



GEORGE H. W. BUSH FOUNDATION  
FOR U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

乔治布什美中关系基金会

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Photo credit: George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum



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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO



In 2022, the relationship between the United States and China remained deeply strained. Significant new global and bilateral developments greatly exacerbated the already high levels of tension between the two countries. Vitriolic rhetoric on both sides continued to be the norm, and public sentiment in both countries, especially in the United States, continued to devolve in the direction of record lows. The first in-person summit between Presidents Biden and Xi at the end of the year offered a glimmer of hope for some degree of stabilization of the troubled relationship, but did little to change the relationship’s fundamental and complex dynamics, particularly given the pressures imposed by the political processes that played out in both countries in 2022—and that are beginning to play out in the unfolding 2024 U.S. presidential campaign.

Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified and illegal invasion of Ukraine, launched in February 2022, created a new “wedge issue” between the United States and China. China’s declared neutrality but evident tilt toward Moscow generated deepened suspicion on the part of U.S. leaders and the U.S. public of China’s geopolitical intentions.

Then U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s politically driven visit to Taiwan in August 2022 further fueled tensions, with China strenuously protesting what it regarded as a violation of its sovereignty and conducting military exercises in response. China’s response to the Pelosi visit, reflective of its long-held principled position on the matter, placed it in the awkward public posture of characterizing a brief civilian visit to Taiwan as an egregious and unacceptable violation of Chinese sovereignty, while simultaneously steadfastly refusing to characterize Russia’s military invasion and bombing of Ukraine, killing of thousands of Ukrainians over a period of many months and outright “annexation” of Ukrainian territory as a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty.

On the economic and trade front, virtually no discernible progress was made on the issues the United States has long described as major irritants. Indeed, strikingly, four-and-a-half years into the U.S.-China “trade war” and the Trump/Biden tariffs, U.S.-China two-way trade actually reached an all-time high of \$691 billion, with both U.S. exports to China and U.S. imports from China reaching record levels—and, notably, the U.S. trade deficit for the year coming in at one of the highest levels in history. These remarkable data points make two things very clear: first, the tariff-heavy U.S. trade policy toward China over the past nearly five years has been utterly ineffectual at getting the United States closer to realizing literally any of the stated objectives of these policies, a point authoritative nonpartisan studies have also made in recent years; and second, the American public, through its actual economic behavior, is clearly and decisively rejecting the U.S. federal government’s efforts to “decouple” from each other the U.S. and Chinese economies. The best time to end the job-killing, inflationary new taxes on the American people known as tariffs were before they were levied by “Tariff Man” in 2018; the next best time is now. And of course, that is true for China, as well.

Against the backdrop of the serious challenges confronting the U.S.-China relationship in 2022, the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations continued to honor our namesake’s life-long view that the U.S.-China relationship is the most consequential bilateral relationship in the world and that a constructive relationship between the two countries serves a vital interest of the United States, as well as the interests of the entire global community. We sought to advance engagement, education, and information-sharing among the U.S. and Chinese policymaking, business, and academic communities, while living our commitment to bring greater diversity, in terms of gender, ethnicity, and age, to the U.S.-China relations field. And we continued to stand strong for AAPI rights in the face of surging levels of anti-AAPI violence spurred by the pervasive, often racially tinged, anti-Chinese political rhetoric that has dominated our nation’s discourse on China since 2017.

With that mission in mind, in 2022, the Bush China Foundation team, including both permanent staff members and scores of fellows and advisors, produced programmatic events and policy consultations, thought leadership (in the form of reports, op-eds, and speeches), podcasts and other media content at a rate of well in excess of one output a day. This report describes these efforts in detail.

The year 2023 promises to be yet another very challenging year for the U.S.-China relationship. Taiwan, the technology competition, trade, and Russia’s war on Ukraine, among other issues, will continue to be contentious, and a number of potential U.S.-China diplomatic flashpoints loom on the horizon. Though direct military conflict between the United States and China is extremely unlikely in the foreseeable future, every effort must be made to prevent this vitally important bilateral relationship from descending into even greater levels of dysfunctionality—or worse. Guided by the George H. W. Bush vision, the Bush China Foundation will continue to do all we can in the service of this cause.

