

# Progress and Challenges: China-U.S. People-to-People Exchange

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In November 2009, Chinese President Hu Jintao and United States President Barack Obama established a high-level dialogue mechanism to promote people-to-people exchange between the two countries. According to the mechanism, governments of the two countries shall make greater efforts to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the following areas: education, science and technology, culture, women, youth and sports. Since then, through joint efforts by the two governments and various other actors, Sino-U.S. people-to-people exchange has developed rapidly and become perhaps the most positive aspect of the relations between the two countries.

This paper will first review the progress that has been achieved over the past years. Then, it will analyze the factors that have contributed to the progress. Finally, it will offer views on the challenges and future prospects of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange.

## I. A FRUITFUL PROCESS

Over the past three years, Sino-U.S. people-to-people exchange has displayed the following characteristics: broad, multilayered,

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Sino-U.S. people-to-people exchange has displayed the following characteristics: broad, multilayered, and widespread.

and widespread. By “broad,” it is meant that the two countries have enhanced cooperation in many areas, including education, culture, science and technology, sports, women and youth. By “multilayered,” it is meant that the two countries have cooperated at various levels, for example, from central or federal government to local government and from senior people to

young students. By “widespread,” it is meant that many people from different walks of life have directly participated in the process.

### **1. Educational Exchange**

To begin, the two countries have made substantial progress in educational exchange. By May 2012, 43,000 American students had studied in China. More than 7,100 students, teachers and principals of elementary and high schools had visited China. Furthermore, 2,100 American college students had won fellowships from the Chinese government or support from the “Chinese Bridge” language program to study in China. As a result, U.S. students in China constituted 8% of foreign students in China and American students became the second largest foreign student body in China. In addition, with support from American universities, China had set up 81 Confucian Institutes; Chinese language classes had become available in over 5,000 American public schools at all levels; and the number of students taking Chinese language classes in the U.S. had exceeded 200,000.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, in 2012 China ranked No. 1 in terms of number of students studying in the U.S. According to “Open Doors 2012” report released by the U.S. Institute of International Education, the number of Chinese students enrolled in U.S. universities and colleges reached 194,029, representing a 23% growth over the previous year. One out of every four foreign students studying in the U.S. came from China.<sup>2</sup> In the academic year of 2010-2011, 4,300 Chinese students received support from the Chinese government to study in PhD programs in the U.S. Estimates show

that more than 300 million Chinese are learning English.<sup>3</sup> This lays a solid foundation for people-to-people exchange between the two countries.

## **2. Cultural Exchange**

As educational exchanges grow rapidly, cultural exchanges between the two countries have also expanded. Between mid-September and end of October 2010, Chinese Ministry of Culture and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts jointly presented a Chinese culture series with the theme “China: The Art of a Nation” at the Kennedy Center. In more than a month’s time, Chinese artists performed ballet, play, opera and other shows to American audience. Their shows were highly appreciated.<sup>4</sup>

With joint efforts on both sides, Chinese culture has been brought to U.S. communities and families. Between end of October and early November, the National Museum of China of the China’s National Ethnic Affairs Commission sent a performing and exhibition group to Washington and New York where Chinese artists demonstrated costumes and cultures of Chinese minority ethnic groups to local Americans. During its stay in the U.S., members of the group participated in a home-stay program and lived with American families. They experienced American life and learned local American songs, and they taught the dances of Chinese ethnic minorities and spoke about the customs and living habits of Chinese minority ethnic groups. These activities have enhanced American understanding of China as a country with many ethnic minorities and forged deep friendship between members of the group and local Americans.<sup>5</sup>

Between November 17 and 19, 2011, the first China-U.S. symposium on culture and arts, jointly sponsored by the Asia Society, Aspen Institute, Chinese People’s Friendship Association, and U.S. Embassy in Beijing, was held in the National Opera House and National Museum in Beijing. Some famous Chinese and American movie directors, actors and other outstanding figures attended the symposium, including American film director Joel Koen, movie star Meryl Streep, cellist Youyou Ma, and Chinese film director Lu Chuan. The symposium ran six theme sessions on

topics ranging from food culture, art and market to photography. This symposium enhanced mutual understanding between artists of the two countries and furnished a new platform for exchange between the two countries on values, art inspirations and cultural tastes.<sup>6</sup>

