

“September 11 Event” vs. Sino-US Relations

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The current international power structure is just like a quiet lake with troubled water underneath. The September 11 Attacks broke the tranquil surface like a falling stone. The splashdown effect, which has spread beyond the United States to every corner of the world, will trigger realignment in big power relations and fundamental changes in the global structure. As one of the most complicated and important bilateral ties in the world today, the Sino-US relationship is certainly affected by this event.

With respect to the event's impact upon Sino-US relations, American scholars have expressed many insightful views. There are both overviews like those lectures given by Dr. Michael Swaine from Washington-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to his Chinese audience recently, and impromptu comments from renowned China experts such as Prof. Harry Harding, Prof. David Shambaugh, Prof. David M. Lampton, Dr. James C. Mulvenon, and Prof. Ralph A. Cossa carried through the mass media.² Though somewhat different from one another, their views roughly stressed two aspects. Some held that the event offered an opportunity for warmer ties between the US and China. Dr. Mulvenon at the RAND Corporation believed that cooperation in the fight against terrorism “gives the U.S. and China the chance to be partners on a crucial issue”.³ Always being optimistic about relations with China, Professor Lampton went a step further by considering counter-terrorism as the “new strategic foundation” for US-China relations just like the common enemy of the former Soviet Union in the Cold War.⁴ Others asserted that instead of allaying existing problems, the event might even bring some new challenges. Mr. Robert Kapp, head of the US-China Business Council, pointed out that, “There still exists the possibility of a very serious degradation of U.S.-China relations if expectations are disappointed.”⁵ How so? Dr. Swaine's analysis goes like this: despite certain superficial counter-terrorist cooperation, each side is deeply skeptical of the strategic intention and motives of the other. In case the counter-terrorist war of great uncertainties turns against China's interests, current cooperation might ignite a greater crisis.⁶ To the

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² *International Herald Tribune*, September 27, October 18, 2001; *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 4, 2001; *Korea Times*, October 12.

³ *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 2001.

⁴ Significant Change Occurred in US Foreign Strategy, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 4, 2001.

⁵ *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 1, 2001.

⁶ Speech by Micheal D. Swaine at a seminar sponsored jointly by China Reform

author, more American scholars seemed to put their emphasis on challenges rather than opportunities. In other words, the majority of the American academic circle held doubts over whether the events of September 11 might bring favorable by-products to US-China relations.

Against the heated discussion among American colleagues stands reticence in the Chinese academic circle. It is worthwhile to ruminate over this contrast with the brisk airing of views among Chinese scholars during the Kosovo War. The author could see three factors behind this phenomenon. First, unlike the Kosovo War in the name of “humanitarian intervention”, the current counter-terrorist warfare so far has been rightful and defensive in nature, although we have to wait and see if this nature will change in the future. That explains why such a war at China's doorstep has aroused less vigilance here towards potential impacts on China's national security than that in far-away Europe. Second, just as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said, the war against terrorism is “an unprecedented, new-type of warfare” with its developments yet to be observed. It is also true that Chinese scholars need to deepen their understanding of terrorism. No wonder most of them prefer to follow the developments with cool-headed observation before making any prudent comments. Third, having been repeatedly shocked by vicious incidents like the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and the collision of the EP-3 espionage plane over the South China Sea, Chinese scholars have become more rational and mature with an evidently higher “sense of responsibility” for stable Sino-US relations.

Compared with American and Chinese scholars, third-party scholars and journalists have come up with some bolder and more penetrating remarks. For example, Saudi Arabia's mass media asserted that “Washington's strategic intention in taking part in the Central Asian conflict lies in breaking up the Beijing-Islamabad-Moscow-Tehran Axis for redrawing the regional political landscape.”⁷ Pakistan's *Frontier Post* pointed out that the U.S. war in Afghanistan “aims at following a ‘new’ containment policy of encircling China, which will be possible only after two thirds of the country's boundaries have been put under encirclement. Incidentally, Japan, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan combine to have two thirds of China's boundaries. The main purpose of the US in Asia is to build a powerful anti-China front. For this, a grand China encirclement plan has been placed on the drawing-board.”⁸ A Japanese newspaper also talked about the intention of the US to carry out “geopolitical restructuring” in Central Asia by making use of the “September 11 Event”: “American influence in Central Asia, a region formerly out of Washington's reach, will increase by leaps and bounds”; “the US's war against Afghanistan will last so long that American military presence in Central Asia might become semi-permanent.”⁹ Russia's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* commented this way, “The tragedy of September 11 is the consequence for U.S. policy. It, however, also represents a political success for the United States and the international forces in favor of a global hegemony.”¹⁰ According to these analyses, the “September 11 Event” would inevitably affect the Sino-US relations in a highly negative, even dangerous, way.