David J. Firestein  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Firestein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## U.S.-CHINA DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

Launched September 2022

The Digital Mental Health Network brings together experts from the United States and China to assess how digital technologies and innovations can address mental health care gaps, an increasingly pressing challenge in both countries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This network is the only known platform bringing together Americans and Chinese focused exclusively on digital mental health.

Activities included a series of individual consultations with researchers, health care providers and corporate representatives from both nations and a virtual discussion between U.S. and Chinese medical providers on leveraging international teleconsultations to improve training and access to quality mental health care.



## U.S.-CHINA XGEN (CROSS-GENERATION) INITIATIVE

Launched October 2022

This innovative intergenerational dialogue process brings together important stakeholders from varying generations—from university students to retired policymakers and academics—to discuss domestic and international issues impacting the U.S.-China relationship, ranging from climate change to diversity, equity and inclusion.

This platform is among the few that is convening Americans and Chinese of different age groups to exchange views on an equal footing, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of societal perspectives on critical issues and constructively addressing some of the key sources of intergenerational conflict. Furthermore, this initiative fills a significant gap in exchanges for U.S. and Chinese youths, who have had extremely limited opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying travel restrictions.

Activities included an inclusive recruitment campaign and individual consultations with Generation Z-aged Americans and Chinese committed to sharing their unique perspectives and exchanging viewpoints with others. From tackling global challenges to domestic perceptions, the Gen Zers expressed concern for the downward trajectory of U.S.-China relations yet also optimism that their generation can make a difference.



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



## POLICY BRIEFINGS ON U.S.-CHINA SUPPLY CHAINS

January - March 2022

David Firestein co-authored an opinion article on “Our need for supply chain diplomacy” with Foundation senior fellow and University of Arkansas professor John Kent, who specializes in U.S.-China supply chains. The op-ed appeared online and in print in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

The Foundation team conducted a series of briefings with policymakers and experts in Washington and virtually to explore the viability of two avenues of work: 1) the convening of a U.S.-China corporate and academic working group to generate recommendations for more effective supply chain policies and to brainstorm how to navigate existing supply chain challenges; and 2) a case study exploring the viability of restructuring the global supply chain by moving Chinese factories to a third country with a policy environment conducive to attracting U.S. and western businesses.

[LEARN MORE](#) 

## CHINESE DIPLOMATIC DELEGATION VISIT TO TEXAS

May 2022

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, then Ambassador to the United States, and a delegation of Chinese diplomats toured several cities across Texas. The Bush China Foundation, led by President and CEO David Firestein, welcomed the delegation for a reception with members of the Austin community. The ambassador spoke with Austinites from various sectors about China’s engagement with Texas. In turn, guests shared their views and thoughts about the U.S.-China relationship with the ambassador.

[LEARN MORE](#) 



PHOTOS: Then-Chinese Ambassador Qin Gang speaks to a group in Austin, Texas



## TRACK 2 DIPLOMACY



In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Bush China Foundation organized three U.S.-China dialogues on the invasion's impact on U.S.-China relations.

The three discussions spanned from March to April. They comprised an ad-hoc session in the immediate aftermath of the invasion to examine strategic options, the 3rd round of the U.S.-China Strategic Policy Dialogue to discuss U.S. and Chinese positions, and a track 2 dialogue to understand the invasion's ramifications for the Asia-Pacific.

## BUSH CHINA FOUNDATION POLICY BRIEF: REPORT ON U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC POLICY DIALOGUE ON UKRAINE

May 4, 2022 | by: Zoe Leung, Jayson Shan and Cherry Yu

Over two months after Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the war's outcomes and Russia's endgame remained unclear. In response to the Russian aggression, the United States, its allies and partners provided security and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. They imposed sweeping financial sanctions on Russia's economy, while working diplomatically to de-escalate tensions. China abstained from voting on a United Nations Security Council resolution that condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has portrayed itself as a neutral party in the conflict. However, its relationship with Russia has grown increasingly close in recent years. Despite different perceptions of the root causes of the war and approaches to lowering tensions, the United States and China have a shared interest in ending the assault on the Ukrainian people and in Ukraine and Russia reaching a peace agreement.