On May 4, 2012, American Undersecretary of State Tara Sonenshine and Chinese Vice Minister of Culture Zhao Shaohua concluded an agreement on cultural exchanges between the two countries between 2012 and 2014. According to this agreement, the two countries are committed to enhancing cooperation and making greater efforts to promote exchanges in culture and arts, education, news broadcast, publication, sports, and protection of historical relics.<sup>7</sup>

### **3. Exchange in Science and Technology**

Exchanges in science and technology between the two countries, especially those on clean energy and agricultural technology, have becoming increasingly lively. Lin Boqiang, Director of China Energy Economy Research Center of Xiamen University, said, "It has become a consensus between the two sides that China and the U.S. have common interests and great potential in exchanges in science and technology, especially in technology of clean energy and agriculture." Against this background, among the 26 agreements China and the U.S. concluded in the second round of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue between the two countries about half are related to cooperation over clean energy. Wang Jun, Director General of the Department of Renewable Energy of the National Bureau of Energy said, "Many U.S. companies have made investment in China on projects of renewable energy such as setting up firms producing wind mills, as well as bears, transformers and other equipment for wind mills. China has become an integral part of their global business."<sup>8</sup>

In 2009, the two countries set up a joint research center on clean energy. This center has facilitated joint research on the part of scientists from the two countries and provides a platform for exchange of views among scientists of the two countries.<sup>9</sup> On January 18 and 19, 2009, China Institute for Innovation and

Development Strategy and the U.S. Brookings Institution jointly hosted a conference on China-U.S. relations and the second symposium on pragmatic and strategic cooperation on clean energy between the two countries. During the conference and the symposium, scholars and business people of the two countries explored the common interests of the two countries on clean energy and pragmatic measures to promote cooperation between business, research institutions and regions.<sup>10</sup> Participating companies and research institutions also concluded some agreements on clean energy cooperation during the meeting, such as the agreement on development of technologies to build green cities between Jim Rogers, Chairman of the board of directors of Duke Energy and Wang Yusuo, Chairman of the board of directors of China's ENN Group; the agreement on technological cooperation on reducing energy consumption and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission in thermo power plants between China Huaneng Group and the American Electric Power; and agreements concluded between China Huaneng Group and U.S. General Electric Company and between China Shenhua Group and U.S. Alcoa.<sup>11</sup>

On January 10, 2013, China-U.S. Clean Energy Research Center (CERC) held its Steering Committee in Washington, D.C. Wan Gang, Chinese Minister of Science and Technology and Steven Chu, the U.S. Secretary of Energy attended the meeting and listened to the reports from the directors and researchers of the CERC on its operation and progress in joint research projects.<sup>12</sup> On February 26 and 27, with the support from the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology and the U.S. Energy Department, Stanford University, U.S.-China Clean Energy Forum, and China Science and Technology Exchange Center, jointly held the second conference on intellectual property. More than 70 officials, lawyers and business people attended the conference. Together, they explored issues within the area of clean energy, such as joint research and innovation, industrial production, technological transfer, financing, commercial secrets training, and intellectual property.<sup>13</sup>

On April 14, 2013, China Overseas Development Association and the American Chamber of Commerce in China jointly held a conference on China-U.S. clean energy cooperation in Beijing.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry attended the conference and delivered speeches. More than 300 energy and business people participated in the conference and engaged in-depth discussion over enhancing energy cooperation between the two countries.<sup>14</sup> On April 17 and 18, China's National Energy Administration and the U.S. Energy Department jointly organized the fifth international conference on China-U.S. clean energy technologies in the city of Birmingham, Alabama in the U.S. More than 140 delegates from government organs, research institutes and clean energy businesses attended the conference. They exchanged views on the latest developments and products in efficient use of latest technologies in coal cleanness conversion between the two countries.<sup>15</sup>

As the two countries enhance cooperation in clean energy, they also made much progress in cooperation in agricultural technologies. According to *Science and Technology Daily*, between 2002 and 2012 China and the U.S. established a joint working group on agricultural science and technology and decided to establish seven priority areas for cooperation: management of natural resources, agricultural biotechnology, agricultural water saving technology, agricultural produce processing, food safety, milk product production and processing, and biomaterials. They have also set up nine joint research centers; implemented more than 50 international science and technology cooperation projects; trained more than one hundred doctoral students, master's students, and young scientists; and hosted a series of high-level international academic conferences and workshops. All this has promoted academic exchange and scientific and technological cooperation in agriculture between the two countries.<sup>16</sup>