Then what is a well-balanced assessment? _____

Forum and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Beijing, October 31, 2001.

⁷ *The Middle*, September 24, 2001.

⁸ *Frontier Post*, October 10, 2001.

⁹ *Sekai Nippo*, October 13, 2001.

¹⁰ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 10, 2001._

As the author sees it, the event indeed offers an opportunity for improvement and reconciliation of Sino-US relations. To what extent this interlude will modify the theme will mainly depend on how the two handle it. American scholar Minxin Pei (at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) believed that either side has only “half-seized” the opportunity so far.¹¹ In order to ensure the event becomes an opportunity rather than a challenge, both China and the US should seize the remaining half.

Denial of the positive impacts of the event on Sino-US relations means disregard for recent major improvements; thus it is hardly a realistic attitude. A brief review of the developments of this bilateral relationship over the past half-year will be useful.

Shortly after George W. Bush was inaugurated as the US President, a sudden drop in the temperature of the bilateral ties was unfortunately accompanied by the saber-rattling confrontation over the collision of the US EP-3 espionage plane with a Chinese F8. Objectively speaking, it is the US that should take the main responsibility. Here are some of the facts: The US abandoned the framework of “constructive strategic partnership towards the 21st Century” reached with China during Clinton's presidency and defined China as “a strategic competitor”; backed away from Clinton's “Three No's” regarding Taiwan and made breakthroughs in various aspects of Taiwan policies; boosted ties with Asian allies and India—a neighboring country of China—while playing up an eastward shift of strategic focus in a way appearing to China as “strategic encirclement”. The EP-3 collision incident, which took place against such a background, naturally angered China and drove the bilateral relations to the valley point. As time went by the Bush team seemed to realize that broken ties with China are against US interests, and therefore relevant policies need to be more or less adjusted. Thus came a change from “strategic clarity” to “strategic ambiguity” in President Bush's stance on the Taiwan issue. Secretary of State Collin Powell and James Kelly, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, both refrained from using the term “strategic competitor” to define China in their recent remarks.¹² Later, President Bush made his first phone call to President Jiang Zemin on July 5 and kept his promise of visiting China even when the war against terror had just began. All these signaled a retreat by the new administration's from its previous hard line towards China. However, the inadequate determination and pace resulted in only slow progress that failed to break up the current stalemate. The author does believe that the major obstacle lies in the long-term “hegemonic mindset” and misgivings about China. Heavy pressures from the domestic right wing also played a part in restraining the hands of President Bush, even if he had some intention of reconciling with Beijing.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 actually helped President Bush to remove the “psychological barrier”. Consequently, apparent improvements, i.e. alleged change from “strategic competitors” to “partners for counter-terrorism”, have already been seen in the bilateral relations, even though President Bush has yet to come back to the expressway to Beijing built during Clinton's term. First, President Bush and President Jiang held their historic meeting at the venue of the APEC Shanghai Conference. It is true that the American side generally regards its result as “very limited”. However, the

¹¹ Speech by Minxin Pei at the seminar sponsored jointly by China Reform Forum and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Beijing, October 31, 2001.

¹² Testimony by James Kelly, U.S. Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs before the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, Senate

author would rather view it as another example of the APEC Model between the state leaders of China and the US, which would facilitate the development of the bilateral relations at difficult times. The most typical precedent took place in Seattle in 1993. What is more, given the timing of the APEC Shanghai Conference, the three-hour meeting between Bush and Jiang provided some far-reaching importance. President Bush not only said, “China is not an enemy,” but even called China “a great country”. He was also deeply impressed with Shanghai's unbelievable march toward modernization and opening-up.¹³ Though such limited visual experience will not overturn his view of China, we hope it may somehow lead to a more balanced outlook. The significance in this regard is not inferior to any improvements on concrete issues.

