategic resources of China used to retaliate against any other state; the wise use of these strategic resources can directly damage the critical supply chain systems supported by the United States to develop. The real course of the Sino-US economic and trade standoff in 2025 completely confirmed the practicality of this strategic logic. The export control steps China took with regard to critical minerals totally changed the cost-benefit dynamics of the economic and trade standoff between the two parties, forcing the U.S. to actively re-enter the negotiating table and work out differences by discussing them over. These economic countermeasures have produced concrete evidence that a predictable pattern of mutual deterrence has now been established between China and the U.S. in the economic, trade, and technology sphere. Whichever side chooses to increase the level of confrontation or apply pressure, it should incur the appropriate costs in this game of tit-for-tat, a situation that has provided a solid material base to the strategic stalemate between the two countries.

3.2 Adjustments and Limitations of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in the Geopolitical Security Domain

The geopolitical security stalemate is most clearly manifested by the application of the U.S. "Indo-Pacific Strategy" and the very constraints of the strategy. The U.S. "Indo-Pacific Strategy" has usually undergone three stages since the start of Trump's first term: conceptualization, early implementation, and rapid implementation. This whole adjustment process has had the main thread of constant refining and perfecting the relationship between the U.S. rigid goals and flexible means [6]. At the start of Trump's first term, the concept of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" was officially announced. Through high-level reciprocal visits and the so-called 2+2 bilaterals, the US intensified collaboration with its key partners Japan, Australia, and India, and thus revived an alliance system of the Indo Pacific with the US, Japan, India, and Australia at the center. Nevertheless, the U.S. did not show much interest in joining the regional multilateral cooperation mechanisms. The Biden administration has extended and reinforced this strategic architecture, incorporating it into a larger integrated strategy to curb China. In a second term under Trump, the objective of containing China would be retained, and the framework of the strategy would remain the same, using the notions of precision containment and cost reduction and efficiency to change the areas of emphasis, focus, and methods of implementing them, and trade, security, and high technology sectors would continue to be the areas of policy that receive more attention.

Due to events since 2025, the Trump administration will remain in a position where its transactional attitude towards allies will further undermine the reliability of its security guarantees. Indiscriminate deployment of tariffs has also cast serious doubt among allies on the reliability of the United States as a strategic partner. Taken together with the fact that the U.S. is actively withdrawing itself from regional multilateral mechanisms, this has led to a reduction in its capacity to define the regional agenda. These intensely selfish and shortsighted changes in policies will make the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy face more challenges in the implementation stage, and can even become a possible threat of the strategy being strategically hollowed out. The evaluation of the term of the hollowing out emphasizes the inherent character of the deadlock in the geosecurity sphere. Due to its historical investments in the region, the United States maintains the same benefits in the region, including military presence and networks of alliances; China, however, increases its presence in the region owing to geographical nearness and increasing economic connections. This strategic rivalry between the two sides has for a long time been marked by the exhaustion of resources and stalemate, with none of the parties being able to have exclusive control over the region [6].

3.3 The "Four-in-One" Strategic Stalemate in the Realm of Institutional Rules

This strategic standoff in the institutional rules is the third element of the mentioned strategic stalemate. With the U.S.-China standoff having moved into a stage of total and long-range strategic stalemate, it has developed a four-in-one structure under which competition is developing across all four spatial dimensions at once: bilateral, dual-neighborhood, small-multilateral, and large-multilateral [1]. The framework is very

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illustrative of the spatiality of the current U.S. - China competition. In the bilateral dimension, the two states compete directly on a variety of topics, such as trade, technology, and Taiwan; in the dual periphery dimension, there are outward competitions between the two countries to their neighboring regions and many other third parties; at the small multilateral dimension, the US makes use of various issue-based alliances to create specific cooperative arrangements, whereas China uses forums like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to keep increasing its cooperative networks; at the big multilateral dimension, the two countries still struggle to have an authority over the course of institutional reform in the world of institutional platforms including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and financial organizations.

The institutional deadlock can also be seen through the slow process of devolving rule-making power. The United States has decided to exit some multilateral frameworks and continues to put external leverage on others, which has weakened its capability to dominate the development of international regulations. China is using the different aspects of global governance efforts to offer complementary public goods, and such actions are slowly becoming acknowledged and supported by other members of the world community. The majority of the states that occupy the middle ground have chosen to adopt the policy of multi-directional hedging and do not want to choose either of the two big powers [9]. As a result, the rules competition takes a complex, polycentric and multi-layered form, where none of the parties can monopolise the institutional benefits on their own. It is similar to the dual-core, multipolar order discussed above and both serve as the institutional base of strategic stalemate [2].