On December 7, 2012, China Association of Agricultural International Exchange and the U.S. Paulson Center jointly hosted a conference on China-U.S. agricultural investment and cooperation in Beijing. At the conference, delegates from the two countries shared views on trends of development and opportunities of U.S. and global agricultural business, the situation with and prospect of investment in China-U.S. agricultural business, investment opportunities in bio-energy/bio-fuel, and overseas investment

strategies of China's agricultural business. They also conducted an in-depth discussion on food security, agricultural production efficiency, global energy structure, China-U.S. scientific and technological cooperation in agriculture, the prospect of agricultural cooperation and the ways and forms of cooperation.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4. Sports Exchanges**

Much progress was also witnessed in sports exchange between the two countries. Through cooperation between the General Administration of Sport of China and U.S. athletic affiliated institutions and organizations, the two countries conducted increasing exchange in various sport activities. An increasing number of American coaches have come to China to work with Chinese sports teams, including basketball, baseball, and tae kwon do.<sup>18</sup> Baseball and American football, two of the American league matches, are attempting to establish leagues in China and many Chinese athletes are finding their way to play in the U.S.<sup>19</sup>

In basketball, the two countries have dispatched teams to play in both China and the U.S. They have also set up training and exchange programs for Chinese and American referees and coaches. In football, the two countries have set up a program to promote football in both countries and ran training programs for coaches of youth football teams in Virginia and Shanghai in 2010 and 2011. In addition, with the support of the U.S. Olympic Committee, the China Olympic Committee dispatched coaches of bicycle, sword, swimming, handball, hockey, ping pong, and badminton to the U.S. for specialized training. This represents the largest and longest coaching exchange training program run by Olympic committees of the two countries.<sup>20</sup>

The General Administration of Sport of China has also been active in promoting Chinese martial arts and qigong in the U.S. In August 2011, the administration dispatched a Chinese martial art delegation to Washington, New York and Atlanta and engaged in performance and promotion activities. In order to enable more Americans to appreciate and experience qigong, the administration provided U.S. programs with teaching materials and videos. At the same time, the Chinese also worked with their American

counterparts to set up programs to train American martial art and qigong talents.<sup>21</sup>

The year 2011 marked the 40th anniversary of China-U.S. “ping pong diplomacy.” The Olympic committees and the ping pong associations of the two countries jointly held a series of activities in both countries to commemorate the event. The activities in the U.S. were held in Milwaukee, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Cai Zhenhua, Vice Director of the General Administration of Sport and Vice Chairman of China’s Olympic Committee, led the Chinese delegation to participate in the activities. During their visit to the U.S., ping pong players of different age groups staged eight friendship matches and participated in forums, dialogues and site visits. Activities in China took place between December 7 and 13, 2011. At the invitation of China’s Olympic Committee and Ping Pong Association, the U.S. Olympic Committee and Ping Pong Association jointly dispatched a delegation to visit China and participated in various commemorating activities in Beijing, Hangzhou and Shanghai.<sup>22</sup>

### **5. Interactions between Women**

In the meantime, the dialogue between women from the two countries also became more active. Early in 2011, the China-U.S. Joint Communiqué concluded by leaders of the two countries indicated that the two countries were actively exploring ways to enhance interactions between women in education and the workplace and discussion on enhancing the role of women in society. On April 12, Chinese State Councilor Liu Yandong and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton jointly announced the opening of the “Exchange and Dialogue between Chinese and American Woman Leaders” at the second round of the high-level consultation on people-to-people exchange between the two countries and formally included the interactions between women into the framework of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange framework. Soon after, through consultation, the China Federation of Women and the U.S. State Department’s Office of Global Women Issues agreed to enhance dialogue between women of the two countries in the following five areas: (1) enhance high-level

woman leaders dialogue; (2) enhance understanding and exchanges between organizations and research institutions/universities that focus on gender equality; (3) develop dialogue between vocational/professional woman leaders' exchange to share knowledge and experience; (4) organize training of woman leaders at various levels; and; (5) support public and private organizations to participate in woman empowering programs.<sup>23</sup>