Next, both heads of state expressed their willingness to see “a candid, constructive and cooperative relationship”,¹⁴ thereby marking a full stop to the agitated proposition of “strategic competitor”. Actually, even before the meeting, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and even National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice all indicated that they would cease calling China “a strategic competitor”.¹⁵ Instead, Secretary Powell began to use the term “constructive and cooperative relationship” to describe the US-China relationship, which was reaffirmed by President Bush after the attacks of September 11th. All these reflected subtle yet significant changes in the key American leaders’ attitudes toward China. It is true that such rhetoric alteration does not necessarily mean substantial policy change. Yet given the unique importance of strategic definition and semantics in the Sino-US relationship, the new wording of “constructive and cooperative relationship” will definitely play a positive role in pushing the relationship forward.

Furthermore, besides resuming dialogues in the fields of human rights, trade/economic relations, arms control and security, both leaders of the two states agreed to establish a top-level direct strategic dialogue mechanism. China expert David Shambaugh believed that with such a mechanism as the guarantee, Bush's decision to postpone his official visit to China might not be a bad thing at all—“It only postponed the momentum a little bit.”¹⁶ His remarks do make some sense.¹⁷

Finally, trade and economic relations between China and the US maintained a steady and good momentum. The US economic situation became a global focus since September 11. Leaving aside the issue of whether the US economy is in a recession, the US economy is certainly suffering. The GDP increase for the second quarter this year was almost zero while that of the third quarter was even minus, the first time in ten years. Under such circumstances, many big American companies shifted their focus to China, a country with steady economic growth. At the same time as the APEC Summit in Shanghai, giant US companies like Microsoft, Applied Materials, Hewlett-Packard and General Motors all announced greater investments to China. Even Motorola, which was generally pessimistic about the economic prospects for the world, suddenly declared another \$6.6 billion investment to China in the next five

¹³ *Washington File*, October 22, 2001.

¹⁴ “President Bush, JIANG Zemin Meet in Shanghai”, *Washington File*, October 22, 2001.

¹⁵ Speech by Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld at the press conference held at the U.S. embassy in Canberra, Australia, July 30, 2001.

¹⁶ Discussion with CICIR scholars in early October 2001.

¹⁷ Some Western media made comments on the strategic dialogue mechanism reached between China and the US by saying something like “China is pursuing the *de facto* Superpower status through such a mechanism”, *Jane's Intelligence*

years, thus amounting its total investment to China to over \$10 billion by 2006.¹⁸ It was commented by the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review* that many U.S. businesses placed their hope on the economic strength of China to stave off recession.¹⁹

The significance of the September 11 Event for the Sino-US relationship lies in providing an opportunity for both to engage in dialogues, to reconcile with each other, and to quicken the pace of readjusting the China policy by the Bush Administration. Quite a few scholars regard counter-terrorist cooperation as the new strategic foundation for Sino-US relations, which will overwhelm other contradictions between the two. The author puts a big question mark on that observation. It is also the very reason why “counter-terrorist cooperation” was not listed above as an argument for the improvement of Sino-US relations. The author’s judgement is based on two reasons.

First, is the role of *ad hoc* alliances in American foreign policy and its implications for Sino-US relations. An *ad hoc* alliance is a frequently used tool for US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era. Desiring world leadership and being obsessed with too many overseas commitments, the US often turns to outside forces for help on major international crises. Those US-dominated international institutions, traditional allies always with firm support and *ad hoc* alliance for certain temporary issues, all have been utilized to serve the strategic goals of the US. The Four Party Talks addressing the Korean Peninsula and the US-China coalition addressing the South Asian Nuclear Tests are two outstanding examples. Such *ad hoc* alliances addressing regional or specific problems are based on coalitions with indispensable countries, and they abide only by the principle of practical interests and are even willing to temporarily shelve differences in ideology and values. Being momentarily interest-motivated, *ad hoc* alliances do not live long. It will evaporate once a solution or moderation is achieved. And contradictions hidden for the time being will resurface and old patterns of relations will be restored. Shortly after the 1998 South Asian Nuclear Tests, the US formed an *ad hoc* alliance with China against India and Pakistan. China was even led to the front row. The Sino-US relationship was warm and friendly for a time with China being repeatedly praised as “a responsible major power”. The term of “Constructive Strategic Partnership” was sung high. But the coalition collapsed as soon as the tension in South Asia relaxed. What's more, in the following year of 1999, bilateral relations between China and the US became even worse than before.

