

中美关系能否从危险的边缘回归？

•  傅莹 外交部前副部长 社科院国家全球战略智库首席专家

2018-11-01 08:11:36 来源：“盘古智库”微信公众号

https://www.guancha.cn/fuying/2018_11_01_477771_s.shtml

【彭博新闻网 10 月 31 日刊登傅莹文章，文章强调中国人需要了解中美关系所面临的问题及其原因。虽然新的形势令人担忧，但人们没有放弃重返稳定和发展的希望，并且愿为实现这一目标而努力。以下为文章中英文版。】

中美关系下滑的速度超出人们预料。随之而来的问题是：这两个国家是否会闭着眼睛跳入所谓守成大国与新兴大国不惜发生战争的“修昔底德陷阱”？美国在推动加快这个下滑进程，但需仔细考量的是：“这是否符合美国的最佳利益？”而对于中国人来说，需要考虑的不仅是如何智慧应对挑战，而且要看这种向错误方向的下滑有没有可能被阻止。

贸易摩擦带来的紧张局势开始向其他领域蔓延。美国声称中国已成为其主要的战略竞争对手，甚至指责中国“干涉”选举并试图挑战美国的全球霸权。在国际层面，全球主义和多边主义遭到批判；同时地缘政治和大国竞争重登台面，同民粹主义、保护主义杂糅在一起，正在削弱几十年来各国之间建立的纽带。所有这些不确定因素颇有要将世界拖回到 20 世纪上半叶那种动荡状态之势。

造成这些紧张的原因是多元和多样化的。在工业和技术领域围绕新增长动能的竞争是原因之一；动摇了自由民主国家的重大政治力量的变化也带来不安。此外，美国等西方发达国家基于对不同政治制度的怀疑心态，对中国在共产党领导下取得成功疑惧日深。

美国需要意识到，它的诸多怨诉都建立在不牢固的事实基础之上。例如，美国自认为是全球化的受害者——即便数据所证明的事实与此恰恰相反。根据世界银行以现价美元估算值所做的统计：美国国内生产总值从 1990 年的 5.98 万亿美元增长到 2017 年的 19.39 万亿美元——人均增加 35,577 美元；而同期中国人均国内生产总值增长 8,509 美元，不及美国增长额的四分之一。



事实上美国是全球化的长期主要受益者，美国跨国公司获得了巨额利润；而海外低成本加工制造和低价进口商品以及全球美元环流，则无疑有助于维持美国的经济繁荣和民生的高基准。

图片来源：视觉中国

尽管如此，在美国有一些人似乎想促使世界上最大的两个经济体“脱钩”，减少相互依存，以期阻碍或至少滞迟中国的进步。他们提出的要求如此极端，以致于似

乎这套设计的目的就是，让中国除了对抗并卷入代价高昂的世界权力博弈之外，别无选择。

但现实是，中美已在同一全球经济体系内相伴成长了 40 年，相互在经济结构上深层次的联系和互补性意味着，“脱钩”不可能立竿见影，即便不得已而发生，也要经历长期而痛苦的过程。而这对双方的经济和人民的福祉乃至全球经济可能造成的损害，恐怕是世界难以承受之重。

历史进程的方向性变化从来不是在哪个特定时间选定、抑或因某个特别事件发生的，而是在对诸多具体问题的应对和调整中，累积完成。只有在大势形成之后，人们才能观察到变化的全貌。从这个角度来看，中美现在的选择所产生的影响，将会在很长一段时间波澜不息。

如果中美两国共同努力，就能够取得重大成就。而如果两国对抗，不论对两国自身还是世界来说都有极大的危害。因此双方都需要避免误判彼此战略意图，否则就会陷入无果的恶性循环中。

美国对中国提出的许多指控并非基于可靠事实，这表明，在美国关于中国和中国的目标和利益方面的信息是缺失的。有些指控也许是基于个别情况或事件，被故意用来作为抹黑或抨击中国的理由。例如，如果某些中国个人或媒体以公开合法的方式对美国政治发表评论，那么由此被指为官方干涉美国内政是很牵强的。中国对外国干涉自己的内政高度敏感，因此不会允许对别国采取这样的做法。在缺乏有效证据的情况下，对中国进行这样的指责，如果不是故意妖魔化中国，那么只能被当作一种天真的笑话来看待。

