

PASCC

Research in Progress

FY19

US-CHINA STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Performer: Pacific Forum

Project Lead: Robert Girrier

FY19

ABSTRACT:

The “US-China Strategic Dialogues” will continue the DTRA-sponsored Track-1.5 Strategic Dialogue sessions between US and Chinese military and civilian officials and non-governmental experts and scholars. They build on nearly a decade and a half of success in hosting these meetings and benefiting from the community building, shared understanding, and mutual confidence that this has generated.

The purpose of the Dialogue sessions, which will take place in Beijing in fall 2019 and in Hawaii in spring to summer 2020, is first to build greater understanding between the United States and China on nuclear and strategic developments to prevent miscalculation and strategic confusion. Second, it is to prepare for and support more robust official Track-1 dialogue on these issues, a longstanding US goal reiterated in the *2018 US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)*. The Dialogue sessions, which will build upon upcoming sessions scheduled for late 2018 (in Beijing) and spring 2019 (in Hawaii), will correct misperceptions, test assumptions, and stimulate new thinking, while seeking to build mutual trust and confidence. Our latest dialogue sessions (in Beijing in August 2017 and Hawaii (Maui) in April 2018) revealed that despite a willingness on both sides to develop a “constructive nuclear relationship,” there are concerns that the strategic relationship is becoming increasingly competitive. The Chinese have expressed a highly negative view of the *NPR*, the *2017 US National Security Strategy (NSS)*, and *2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS)* and fear that the United States may now consider China as an adversary. Americans, meanwhile, worry about military reforms undertaken by China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the changes announced at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party. The rapidly changing nuclear dynamics on the Korean Peninsula also create uncertainties that could have wide-ranging implications for the Sino-US strategic relationship.

In sum, the Dialogues will explore differences in US and Chinese strategic thinking, reduce misperceptions, enhance mutual understanding of respective views on the role of strategic forces and how they will be employed and deployed, and help build a stronger relationship between the two countries and their respective strategic communities, with an emphasis on urging next-generation scholars to challenge current thinking.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.