The current US-advocated global counter-terrorist coalition will naturally remind one of previous *ad hoc* alliances. Omnipresent and unpredictable terrorism forced the US to seek the collective power of the world in fighting the war against terror. The “Bush doctrine” differentiating between the foe and the friend by one’s choosing “the side of us or the terrorists”²⁰ united most countries in the world under the flag of the counter-terrorist coalition. The US policy goal of using global power to serve its own interest is obvious to all. In order to sustain the coalition, President Bush put aside his

¹⁸ “Focus on China: Motorola Aims to Double Investment and Production”, *International Herald Tribune*, November 8, 2d001.

¹⁹ Michael Vatikiotis, Ben Dolven and David Murphy, “Terror Throws US Together, For Now”, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 1, 2001.

²⁰ *Washington Post*, October 17, 2001.

unilateralism overnight, lifted sanctions against India and Pakistan, paid the overdue fee to the UN and smiled to both Beijing and Moscow. In short, US foreign policy made a U-turn. Nevertheless, the sincerity of counter-terrorist partners in this mission is highly questionable. According to the above-mentioned rules of the *ad hoc* alliance game, cooperation over counter-terrorism would hardly change the US's deep-rooted prejudice towards certain countries. Fundamental contradictions will re-emerge at the end of the counter-terrorist war. That is why the author is doubtful of the possibility of the counter-terrorist cooperation becoming a driving force for Sino-US relations.

And second, differences between China and the US over a number of related important issues like the definition of terrorism, the goal of the current war, etc. have come to the surface, despite good bilateral cooperation over counter-terrorism so far. Such divergences over concrete issues plus existing problems between the two might cast shadows over their future ties.

1. There exists a gap between the two sides' expectations of the counter-terrorist cooperation. As the weaker side, China hopes to improve its relations with the US fundamentally through the cooperation. Whereas Washington this time merely warmed its relations with Beijing for the sake of the counter-terrorist campaign itself. Such different preoccupations led to entirely contrary perceptions by Chinese and US scholars. For instance, from the Chinese perspective, China, with an independent foreign policy tradition and plagued with ethnic separatists and terrorist threats, has done its utmost in immediately expressing political support, closing borders with Afghanistan, sharing intelligence with the US and pledging to de-link the counter-terrorist matter with the Taiwan issue. Even so, many a US scholar still blamed China for its "many words but few actions" and "insufficient efforts".²¹ What appeared to be different views on a specific issue here actually reflect discrepancy between American and Chinese scholars in understanding the essence of the bilateral relationship. The inertia thinking of some US scholars made a mistake in expecting "a strategic competitor" to transform into "a cooperative partner" overnight at the moment of US suffering. This way of thinking really runs counter to the realistic philosophy that most Americans believe in.

2. Divergence also exists between China and the US over the interpretation of the term terrorism, the most popular international political word after September 11. Even within a country there is no consensus. Not to mention a universal definition. China opposes "terrorism in all forms", including naturally terrorist activities plotted by ethnic separatists on its land.²² Nevertheless, during their stay in Shanghai for the APEC meeting, President Bush and Secretary Powell did not fail to stress that "the war against terrorism should not become a pretext for suppressing ethnic minorities."²³ It is said in the APEC Leaders Statement on Counter-Terrorism, "Leaders consider the murderous deeds as well as other terrorist acts in all forms and manifestations, committed wherever, whenever and by whomsoever as a profound threat to the peace, prosperity and security of all people, of all faiths, of all nations."²⁴ These are only views in principle without going into details. It is hence very likely that the double-standardized definition of terrorism will become a new subject for the security dialogue

²¹ Raugh Cossa: China—An Outsider of the New World Order, *Korea Times*, October 30, 2001.

²² WANG Yizhou: How to Define Terrorism, *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*, 2001.10.

²³ Jonathan Mirsky: Remind Beijing: Human Rights and Arms Control Do Matter, *International Herald Tribune*, November 22, 2001.