The George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations partnered with Peking University's Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding to bring together academics and former diplomats from the United States and China for a closed-door discussion on Russia's war in Ukraine. The dialogue session was the third round of the track 2 U.S.-China Strategic Policy Dialogue series, which seeks to facilitate action-focused exchanges between the two countries and was launched in May of 2021.

READ REPORT 



**Zoe Leung**  
Senior Director of  
Research



**Jayson Shan**  
Research Intern



**Cherry Yu**  
Research Intern



## BUSH CHINA FOUNDATION POLICY BRIEF: REPORT ON U.S.-CHINA STRATEGIC POLICY DIALOGUE ON AFGHANISTAN

January 31, 2022 | by: Zoe Leung and Cameron Waltz

On August 15, 2021, Afghanistan’s government and security forces collapsed, with the Taliban capturing Kabul and then President Ashraf Ghani fleeing the country. The United States’ complete withdrawal after 20 years of intervention in Afghanistan precipitated the fall of Kabul. The Taliban’s return to power has yet to bring peace and stability to the country, with the armed opposition and the provision of governance and jobs as ongoing challenges. Meanwhile, an unstable Afghanistan is at risk of becoming a terrorist haven, further threatening its fragile state and its neighbors.

To assess the future of U.S. and Chinese policy toward Afghanistan as well as prospects for U.S.-China cooperation in the region, the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations partnered with Peking University’s Institute for Global Cooperation and Understanding in bringing together former diplomats and academics from the United States and China for a closed-door discussion on the desired outcomes for respective interests in Afghanistan. The dialogue session, held in October 2021, was the second round of the track 2 U.S.-China Strategic Policy Dialogue series launched in May of the same year.



**Zoe Leung**  
Senior Director of  
Research



**Cameron Waltz**  
Junior Fellow

READ REPORT 



ABOVE: Official Photo by Chien Chih-Hung / Office of the President. Originally posted to Flickr by Taiwan Presidential Office

## U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN TRACK 2 DIALOGUE ON TAIWAN STRAIT (IN)STABILITY

September 20, 2022

In August, 2022, China conducted large-scale sea and air military drills around Taiwan in response to then U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to the island. This visit was shortly followed by another congressional delegation traveling to Taiwan and the officials signaling support and commitment to Taiwan to deter the People’s Republic of China. As increased military activities near Taiwan become the norm, maintaining stability across the Taiwan Strait is ever more challenging.

To understand various goals and perspectives and the path forward for cross-Strait stability, the Bush China Foundation convened a private discussion among U.S., mainland Chinese and Taiwanese experts and scholars to delve into the current challenges and sentiments. This discussion is part of the Foundation’s ongoing efforts to facilitate communication and understanding between all sides and to look beyond the headlines on important evolving issues.

LEARN MORE 

## ACHIEVING EQUITABLE SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY

January 19, 2022 –virtual

The George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations partnered with the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) for a webinar on “Achieving Equitable Supply Chain Transparency” led by PBEC moderator Anson Bailey. Speakers included experts from KPMG China, the Bush China Foundation, Serai by HSBC, the University of Arkansas & Monash University Malaysia, who discussed achieving regional Supply Chain Transparency in the Asia Pacific. The webinar explored existing operational risks in sourcing, and from the supplier’s perspective, the current challenges and opportunities emerging to achieve a greener supply chain downstream and upstream for brands and the ongoing geopolitical landscape and trade agreements.



[VIEW EVENT](#) 

## 2022 INTERNATIONAL CARBON NEUTRALITY AND GREEN INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

November 6, 2022 – Shanghai, China & virtual

The George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations joined the National Center For Sustainable Development, the Energy Investment Professional Committee (EIPC) of the Investment Association of China (IAC) and other institutions to hold the 2022 International Carbon Neutrality and Green Investment Conference. This convening was an in-person and virtual event.