Since then, the two countries have organized various activities around the previous five issue areas. This includes the advanced seminar of developing woman leaders jointly organized by China Federation of Women, the Department of Organization of the Central Committee, the Communist Party of China, Chinese Academy of Governance and Yale University in May 2011; the international symposium on "Women and Sustainable Development" attended by a U.S. delegation led by Ambassador Melanne Verweir in November 2011; the conference on rural women and sustainable development jointly organized by China Federation of Women and the U.S. State Department Office of Women Issues at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York in February 2012; the third round of dialogue between Chinese and American women leaders attended by a Chinese delegation led by Chen Zhili, Vice Chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Chairperson of the All-China Federation of Women in March 2012; and the pilot project to disseminate awareness to prevent breast cancer in three Chinese provinces sponsored by the All-China Federation of Women, the U.S. Goldman Sachs Group and the Susan G. Komen Foundation.<sup>24</sup>

On May 3, 2012, the All-China Women's Federation and the U.S. State Department's Office of Global Women Issues jointly organized the fourth round of dialogue between Chinese and American women leaders with the theme "women and philanthropy." Present at the dialogue were leaders of the Development Foundation of All-China Women's Federation, China Children and Teenagers' Fund, China EverBright Bank, U.S. Women in the World Foundation, Buell Foundation, Exxon Mobile International Fund and Virtue Foundation.<sup>25</sup>

In sum, over the past three years, substantial headway has been observed in Sino-U.S. people-to-people exchange, which has played an important role in deepening mutual understanding between the two peoples and consolidating popular support for the relationship.

## II. REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRESS

While reviewing the progress achieved in China-U.S. people-to-people exchange over the previous years, the following factors are helpful to explain the accomplishments made between the two countries: (1) the will and determination on the part of the leaders of both countries; (2) the way the two sides pushed forward the exchange; and (3) the cooperative spirit with which the two sides promote the exchange.

### 1. Leadership

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The Chinese and American leaders made the decision to enhance people-to-people exchanges between the two countries under very unusual circumstances.

In history, major changes in international relations are invariably reflective of the will and determination of national leaders of the countries concerned. This is especially true with China and the U.S., two very large and politically highly independent states, on people-to-people exchange. It should be noted that the Chinese and American leaders made the decision to enhance people-to-people exchanges between the two countries under very unusual circumstances. In 2009, the shock of the international financial crisis was still reverberating. The U.S. economy was in a bad shape, marked by high unemployment and huge government debt. Though much less affected than the U.S. economy, Chinese economy was also facing serious challenges, including a slowdown of China's exports and sluggishness in consumption, two of the three most important drivers of China's economy, namely, investment, consumption, and exports. Promoting people-to-people exchange requires substantial investment of not only time and

energy, but also money. Therefore, it took a strong will on the part of leaders of both countries to make the decision at the time. They believed that promotion of people-to-people exchange between the two countries was very important and they should not wait until the economic situation improves. According to Vice Education Minister Hao Ping, among the eleven meetings between President Hu Jintao and President Obama before April 2012, the issue of people-to-people exchange was discussed on seven occasions.<sup>26</sup> President Obama said that he regarded people-to-people exchange as the foundation of China-U.S. cooperation and cooperation between the two countries and cooperation between China and other countries goes beyond intergovernmental cooperation and enjoys popular support.<sup>27</sup>

On November 17, 2009, President Hu Jintao and President Obama issued a China-U.S. Joint Communiqué. In the communiqué, the two leaders announced that they would set up a new bilateral mechanism to promote people-to-people exchange. The U.S. would help facilitate Chinese students to study in the U.S., while China also would welcome and encourage more American students to come to China to study.<sup>28</sup>

On May 25, 2010, the China-U.S. High Level Consultation Mechanism was formally established and held the first meeting. China's State Councilor Liu Yandong and the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton served as co-chairpersons. In the opening ceremony, Liu Yandong stressed the importance of promoting people-to-people exchange between the two countries. She said, as the biggest developing country and biggest developed country, mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation between China and the U.S. would not only benefit the people of the two countries but also the people of the world. China and the U.S. should take a strategic perspective in promoting people-to-people exchange between the two countries, consolidate the social and popular foundation of China-U.S. friendship, and inject new vitality into the relationship.<sup>29</sup> In her remarks at the opening ceremony, Secretary of State Clinton said that the foundation of the 21st century positive, cooperative and comprehensive relationship was people-to-people exchange. China and the U.S. should promote people-to-people

exchange, enable Americans and Chinese of different walks of life and age groups to get to know each other, deepen understanding, build trust and engage in friendly cooperation.<sup>30</sup>