中国人也可以做更多努力来消除这类伤害形象的误解，官员和学者可以更积极地与美国公众和更广泛的国际社会进行沟通。举例来说，2008 年发生了三聚氰胺婴儿配方奶粉事件，现任白宫贸易顾问纳瓦罗曾在他的书中将此事渲染和扭曲，根据他的描述，中国人如此不道德，不仅给外国消费者下毒，也给自己下毒。但如果中国人能主动向外界进行全面通报，说明事件如何得到彻查，相关人如何被惩处，法律法规如何得到严格执行以避免再发生，这样的胡扯就不会轻易传播。10 年过去了，挑战仍然存在，但食品安全已成为中国政府的头等大事。

中国有权在其政治体制受到攻击时捍卫政治主权。同时，对美方提出的具体问题也可以做出说明和给予回应。举例来说，美国人批评中国在应对气候变化上努力不够，而实际上中国为改善环境付出巨大经济代价，一些工厂不得不关闭，下岗工人需要再培训和安置。中国人为维护一个健康的地球所经历的种种困难应该让世人所知晓。

如果美方提出的诉求有合理的地方，中国人可以坦然接受，并且通过加快改革来解决这类问题。例如，中国已宣布采取措施进一步开放金融服务业，全面降低关税等。为了更好地保护知识产权，全国人大常委会刚作出决定，涉及知识产权专业技术性较强的二审案件，今后将直接提交最高法院审理，以利于统一专利等知识产权司法裁判标准。

自 2014 年以来，在北京、上海和广州设立的知识产权法院处理了越来越多的涉及专利、商标和版权等方面的案件。目前知识产权领域的侵权和纠纷仍不少见，须进一步提高人们的意识和加强从严执法。如果美国真关心中国的知识产权保护，那就应该成为中国应对挑战的伙伴。

此刻，中国人需要了解中美关系所面临的问题及其原因。虽然新的形势令人担忧，但人们没有放弃重返稳定和发展的希望，并且愿为实现这一目标而努力。即便“修昔底德陷阱”是存在的，但并不意味着我们必须踏进去。（翻页请看英文原文）

Can China-U.S. Relations Step Back From the Edge?

Fu Ying

Visiting the U.S. recently, I was told by virtually every American I met that attitudes toward China had shifted. This phenomenon, they claimed, cut across bipartisan lines as well as government, business and academic circles. The U.S. was frustrated at not having shaped China in its own image, despite bringing the country into the World Trade Organization and helping to enable its economic takeoff. Instead, China had “ripped off” the U.S. by taking advantage of it in trade and business. There was concern at how fast China was climbing up the global economic and technological ladder, and that its military was threatening to “elbow out” the U.S. from Asia.

Although attitudes may have changed, I’m not convinced they’ve settled yet. Judging from American history, major strategies are usually shaped through trial and error, in response to specific challenges. Consensus develops along the way. Any adjustment in the U.S. posture toward China will therefore take time. This also means that the final outcome will be affected by how the two countries act and react in the coming months and years.

In evaluating next steps, the Chinese people first have to ask whether U.S. criticisms are fair. It’s true that economic growth hasn’t produced in China a political system similar to the U.S.’s. Interestingly, I recall attending an American government program in the mid-1990s designed for diplomats from developing nations. The topic was U.S. security strategy and policy-making. I had one question: What were America’s strategic objectives for the post-Cold War era? The answer was unambiguous: to promote U.S.-style democracy and human rights worldwide. And indeed, the U.S. has pursued those goals consistently over the last two decades, at huge cost to itself and others.

China isn’t America’s only failure — nor the worst one. In fact, given what’s happened to some countries since the “color revolutions” and the “Arab Spring,” the U.S. should be thankful that its efforts haven’t thrown China into political turmoil and economic chaos. The fact that China has maintained social and political stability and followed its own economic path has contributed to global economic growth, especially after the 2008 financial crisis. Rather than draining U.S. finances the way the nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have, China has added greatly to American prosperity.

True, China’s fortunes have risen as well. Taking advantage of the globalization promoted by the U.S. and Europe, hardworking Chinese gained access to global capital, technologies, expertise and markets, all of which facilitated the growth of industry. Hundreds of millions of Chinese came out of poverty, and living standards in the country have risen substantially.