This summit explored energy storage technology, solar thermal technology, digital manufacturing compliance management, agricultural carbon reduction technology and opportunities and challenges for U.S.-China carbon neutral cooperation.

[VIEW EVENT](#) 

## HOW HONG KONG AND TAIWAN IMPACT THE FUTURE OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD CHINA

March 31, 2022 – virtual

The George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations and the Asia Society Texas hosted a virtual discussion on “How Hong Kong and Taiwan impact the future of U.S. policy toward China” in light of recent escalation of tensions in the Taiwan Strait. The panel discussed if the United States will reconsider its decades-long “strategic ambiguity” stance on Taiwan and how likely direct military clashes in the Taiwan Strait are, as well as to what degree might the U.S. be involved. Further, it posed the questions of the legitimacy of Beijing’s “one country, two systems” rule and how the U.S. should respond to Hong Kong, which continues to play a vital financial role in global markets, as it is further subsumed under mainland China’s direct rule.

[VIEW EVENT](#) 

## THE FUTURE OF U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

November 29, 2022 – virtual

The Bush China Foundation, Asia Society Texas, Council of Korean Americans, and the Korea Foundation held a discussion on what the future of the U.S.-China relationship will look like and the role that the Korean Peninsula will play in that relationship. East Asia is home to many of the most intractable and precarious global security issues. North Korea continues to test missiles, leading to speculation that these tests may be a precursor to another nuclear weapons test. Xi Jinping has recently begun his unprecedented third term as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, ushering in an era of a more emboldened China, particularly regarding its relationship with Taiwan. Meanwhile, some in Japan call for it to modernize its military more rapidly.



[VIEW EVENT](#) 





## INNOVATION INSIGHTS WITH AAPI COMMUNITY

May 10, 2022 – Austin, Texas

In honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the George H. W. Bush Foundation, Born Global Ventures, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce and Dell for Startups partnered up to host an in-person event on “Innovation Insights with AAPI Community” at the Capital Factory in downtown Austin, Texas. The event was focused on learning about the experiences of AAPI entrepreneurs, Venture Capitals, corporate and community leaders, connect with diverse innovators with a global mindset and enjoy Asian-inspired refreshments.

[VIEW EVENT](#)



## DAVID FIRESTEIN SPEAKS AT UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE U.S.

### • HARVARD COLLEGE CHINA FORUM April 16, 2022

The forum, entitled “Extraordinary Times” featured David Firestein on the trade relations keynote panel covering tariffs, future trade opportunities, trade policies under Presidents Trump and Biden and other important economic issues.

### • STANFORD UNIVERSITY SUMMIT September 9, 2022

The summit on “Next Gen Leadership, Sustainability & Social Impact” held a panel on the geopolitics of cybersecurity and democratic stability featuring David Firestein as a panelist. The event aimed to bring together thought leaders from academia, industry and family offices in a unique two-day event exploring transformative people, technologies and opportunities.

### • UT AUSTIN CENTER FOR TAIWAN STUDIES September 12, 2022

In this presentation, David discussed the then-recent visit of U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan, which generated headlines and cast into renewed relief the importance and sensitivity of Taiwan as an issue in U.S.-China relations. He spoke on differences between the United States and China on the issue of Taiwan, which while always present, have become increasingly visible.



[VIEW EVENT](#)



### • MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY October 27, 2022

David, a longtime friend of the MSU community, peeled back the veneer of well-worn diplomatic language employed by both the United States and China, and discussed the “hard realities and inconvenient truths” associated with the issue of Taiwan in the U.S.-China relationship, offering his assessment regarding the prospects for cross-strait relations and U.S.-China relations.