By mid-2010, relations between the two countries entered into a period of friction. Conflicts over Google, climate change, trade, RMB exchange rate, arms sales to Taiwan, Obama's meeting with Dalai Lama, and U.S.-South Korea's military exercises in the Yellow Sea led to a downward spiral of the relationship.<sup>31</sup> At this time, speculation and mistrust appeared to be increasing. Despite questions regarding the sustainability of the people-to-people exchange under such circumstances, China and the U.S. actually made greater efforts to promote the program. With support from their nations' top leaders, Liu Yandong and Hillary Clinton stepped up their efforts. It was against this background that the two countries successfully held the second and third meetings of the high-level mechanism that yielded fruitful results.

## **2. Cooperative Spirit**

If the determination and will on the part of the leaders provided the critical momentum for promoting the people-to-people exchange, the cooperative spirit of both sides helped translate vision into reality. Such cooperative spirit was seen in the following aspects: seeking common ground while acknowledging differences, mutual tolerance and mutual help.

- a. Seeking common ground. China and the U.S. are two very different countries. Huge differences exist between the two nations in historical experience, culture, political system, developmental stage and business practices. Under normal circumstances, they may pose serious obstacles for people of both countries to understand each other and for the healthy development of the relationship. Confronted with these differences, the two governments have managed to seek common ground in their efforts to develop cooperation. As Liu Yandong clarified, the goal of promoting people-to-people exchange between the two countries is to reduce differences and cultivate consensus.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Clinton remarked that the aim of promoting people-to-people

exchange is to enhance mutual understanding and develop trust between the two peoples.<sup>33</sup>

- b. Mutual tolerance. As the two sides seek common ground, they have adopted an attitude of mutual tolerance. International exchange is invariably accompanied with many problems and frictions, ranging from significant problems like differences in values and political systems to seemingly small matters such as schedules and protocols. Coordination can be difficult, especially while promoting people-to-people exchange between China and the U.S. However, in their efforts to promote the exchange, the two countries have strived to adhere to a mutually tolerant approach. Contrary to the two countries' interactions on political, security, and economic fronts, one hears very little mutual recrimination in promoting people-to-people exchange. Instead, both sides have professed much encouragement and support.
- c. Mutual help. In promoting cooperation between two countries, leaders often face domestic political pressures. This is especially true for the leaders of China and the U.S. Leaders of the two countries should learn to help each other in promoting relations between the two countries. To expand people-to-people exchange between the two countries, President Obama proposed a hundred thousand strong initiative, meaning to send one hundred thousand American students to study in China. Realizing this initiative, however, requires much investment, and because the U.S. economy was in a bad shape at the time, both the U.S. government and the private sector were not in a position to make the necessary investment. In the light of the fact that the U.S. had supported many Chinese students and scholars to study in the U.S. when China had economic difficulties and the importance of people-to-people exchange for both countries, the Chinese government set aside necessary funds for American students to come to China to study. In return, the U.S. government simplified visa application procedures to facilitate Chinese scholars and students to visit and study in the U.S.

### **3. Ways and Approaches**

The ways and approaches with which the two countries promoted people-to-people exchange have also played an important role in shaping the results. Generally speaking, they include official guidance, private initiatives and extensive exchange.

Official guidance is reflected by personal efforts on the part of the leaders of both countries to promote the exchange. As previously mentioned, leaders of the two countries discussed people-to-people exchange many times during their summits. The two governments also include people-to-people exchange as a major item in the joint communiqué of the two countries and set up a high-level consultation mechanism to oversee the exchange.

On the Chinese side, official guidance also means government support to the exchange from its budget. This include financial support to Chinese scholars to conduct research in the U.S.; Chinese doctoral students to study in American PhD programs; visits by principals, teachers and students of the U.S. elementary and high schools; U.S. college students to study in China; the “Hanyu qiao” (Chinese Bridge) language program; and Confucian Institutes in the U.S.