But it’s important to remember two things. First, Chinese workers paid a steep cost for these developments, just as American workers did. After entering the World Trade Organization, Chinese enterprises were suddenly thrown into direct competition with global peers. Many of them didn’t survive, leading to huge layoffs all over the country. At the same time, more than 2,000 laws and

regulations had to be revised or abolished at the national level and about 190,000 more at the local level, causing widespread dislocation.

Second, China's gains have benefited the U.S. as well. According to Oxford Economics, U.S.-China trade helps each American family save \$850 every year. Between 2001 and 2016, U.S. commodities exports to China expanded five times, much higher than the 90 percent average increase. The advent of the "internet of things" and rapid growth in the number of China's middle- and upper-class consumers will offer even more opportunities for U.S. companies. China is not only an integral part of the global economy, but also an indispensable source of growth. Any attempt to "decouple" it from the U.S. or the global economy will hurt all countries, including the U.S.

So what should China's response be? The Chinese have to stay cool-headed in the face of tough but confusing messages from the U.S. We must stay focused on China's development, and overcome our own difficulties.

China is not adopting a more confrontational stance toward the U.S. Its current attitude is part of its overall foreign policy, which is aimed at ensuring a sound environment that facilitates effective cooperation with the outside world to serve China's development goals. For its purposes, there's every reason for China to maintain an attitude of "constructive cooperation" with the U.S.

In fact, changes in U.S.-China relations may help to push China's own desired reforms. Some requests raised by U.S. companies, such as increased market access, dovetail with recommendations from China's leaders. The government is, in fact, opening up: Eight out of the 11 market-opening measures announced by President Xi Jinping in April have been put in place, covering banking, securities, insurance, credit rating, credit investigation and payment, and so on. The government is also working harder to improve the business environment and strengthen intellectual property protections for both Chinese and foreign enterprises. Chinese reformers can turn outside pressure to their advantage, using it to bust through internal resistance to necessary changes.

But make no mistake: The Chinese people will stand firm against U.S. bullying over trade. There is talk about China's economy "sliding down" as a result of the trade war. Some expect China to succumb soon. I can tell you that this is wishful thinking.

Yes, China is in the process of deleveraging, which is uncomfortable and painful. But it is a price worth paying for sustaining healthy development. It's worth remembering that China adopted a stimulus program to help overcome the global recession triggered by the 2008 financial tsunami in the U.S. And it's worth noting that the trade war may slow the necessary process of deleveraging.

Finger-pointing and hurting each other won't solve any problems. They will only make things worse. This is why China will continue to work with all countries, including the U.S., in areas of mutual concern — from climate change to transnational crime to epidemics to nuclear nonproliferation.

This is also why China should continue talking to the U.S. Many in China believe that the root causes of U.S. troubles lie within — and therefore need to be solved by Americans themselves. We

can see that the U.S. system requires a major overhaul to overcome deep sociopolitical divisions and economic disparities. But that doesn't relieve China of the responsibility to engage in dialogue, to find out where the two sides can and can't agree, and to seek solutions or at least ways to manage persistent disputes.

Such an approach won't appeal to those who seek confrontation now. But, to borrow a saying, if some folks want to chase butterflies, why should the rest of us go dancing along with them?

China-U.S. relations have deteriorated faster than almost anyone could have expected. The question looms: Are the two countries leaping with their eyes closed into a so-called Thucydides Trap, with war possible between the rising and the established power? The U.S. is driving this process and should reflect carefully whether it's in Americans' best interests to continue down this path. China also needs to consider how to address the challenges wisely and whether the slide in the wrong direction can be halted.

Tensions caused by trade have started to spread to other areas. The U.S. is now claiming that China has become its main strategic competitor, even accusing it of interfering in elections and seeking to challenge American global hegemony. At the international level, globalism and multilateralism are under attack, and the resurgence of geopolitical and power competition, mixed with populism and protectionism, are weakening the bonds built among countries in recent decades. These uncertainties seem poised to drag the world back to the turbulent years of the early 20th century.

The causes for these tensions are many and various. Competition among the new drivers of growth, industry and technology is a source of unease. So, too, are the seismic political realignments in liberal democracies. It also seems that the U.S. and other Western countries, driven by their suspicion of different political systems, have become more wary or even fearful of China's success under the leadership of the Communist Party.