[VIEW EVENT](#)





## U.S. AND CHINESE APPROACHES TO CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION

December 7, 2022 | by: Zoe Leung, Emily Fan and Cherry Yu

- Funded by The Rockefeller Foundation, the publication is the result of three months of primary and secondary research including individual consultations with energy policy experts in both the United States and China.
- The report delves into the two countries' international clean energy policies and the intersection of foreign policy and the low-carbon economy, which previously had not been considered in a comprehensive manner. Additionally, it discusses recent U.S.-China climate and energy engagement that informs future competition and cooperation between the world's two largest economies.

What are the roles of the United States and China in accelerating the global clean energy transition? On the one hand, the global energy landscape is undergoing fundamental changes, which will have far-reaching geopolitical consequences. On the other hand, the energy transformation remains an area where various forms of inclusive, supranational structures are crucial for providing global public goods. The U.S. and China's ability to shape future energy systems hinges on their international strategies and efforts to persuade and work with partners and allies, lead by example and to advance global norms and standards.

This report takes a narrow, diplomacy-focused perspective on the clean energy transition. It does not discuss whether or why to decarbonize or at which level is fair or adequate, nor does it seek to delve into U.S. and Chinese domestic and subnational efforts to meet each country's climate pledges and challenges. However, domestic actions are considered in the context of international diplomacy. Rather, it aims to highlight the two countries' international clean energy policies and the intersection of foreign policy and the low- and zero-carbon economy, which previously have not been considered in a comprehensive manner. Additionally, the report briefly discusses the recent U.S.-China energy engagement that informs future competition and cooperation between the two countries.

This report was written against the backdrop of intensifying U.S.-China strategic rivalry and heightened bilateral tensions over Taiwan, which triggered Beijing to suspend talks with Washington on climate. The diplomatic fallout from the growing rivalry makes it difficult for the two countries to collaborate on clean energy even when it is in their interest to do so. However, the climate emergency has become a social movement at the individual and business levels that necessitates stronger and more urgent collective actions, regardless of whether government leaders are on board with cooperation. Nevertheless, efforts by the world's two largest economies and carbon emitters to support the global good play an outsized role in the global transition toward cleaner energy. It is our hope that mapping their international policies will provide insights into the trajectory of their priorities in the global fight against climate change, amid ever-changing geopolitical dynamics.

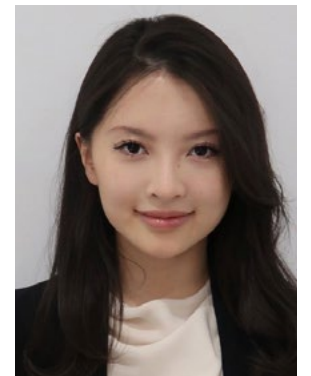
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**Zoe Leung**  
Senior Director of Research



**Emily Fan**  
Junior Fellow



**Cherry Yu**  
Research Intern





## AFGHANISTAN WITH LAURA TEDESCO

Aired: January 25, 2022

Laura Tedesco, cultural heritage program manager for the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, joined host Zoe Leung to explore how cultural diplomacy plays a role in the security of Afghanistan and the region and what major powers like the United States and China should do to help preserve cultural resources in Afghanistan.



Laura Tedesco

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## HEALTH EQUITY, COVID-19 AND GLOBAL HEALTH COOPERATION

Aired: March 8, 2022



Jennifer Huang Bouey

Jennifer Huang Bouey, Tang Chair for China Policy Studies and a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation, joined host David Firestein to discuss how countries can better handle future pandemics and other global public health crises and other pressing questions.

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## EXPLORING THE U.S.-CHINA BUSINESS LANDSCAPE

Aired: February 22, 2022

With the Biden Administration's trade policy still under review more than a year into this term, some have characterized the Biden Administration's approach to trade with China as, in essence, a fifth year of Trump Administration policies. As we entered the second year of President Biden's term, Tim Stratford, former Assistant U.S. Trade Representative, joined host David Firestein to discuss where does the U.S.-China trade and investment relationship appear to be going.

[LISTEN NOW](#)



Tim Stratford

## TAIWAN'S SECURITY AFTER THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Aired: May 11, 2022

Host Zoe Leung was joined by Bonny Lin, senior fellow for Asian security and director of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), to explore questions like: How should Taiwan strategize for its own defense? What are the overall implications of the war in Ukraine for Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific? Has it created more challenges, or has it opened more opportunities?