On the U.S. side, although the U.S. government has not yet funded the exchange with a new official budget, it has awarded fellowships within existing programs to support Chinese and American scholars, such as the Fulbright Program. In addition, the U.S. government has lent its support to private initiatives to finance the exchange. This includes its endorsement of the establishment of the One Hundred

Thousand Strong Foundation, which supports U.S. students to study in China through funds raised from private sources.

Both China and the U.S. have tried to encourage nongovernmental sectors to play a role in the process. In China, for example, the Ministry of Education established the Institute of China-U.S. People-to-People Exchange at Peking University. Since its founding, the institute has organized and supported various activities in promoting people-to-people

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exchange between the two countries, including a dialogue between senior scholars and experts from China and Harvard University on China U.S. relations, a China-U.S. young leadership program, and various workshops on China-U.S. people-to-people exchange and China-U.S. relations. It has also supported research projects on such topics as the history of China-U.S. people-to-people exchange, historical figures in the history of the relationship of the two countries, and the role of local governments in people-to-people exchange of the two countries in universities and research centers throughout the country. It has also published a bilingual book on historical figures in the history of people-to-people exchange between the two countries and worked with other institutions to organize China-U.S. civil strategic dialogue and dialogue on core values between Chinese and American scholars.

With the encouragement from the central government, Chinese local governments have also played an increasingly active role in promoting people-to-people exchange between the two countries. For example, the Education Committee of the Chongqing Municipal Government has offered scholarships to students from Seattle to study in Chongqing. With the scholarship, forty high school students with financial difficulties from Seattle public schools were able to come to Chongqing to study for three weeks after participating in a special Chinese language training program in their respective high schools. Jiangsu provincial government has also offered support to student exchange between high schools of the two countries.

Moreover, the U.S. State Department has adopted a series of measures to promote educational exchanges between the two countries. As mentioned, it has used existing fellowship programs such as the Fulbright Program and Gilman Scholarship Program to support Chinese and American scholars and students to research and study across the Pacific. With strong support from the U.S. Government, the Hundred Thousand Foundation was established to raise money from private sources to support U.S. students to study in China. Finally, the Obama Administration has called upon presidents of public and private traditionally black universities to double the students they send to China.

### III. FUTURE CHALLENGES

As one reviews the remarkable achievements of people-to-people exchange between the two countries, one should also note that there are many important challenges ahead. To begin, the leadership transitions in the two countries over the past year have brought about new uncertainties. In the U.S., John Kerry, the new Secretary of State, is now in charge of the American team on people-to-people exchange between the two countries. Whether he will be as devoted to this area as his predecessor, Hillary Clinton, remains to be seen. In China, the Chinese team is still headed by Liu Yandong, who is now vice premier. Yet, it remains to be seen whether she will receive the same level of support from the new Chinese leadership as before. In addition, whether the new Liu Yandong-John Kerry team will work as effectively as the previous Liu Yandong-Hillary Clinton team remains a question mark.

In addition, promoting people-to-people exchange requires much financial investment. Previously, the U.S. government made much effort in this regard but the result remains to be desired due to economic difficulties in the U.S. and lack of budgetary support from the American Congress. The target of sending one hundred thousand American students to China remains a difficult goal to reach, even with substantial financial support from the Chinese side. However, as Chinese economic growth slows down, whether the Chinese government will be able to offer the same level of support remains to be seen. In addition, the Chinese government has not been successful

in mobilizing the private sector to support the exchange. Whether it will do a better job in the days to come remains uncertain. Against this background, how to mobilize more resources to support the various programs of people-to-people exchange presents a significant challenge to both countries.

Finally, the cost of exchange between the two countries remains high. Securing a U.S. visa remains costly, in fact, one of the most expensive in the world. Each

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visa costs about USD135 or USD150 with handling fees, posing an obstacle for many Chinese travelers. In addition, despite the efforts made on the U.S. side to simplify visa application procedures, it remains a time consuming exercise to obtain a visa. The same is true for Americans wishing to obtain a Chinese visa.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Promoting people-to-people exchange is an important endeavor that aims to have a lasting positive impact on China and the world. During the past three years, with support from both Chinese and U.S. governments, much progress has been made. Strong leadership, sensible ways to promote the exchange, and the willingness to cooperate are the key factors in making this possible. Looking ahead, the two countries need to make greater efforts to facilitate people-to-people exchange with determination, tolerance and cooperative spirit.

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