4. From Strategic Stalemate to Constructive Strategic Stability

4.1 Summit Diplomacy and the Recalibration of Strategic Perceptions

Summit diplomacy has been indispensable in the provision of strategic direction in U.S.-China contacts within the context of the so-called Trump 2.0 era. In a meeting at the Busan summit, President Xi considered that U.S.-China relations would be able to sustain the general level of stability, which contributed greatly to the much-needed certainty in the relationship between the two countries that had experienced several rounds of intense competition [3]. The two presidents met on May 14, 2026 and talked about creating the concept of constructive strategic stability in U.S.-China relations as the new paradigm of their interaction. They went on to say that this new paradigm has four aspects, namely: positive stability defined as cooperation as the core; benign stability defined by moderate competition; normal stability with controllable disparities; and long-lasting stability with the possibility of peace [1]. The concept of four-pronged stability is an effective way of defining a predictable operating system of U.S.-China relations in the current stalemate period. It recognizes the fact that there is some competition, but it must be kept at reasonable levels; it faces all kinds of discrepancies directly and states that they need to be addressed in a safe manner; it promotes bilateral cooperation and uses it as the foundation of the relationship; and it sets peace as the floor that the two nations should mutually support.

The effective implementation of this new framework depends on appropriate changes to the strategies of all involved countries. As of the beginning of the second term of Trump, the strategic evaluations that were adopted both by China and the U.S. concerning their bilateral relations indicate some divergences as far as the nature of the relationship, its main goals, points of departure in the discussion, and underlying principles are concerned; yet, their views do not seem to be entirely contradictory. Each country reads and interprets the bilateral relationship in the context of its own national interests [3]. Such circumstances enable the two parties to retain a pattern of simultaneous bargaining and negotiation on some issues, and to address discrepancies in other spheres. What China and the United States should try to achieve is not a balance but an equilibrium. The former implies balanced alignment of forces, interests, and external factors; the latter means a steady condition which both parties could agree to and would be able to sustain in the long run under particular circumstances. Striving towards the strategic perception adjustment and rebalancing of the substance of bilateral relations is mutually reinforcing, pushing positive strategic stability out of empty political declarations and into policy agreements that could be implemented in practice [2].

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4.2 The Dialectical Application of Major Trends and Minor Cycles

The long-term sustainability of the U.S.-China strategic stability framework depends on effectively matching the long-term developmental tendencies of bilateral relations and short-term dynamism. The general trend of U.S.-China relationship is not merely limited to deep-rooted structural trends, but it is also affected by short-term cycles that can arise due to policy shifts at various levels. [5] In terms of long-term structural trends, the shift in the balance of power between China and the US, the speed of the entire change in the world order, and the fact that the two countries are highly interconnected all contribute to the conclusion that bilateral competition cannot be entirely eliminated and that full-scale confrontation is not even a realistic alternative. To investigate the concept of peaceful coexistence in the context of strategic stalemate is a natural consequence of the dynamics of the two countries and the international structure; nevertheless, in the context of short-term cycles, changes in the U.S. administration, changes to the internal political agenda, and changes in policies on any number of issues will produce time periods of opportunities to thaw or tighten bilateral relations. Purposefully using such positive opportunities to develop bilateral communication and practical cooperation will, under the influence of overarching structural trends, be able to constantly extend the range of positive development in U.S.-China relations.

In early 2017, soon after President Trump was elected to office, the heads of state of China and the United States were able to initiate the U.S.-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue mechanism via their meeting at Mar-a-Lago. At this high-level discussion, the two leaders agreed on promoting practical cooperation on trade and investment and working towards positively and properly handling bilateral trade and economic friction, which enabled the U.S.-China relations to exhibit a positive direction of development at that particular time [4]. Nevertheless, the trade war that followed led to the rapid deterioration of the bilateral conditions, but this initial instance of interaction is enough to prove the fact that despite the ongoing intensification of structural contradictions between the two countries, normal high-level contacts and the creation of an institutionalized cooperation may still occasionally be used to improve the performance of bilateral relations. The lessons learned concerning the management of goals and processes at the previous San Francisco conference also support the statement that active diplomatic moves in the short run can, to some extent, mitigate the negative impact of structural tendencies in the long run. With this trend in mind, the period of bilateral détente opened up by the Busan and Beijing meetings in what can be termed the « Trump 2.0 » era is certainly a significant chance of the short-term strategic circle that should have been thoroughly exploited and utilized.

4.3 Selective Cooperation and China's Strategic Maneuvering

To ensure that U.S.-China relations would gradually shift away from a condition of strategic stalemate to a more constructive condition of strategic stability, the final resolution is to develop cooperation in particular spheres and sophisticated strategic maneuvering. There is currently a general lack of global public goods, and the risk of the Kindleberger Trap is still increasing. With such an external setting, one of the viable paths towards a rebalancing of the U.S. and China relationship in the sphere of global governance is to follow the pragmatic line of the selective cooperation [2]. The main idea behind this collaborative framework is to find situations which can be agreed by both parties and they are ready to involve themselves in them, which will help to ensure sound operation of the global governance system due to the pragmatic bilateral cooperation. Artificial intelligence governance and international financial stability are among the fields where there are many conditions that enable them to become major topics of cooperation between China and the United States. To both countries, constructive discussion of the issue of global governance is a highly effective method of communicating to the international audience that their relationship is controllable and the situation is stable. The value of selective cooperation is special because no country is forced to make concessions or compromise on structural differences. Rather, it looks at areas of cooperation that are low sensitivity but have high spillover value in the context of a stalemate, and builds up positive resources over time by cooperating on specific issues and thereby enhancing bilateral ties.