[LISTEN NOW](#)



Bonny Lin

## THE FUTURE OF U.S.-CHINA NUCLEAR RELATIONS

Aired: July 14, 2022

Host Zoe Leung was joined by Eric Gomez, director of defense policy studies at the Cato Institute, to explore how we should think about the role of nuclear weapons in the Asia-Pacific and the threats they cause. What are the implications of a potential nuclear competition between the United States and China?

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Eric Gomez

# THE BUSH CHINA FOUNDATION PODCAST

## DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN TECHNOLOGY

Aired: August 15, 2022

As we have seen acutely in the past few years, attacks and hate toward the AAPI community have become more widespread. Host Leslie Tisdale Reagan was joined by YJ Lin, senior program manager at Dell for Startups Strategic Partnerships, to discuss what can we do to diffuse tensions in our communities. And how can technology help different communities come together?

[LISTEN NOW](#) 

YJ Lin |



| Chris Muller-Tabanera

## COMBATING SEX AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A GROWING ISSUE IN THE U.S.-CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Aired: October 5, 2022

Host Euhwa Tran was joined by Chris Muller-Tabanera, chief strategy officer at The Network, to explore the illicit massage business in the United States, an industry whose trafficking victims are nearly all of Chinese descent. Why are these victims primarily all Chinese? Who are the operators of these businesses, and who are the clients? What can be done to combat these illegal activities? And specifically, what can the United States and China do to stop human trafficking and support current victims?

[LISTEN NOW](#) 



ABOVE: Robert Wang and his wife with President George H. W. Bush in Shanghai.



| Robert Wang

## TAIWAN AND THE U.S.-CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Aired: November 21, 2022

Host David Firestein was joined by Robert Wang, senior associate with the Center for Strategic and International Studies and adjunct professor at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, to discuss important topics on the current state of play with respect to Taiwan. Does the 2022 Bali summit, or the recently concluded political transitions in the U.S. and China, change the trajectory in any discernible or meaningful way? Where does U.S. policy toward Taiwan stand at this point? What is the risk of conflagration across the Taiwan Strait?

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# MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## OUR NEED FOR SUPPLY CHAIN DIPLOMACY

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: January 9, 2022

“[But] while goods, services, and people now flow regularly between the United States and China, their official diplomatic relationship has been strained in recent years, mostly because of disagreements over issues such as fair-trading practices, global governance, and human rights concerns.

Perhaps it’s time for an updated version of ping-pong diplomacy—something more economically strategic in nature but still driven by the power of human relationships. We believe it’s time to bring together academic and industry experts from the United States and China to work collaboratively and transparently on the supply chains of the future.

Call it supply chain diplomacy.”