²⁴ People's Daily, October 21, 2001.

between China and the US in addition to the lasting debate over Human Rights vs. Sovereignty left over by the Kosovo War.

3. Both sides have different understandings as to the objective of the current US-led war against terror. Thus far the US only admitted officially two goals: first, “hitting terrorist forces in order to prevent large-scale terrorist attacks on America and her citizens”²⁵ by destroying the lair of chief terrorist suspect Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan; second, eliminating the source of terrorism at the same time. As to the third goal of “geo-strategic purpose” alleged by many countries including China, the US just stoutly denied.

Mme. Charlene Barshefsky, former US Trade Representative held that counter-terrorist cooperation has enhanced mutual trust between China and the US, therefore adding an “anchor” to the bilateral relationship and offering a “second foundation” other than trade and economic relations.²⁶ She is right in a sense. Yet based on my previous analysis, it will need three preconditions in order to transform such cooperation into impetus. First, instead of being obsessed with “potential challenges” from the rise of China and spreading “China Threat”, the US should regard terrorism as its real enemy as repeatedly claimed by key US political figures. Second, Washington should no longer designate East Asia as the focus of defense. Instead of playing the old tune of “strategic encirclement of China” and “strategic focus shifting eastwards”, it should sincerely regard homeland defense as the primary task of its national defense strategy as suggested by the latest Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR) issued in September 2001. Third, the US should not treat the current counter-terrorist coalition as another *ad hoc* alliance. China’s role should be measured by the current yardstick even after the war ends. In a few words, Washington needs to fundamentally change its view on the source of threats, completely update its defense doctrine and thoroughly examine its practice of global leadership.

Unfortunately, at this time, none of these three preconditions has been realized. Secretary Rumsfeld needs to change rigid notions about the source of threats and needs to shake off the disturbances over familiar yet highly unlikely threats.²⁷ The Pentagon has also established a capability-based not threat-based new strategy.²⁸ Yet in terms of overall defense strategy, while paying more attention than before to non-traditional threats like terrorism, the Pentagon keeps bearing in mind the so-called potential threats from regional major powers. For example, the recently released QDR still indicates China as the most likely regional power capable of challenging U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific.²⁹ On the diplomatic front, the US lifted sanctions against India and Pakistan for the sake of their cooperation over counter-terrorism but sanctions against China from 1989 remain intact. Moreover, the US has shown with words and deeds to Taiwan and also of course to the mainland of China its determination not to change Taiwan policy in exchange for China's support. All of these actions are surely revealing.

²⁵ Televised speeches by President Bush, September 12, October 7, 2001.

²⁶ Charlene Barshefsky: Impact of September 11 event on Sino-U.S. relations, *Xinhua New Agencies* dispatch, October 19, 2001.

²⁷ *Washington Post*, November 1, 2001.

²⁸ Department of Defense: *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, September 30, 2001.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

There is another hot topic related to the impact of the September 11 Event on Sino-US relations. Many observers suggest that US military attacks on Afghanistan will drive a wedge between Beijing and Moscow, weaken Beijing-Islamabad relations and erode the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In the strategic rivalry between China and the US, China will then remain in an inferior position. Hence the long-term Sino-US relationship is pessimistic. The author could hardly agree.

First comes the current Beijing-Washington-Moscow triangle. We have to acknowledge that this new triangle developed after the Cold War and is very different from the Grand Triangle among China, the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Owing to the interdependence under globalization, neither two sides could afford the cost of a worsened relationship with the third party while improving ties between themselves. Any improvement of a bilateral relationship must be driven by the concerned two parties' own interests and not necessarily aimed at the third party.

