



The flags of the United States and China at the site of a bilateral meeting at the Group of 20 summit in Osaka, Japan, on June 29, 2019. (Photo: NYTimes)

# Sino-US partnership will be key to global shared future



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**P**RESIDENT Xi Jinping's call to "build a community with a shared future for mankind" will have an even better chance of being realized, should the United States be ready to move beyond challenges and seize new opportunities.

With its recent general election, the Capitol Hill riot on January 6 in Washington, DC, and the impeachment trial of challenger Donald Trump behind it, the US must now transition from challenges, and move on to opportunities and new solutions.

The nation should recall the words of former president Abraham Lincoln in his annual message to Congress on December 1, 1862, during the US Civil War: "It is not 'can any of us imagine better?' but, 'can we all do better?' ... We must disenthral ourselves, and then we shall save our country. ... Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. ... We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

The time has come for the US to disenthral itself once again and to revisit the first principles of its greatness, the foremost of which is tolerance — now needed not just urgently, but existentially, to launch a new discourse for global resilience and collaboration. In that spirit, as a start, the US and China can endeavor to promote international tolerance, sustainable development and cooperation at multiple levels globally. We need a clear call to action.

First, about two weeks after the US general election on November 3 last year, the International Day for Tolerance was observed. I, along with my Global Challenges Forum Foundation co-founder, Walter Christman, responded by issuing a Global Partnership Declaration. Our aim is to connect the world through trust building and to confront the emerging challenges of the 21st century.

More than ever, in a hyper-connected world, local is global, and global is local. Remote challenges ripple globally. Any mass threat, no matter how distant, is global.

Therefore, we must address challenges and collaborate. What is needed is a world campaign encouraging a new spirit of partnership for global resilience, while respecting the needs of China and the US to balance complementarity and competition.

To build a shareable discourse respectful of all mankind, and to avoid dividing humanity into rival blocs, the two nations must jointly articulate shareable interests to the rest of the world. The new "last best hope of earth" is for the US and China to join with other nations to co-develop partnership principles for global resilience in the 21st century, while reaffirming the United Nations' Sustainable

Development Goals.

Second, US President Joe Biden's well-received inaugural speech on national healing should soon be followed by a speech on global healing — with a call to build global partnerships for a sustainable world. The COVID-19 pandemic has rattled everybody, and the paramount question the US faces is not whether China is a threat, but whether post-pandemic nations will become more resilient to manage future challenges.

US-China relations, poised precariously, are paramount for world progress, and all people await their positive development. Enabling partnerships for global resilience is precisely why partnership is the final, crowning goal among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Promoting tolerance, global resilience, and youth empowerment for sustainable development are feasible partnership options.

Emerging global challenges will be multiple, interconnected, unpredictable, and persistent. Global challenges need global solutions, in which we must all be partners.

We need a new global partnership that is more equitable and balanced, also yielding mutually shared benefits. To pursue that entails collective rethinking — on how to be secure, for example. There is no zero-sum, absolute security. We are interdependent. We also need new thinking: concepts, mechanisms, and means to achieve a secure world.

President Biden should respond positively to President Xi's call to "build a community with a shared future for mankind."

Finally, I am issuing a call for all of humanity to join in support of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' statement that if the US and China grow apart, the world risks splitting into two rival blocs. All peoples everywhere should endorse his appeal for the two nations to cooperate to overcome major challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

The issue before us is how best to move from challenges to opportunities to solutions — by launching a new endeavor to promote global resilience through partnerships for sustainable development.

I began with a thought from the great US president Lincoln. I will end with wisdom from China, from the Analects of Confucius: "Men of virtue can cooperate, even when they don't agree; men of meanness can't cooperate, even when they agree."

Let us all together face and overcome world divisions and crises by recalling our virtue.

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