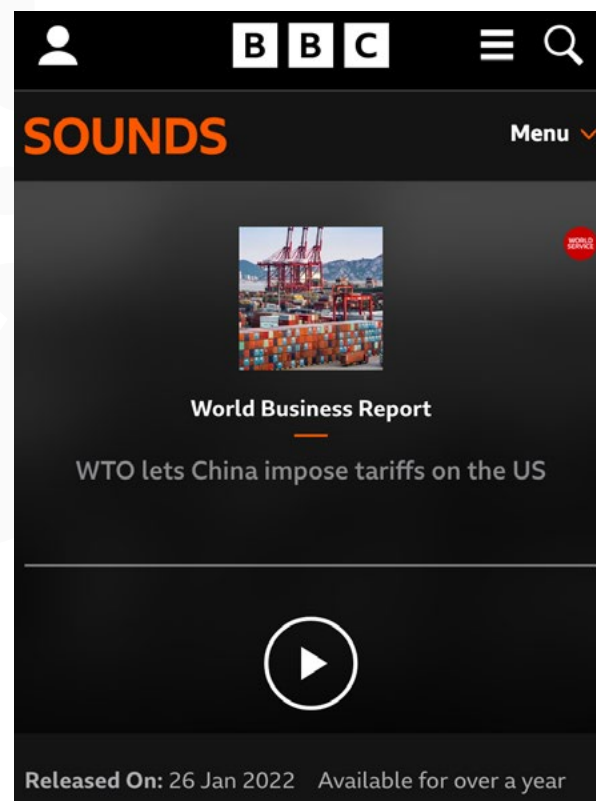
READ OPINION 

## WTO LETS CHINA IMPOSE TARIFFS ON THE US

BBC World Business Report: January 26, 2022

“Despite the potential Ukraine conflict, Italian business leaders have met President Putin. The virtual meeting with the Russian president went ahead amid calls from Italy’s government for it to be scrapped. We explore Italy’s commercial ties to Russia with Vincenzo Trani, chairman of the Italian-Russian Chamber of Commerce, who was on today’s call. And we get Ukrainian business reaction from Dmytro Shymkiv, executive chair of Darnitsa, which is the country’s largest pharmaceutical company.”

LISTEN NOW 



## WHO ARE THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMUNIST CHINESE LEADERS?

The Hill: January 15, 2022

“It is highly likely that the next generation of leadership will emerge not from the countryside but rather from elite universities. As China looks to become a fully innovative nation without sacrificing its adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles, those who expect to engage with China in the future should keep a close eye on how the party strikes this balance now in recruiting and training its future leaders.”

READ OPINION 

## TAIWAN PROVIDES POWERFUL LESSONS ON DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE

The Diplomat: June 29, 2021

“A conventional narrative has solidified around the idea that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed flaws of democracy in coping with the public health crisis while China’s quick economic rebound and pandemic success, albeit through strict lockdown measures, may serve as a showcase for its model of governance. However, Taiwan stands in contradiction to this narrative and its own success is well documented. It has leveraged contact tracing, apps, “civic hackers,” and “radical transparency” to effectively combat misinformation and contain the pandemic spread absent lockdowns while staying true to its core democratic values.”

READ OPINION 



## THE STATE OF U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS WITH DAVID FIRESTEIN

Inside the War Room Podcast: November 29, 2022

Host Ryan Ray was joined by guest David Firestein, president and ceo of the George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations, to discuss the current state of affairs in the bilateral relationship on the Inside the War Room podcast. The hour-long podcast covered important current events such as Taiwan relations, the efficacy of the United Nations, the Russia-China relationship, the U.S. reserve currency and values and economic competitiveness between the U.S. and China.

LISTEN NOW 



## DAVID FIRESTEIN SPEAKS ON CGTN’S “THE POINT”

CGTN: February 21, 2022

Bush China Foundation president and ceo David Firestein spoke on CGTN’s “The Point” with Liu Xin, reflecting on President Nixon’s historic visit to China 50 years ago that week. The discussion focused on what the global community can draw from this legacy and a reflection on current strained ties.

Mr. Firestein spoke to the importance of rapprochement, suggesting normalization with China still would have happened, though perhaps later if President Nixon had not made this historic visit.

WATCH NOW 



December 8, 2022 | *China International Strategy Review* | by: David Firestein

Trust in the context of the U.S.–China relationship is an important topic that bears additional exploration. Here, David Firestein shares some of his views about the idea of trust in international relations, the sources of mistrust in the U.S.–China relations, and the impediments to building greater levels of trust between these two nations.

[Excerpt from China International Strategy Review]

*“A good working definition of trust in the context of international relations (and more generally) is the notion of giving the other the benefit of the doubt and not reflexively assuming the worst about the other side’s intentions. By this basic definition, it’s clear that there is a major deficit of trust in the relationship between the United States and China—a deficit greater than anything we have seen since the 1970s and, indeed, the pre-normalization period.*

*Trust is real. It’s not tangible in a physical sense; it is not on the elemental chart. But it is real, and it makes a difference in how countries relate to each other. When a state of mistrust exists between nations, country “A” will react to an action on the part of country “B” differently than it would if a state of trust existed between the two nations. A good example of this concept is the case of friendly fire casualties and fatalities in war. If, for instance, the United States tragically kills an allied soldier, say from Canada or Great Britain, no one in those countries would presume that the United States killed the soldiers intentionally. That is trust. Lack of trust, where trust is in fact merited, can lead to misassessments and miscalibrations of policy.*