In China, the whole strategy and orientation of its strategic planning towards the US is clear at this point. Entering the new era, China has been persistently and actively seeking the right way between the two great powers to coexist constructively, and it has reached historically significant achievements in its strategic planning and practice of US-China relations. In the future, China will not merely develop further the U.S-China relationship to a more strategic stability level but also attempt to create more positive bilateral

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engagement in every sphere, which would result in more extensive and more profound positive changes in the bilateral relations. Explicitly, this can be subdivided into three categories: Firstly, on the question of core issues on China national interests, China is going to remain resolute in its principled bottom line and use matured and dependable counter-measure to deter and contain the risky and confrontational moves of the U.S. Secondly, China will actively engage in and influence the creation of the rules of bilateral competition, constantly delineating the limits of competition to make sure that the U.S-China interactions do not exceed a reasonable, moderated, and controlled level so as to avoid the strategic stalemate turning into a full-fledged confrontation. Thirdly, it is supposed to expand our international strategic depth and establish comprehensive cooperation with the countries of the so-called "Global South" to transform our external development situation. It comprises various practical steps, including revising our strategic role as a middle power, incrementally improving the South-South cooperation models, and the best placement in the global value chain [9].

The possibility of protecting bottom lines forms the safety base that supports the survival of strategic stalemate. In the absence of reliable countermeasures, any talk of stability and cooperation would be devoid of realistic ground. At the same time, the ability to determine the rules directly defines the general condition of operations in the strategic stalemate stage; if the competitive borders are distinct and well-established, it directly affects the degree of danger connected with the strategic error and the increase of the situation on either side. Moreover, active control over the external environment greatly affects the long-term evolutionary tendencies of strategic stalemate; the volume and quality of external development space of a country will eventually have a reciprocal impact on the dynamic transformation of its internal balance of power. Fundamentally, strategic endurance and governance wisdom are what define the competition between the great powers in a time of strategic stalemate. By keeping up the strategic resolve and successfully handling domestic as well as foreign contexts, the nation will eventually gain the advantage in this lengthy game of strategic stalemate.

5. Conclusion

Due to the onset of the so-called "Trump 2.0" era, U.S.-China relations are experiencing a historical shift - initially, they begin to shift slowly out of the high-intensity competition towards a position of strategic stalemate, followed by an ongoing search of how to depart such a stalemate to achieve the constructive strategic stability. This strategic stalemate has its origins in many underlying factors, including the intractable structural contradiction of the United States to maintain hegemony and strategic retrenchment; the limitations due to the shift in the international order toward a dual-core, multipolar structure; and the diverse effects caused by the overflow of domestic political polarization in the United States. In the three main areas, economy, trade, and technology; geopolitics security; and institutional rules, the stalemate takes on different expressions. Under this complicated exterior there is the constant conflict and balancing of the two nations power and strategic volition. Nonetheless, strategic stalemate is not a dead end and this stage has the possibility that bilateral relations may be restructured. The idea of proposing a constructive strategic stability relationship between China and the United States is a distillation of the lessons learned through the repeated trial-and-error interaction into a clear political framework, which can provide a strategic direction of the bilateral interaction in the long run.

Of course, it should be noted that when looking at the chances of a successful development in U.S.-China relations, not indulging into the excess of optimism. Quantitative research data that are relevant to the study shows that the long-term negative tendency in the relations has not been reversed. At the same time, mutual understanding between the two states - has a particular level of elasticity and can be contracted or changed in response to any unexpected situations, whereas implementation of constructive strategic stability is still faced with many particular technical and practical difficulties. It is obvious that the direction of future U.S.-China relations will, in much part, depend on the strategic decisions of both countries: if they perceive the existing strategic deadlock as a momentary calm before the storm of confrontation, or as an important window to redefine the model of interactions and establish a new kind of bilateral relationship. However, it is evident that China must base its strategy on the long-term tendencies in bilateral relations, react to the opportunities of short-term policy cycles in a flexible manner, and control the bilateral relations during the stage of strategic stalemate by adopting a solid bottom line, credible counter-measures to the strategic situation, and active cooperation measures, all of which facilitate the further improvement of U.S-China relations towards stability, health, and sustainability in the long term, which is not only the practical requirement of China to create a

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favorable external development environment, but also the manifestation of the responsibility of a major power that should be expected based on the overall aspirations of the international community.

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Conflicts of Interest

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