Russian President Putin was the first to send condolences to the White House after the September 11 attacks. Furthermore, Russia opened its territorial sky to the US, shared intelligence with the later and for the first time allowed US military forces access to Central Asia. Such a degree of support is higher "than any other NATO member state except the UK". In addition, Moscow also showed some flexibility on major issues like the ABM Treaty revision and NATO expansion. Washington returned these favors by declaring, "America and Russia have completely walked out from the shadow of the Cold War". America in turn increased investments to Russia and vowed to heighten the bilateral relationship to strategic and cooperative partnership and to build a stable strategic framework with Moscow.³⁰ The relationship between Washington and Moscow seemingly outweighs that between Washington and Beijing. But the point is that the incentive behind these developments is not to alienate China but rather to meet complementary demands. U.S. former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski once pointed out that Russia, faced with 1.3 billion Chinese to the East and 300 million Muslims to the South, has no other choice but Western inclination. Closer ties with China could allay Moscow's security concerns so that it could concentrate on avoiding an economic predicament. But its economic recovery still awaits substantial assistance from America and Europe. In order to enhance its international political position, recover lost prestige and regain the status of a first-class world power, Russia needs to show a thing or two at this crucial juncture. All these motivations resulted in Russia's active responses to the US-led counter-terrorist coalition. However, its consistent definition of terrorism, position toward the post-Taliban regime in Afghanistan and adherence to the ABM Treaty all demonstrate that Russia has compromised the protection of its own national interests for closer relations with the US. On the one hand, President Putin and President Bush did meet four times this year; on the other hand, three top Chinese leaders President JIANG Zemin, Premier ZHU Rongji and Vice President HU Jintao also paid successive visits to Kremlin within the same period of time. On the one hand, Russia might compromise with the US over the ABM Treaty; on the other hand, China and Russia have already signed the Good Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, signifying a milestone in their bilateral relationship. All these indicate that Russia would like to maintain good relations with China and America at the same time. Since the end of the Cold War, Moscow has succeeded in readjusting relations with China and other neighboring countries, but has yet to straighten out ties with America and

³⁰ *Washington File*, October 23, 2001.

Europe. In terms of diplomatic logic, it is natural for Moscow to boost relations with Washington by sizing the opportunity of counter-terrorist cooperation. Accordingly, warming-up relations between Moscow and Washington does not mean Beijing must be left out in the cold.

In fact, improvements in Russia-US relations are accompanied by good momentum in Sino-US relations and steady progress in Sino-Russia relations. U.S. Scholar Sherman Garnett said, "Washington should not exaggerate the dangers of the strengthening ties between Russia and China."³¹ This reflected the liberal mindset of some American scholars. Then why should we think better Washington-Moscow relations must mean worsening relations between Beijing and Moscow or Beijing and Washington? Instead, we should hold a more positive attitude toward the development of the US-Russia relationship and fully express our positions—the so-called "China-Russia alliance against America" is nothing but a fabrication; the development of Sino-Russian relations will abide by the three *No's* principles (no alignment, no confrontation and no targeting at a third country) which are by no means diplomatic rhetoric; a historic win-win-win triangular relationship among China, Russia and the US is possible.

The current US military presence in Central Asia refutes the fallacy of some Americans that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a "quasi-military bloc". The author believes that progress in US-Pakistan relations is also conducive to the Sino-US and Sino-Pakistan relationships. Lack of mutual trust has always been the obstacle to Sino-US relations after the Cold War. Therefore, the US improving its relations with China's neighboring countries while China maintains good relations with them at the same time should encourage confidence-building between Washington and Beijing. This should be a desirable perspective for assessing recent realignments in big power relations and future Sino-US relations.

In sum, counter-terrorist cooperation after the September 11 Event has offered an opportunity for better relations between China and the US. However, it can hardly serve as a foundation for long-term steady improvement. The real foundation lies in confidence building. At present, there is enough space for the two countries' synchronous development. By using the Russian economist Nikolei Kondratyev's Long Wave theory and the cycle of changes in hegemonies, some US scholars estimate long-term growth for the world economy. They came to the conclusion that the global leadership would not shift before 2030 and that the next change of the world power structure would not occur between America and China for at least 20 years.³² This span of time and space will provide the relationship with both intrinsic driving forces as well as foundations for improvement. Yet it requires careful nurturing of the leaders of the two countries to consolidate the foundations. Opportunity and challenge are often one step away. After all, counter-terrorist cooperation has offered an opportunity if not a foundation for future Sino-US relations. The bumpy progress of bilateral relations in the post-Cold War era has proven that proper handling of single issues or events could fortify the strategic foundation. A clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges brought about by the September 11 Event would benefit the Sino-US relationship, if we could seize the former and overcome the latter.

³¹ Sherman Garnett: "Challenges of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership", *The Washington Quarterly*, Fall 2001.

³² Michael D. Swaine & Ashley J. Tellis: *Interpreting China's Grand*