*Trust is also unnatural in international relations; it is not the default position for most countries, and it takes time and effort to generate trust between two countries. Further, trust is all the more difficult to achieve when the two countries in question are powerful players with diverging national interests as is the case with the United States and China. It is increasingly evident that lack of trust is becoming an ever more serious problem for both the United States and China, the bilateral relationship, and the world as a whole.*

*I have identified six main sources of mistrust: civilization and culture, ideology, doctrine, national interest, diplomatic style, and discursive method level. These six “layers” or levels of mistrust are, in descending order of profundity: the civilizational/cultural level; the ideological level; the doctrinal level; the national interest level; the national/diplomatic style level; and what I would call the discursive method level—the way we speak to each other and our publics about foreign policy, national security, and related topics.*

*Though the United States and China are going to find it very difficult to build trust in an affirmative sense, reducing mistrust—or, at least, the speed of the deterioration of trust between the two countries—is certainly a worthwhile objective. As many, including myself, have observed, there is any number of confidence-building measures that realistically could be taken at this time to stop or stem the hemorrhaging of trust that we are seeing. Getting rid of the job-killing, consumer-gouging, inflationary tariffs on both sides would be one obvious place to start, as would restoring the two consulates, in Houston and Chengdu, that were closed down toward the end of President Trump’s term in office.*

*And many other small, even symbolic, steps that can help stabilize the relationship—something that, in my view, would serve the interests of both countries and the larger global community.*

*Both the United States and China have contributed to the deterioration of trust in the bilateral relationship we have seen in recent years; therefore, both are responsible for repairing the damage.*

*Stated from a U.S. perspective, two things are true about China at the same time. First, China is the most formidable national competitor that the United States will ever have in the lifetimes of every American drawing breath today. But second, it is also true that China is an indispensable partner to the United States whether we like it or not; virtually no significant global challenge can be effectively or enduringly addressed absent collaboration between the United States and China, among others. We need each other; it’s as simple as that. And we must work together, not out of altruism but rather out of enlightened self-interest and desire to advance our nations’ important interests. For either country to frame and make the other an enemy, it did not have to be (rather than merely the formidable competitor that it actually is) would be among the grandest strategic blunders in modern history. Working to build a U.S.–China relationship that is functional, constructive, results-oriented, mutually beneficial, and politically sustainable is a much better choice.*

*I hope we make it.”*

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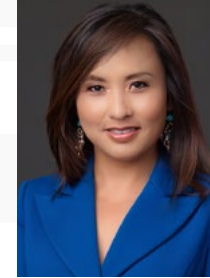
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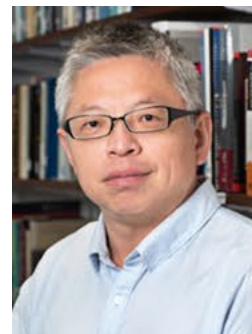
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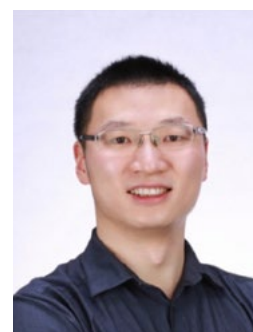
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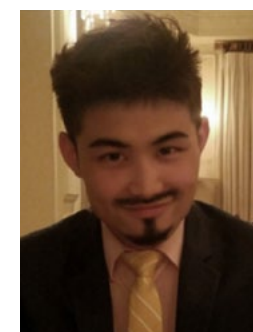
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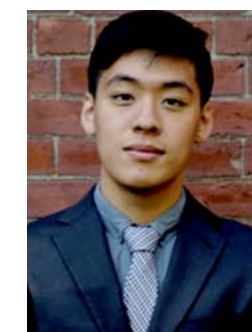
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