The U.S. needs to realize that many of its complaints rest on shaky foundations. For instance, the U.S. seems to believe that it's a victim of globalization — even though the numbers tell a different story. According to World Bank statistics based on current dollar estimates, U.S. gross domestic product grew from \$5.98 trillion in 1990 to \$19.39 trillion in 2017, an increase of \$35,577 per capita. China's GDP per capita over the same period grew \$8,509, or less than a quarter of the U.S. total.

The reality is that the U.S. has been the main long-term beneficiary of globalization. U.S. multinationals have earned huge profits. And there's no doubt that Americans' prosperity and high living standards have been helped by low-cost overseas manufacturing, low-priced imports and the global circulation of dollars.

Despite this, some in the U.S. seem to be hoping to "decouple" the world's two biggest economies, to reduce their interdependence and hamper or at least delay China's progress. The demands they've laid out are so extreme they seem designed to leave China no option but to choose confrontation and enter a high-cost power game.

The truth is that China and the U.S. have grown together, in the same global economic system, for 40 years. The deep connections and complementary economic structures mean that decoupling is not immediately possible. If it has to happen, it would probably involve a protracted and painful process, and the extent of the damage to each country and its people's well-being is hard to predict, as well as the damage to the world economy.

Looking back at history, directional change is not made in a particular moment or through a single event but rather through the accumulation of many small adjustments to specific problems. The big picture only reveals itself later. In this light, the choices China and the U.S. make now will reverberate for a long time to come.

If China and the U.S. work together, they can achieve major successes. Confrontation, by contrast, would be enormously harmful for both countries and the wider world. American and Chinese leaders cannot afford to make misjudgments on the fundamental issue of each other's intentions, or we will all lose out in a fruitless downward spiral.

That many of the charges the U.S. has leveled against China aren't based on solid facts indicates there is lack of sufficient information about China and its aims and interests. Some of the accusations may be based on individual cases or mishaps, which are being deliberately used to give China a bad name. For example, if a Chinese individual or a member of the news media comments on American politics in a transparent and lawful manner, it should not be misrepresented as official interference. China has been highly sensitive about foreign interference in its domestic affairs and therefore condones no behavior for such purposes. Accusing China of interference without hard evidence, for any Chinese, is no more than a naïve joke -- if not a deliberate demonization.

For its part, the Chinese can do more to dispel such corrosive misconceptions. Chinese officials and scholars can be more active in engaging the American public. Take for example, the 2008 melamine-laced baby formula scandal. Peter Navarro, now a White House trade adviser, twisted the tragic episode in his book, using it to portray the Chinese as so immoral that they would poison foreign customers and themselves. Such distortions wouldn't spread if China had proactively given the world a fuller picture of the episode, making clear that the problem was investigated, that the people responsible were punished and that laws and regulations were put in place to prevent future such occurrences. Ten years have passed and challenges remain, but food safety is a top priority of the Chinese government.

Although China has a right to defend its sovereignty when its political system is under attack, it can also do a better job of responding to specific U.S. complaints. Take, for instance, the empty American contention that we haven't done enough to fight climate change. To safeguard the environment, China is paying a stiff economic cost. We have closed polluting factories, which has led to layoffs and workers in need of retraining. The difficulties China is going through in service to a healthier planet need to be shared with the entire world.

Where there are reasonable requests from the U.S., the Chinese can candidly acknowledge and try to address them through accelerating reforms. For example, China has announced further

steps to open up the financial service sector and bring down tariffs across the board. To better protect intellectual property, the Standing Committee of National People's Congress has just approved changes that the second-instance intellectual properties cases with strong technical elements will be submitted directly to our Supreme Court so as to unify the standards of adjudication.

Since 2014, specialized intellectual property courts in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have handled a growing number of patent, trademark and copyright cases. Violations and disputes are not uncommon, however a strong emphasis is given to broadening people's awareness and reinforcing the execution of laws. If the U.S. cares for China's IP improvement, it should be China's partner in addressing the challenges.

At this moment, it is important for the Chinese people to understand what is confronting us in our relationship with the U.S. and why. Although events of late have increased apprehensiveness, we have not given up the hope of returning to a place of progress and stability, and we are willing to work toward this goal. Just because the Thucydides Trap is set, doesn't mean we have to walk into it.

(本文原载“盘古智库”微信公众号)