

The “Trump Phenomenon” and China’s Strategic Choices

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On December 20, 2016, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey was assassinated; a terrorist attack was reported in Berlin, Germany, where a truck drove into a Christmas market; and a gunshot incident happened in Zurich, Switzerland. European countries like Britain and France have also been under terrorist attacks since 2017. All those incidents, combined with the two “black swan” events of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as the U.S. president,¹ have plunged the western world, a peaceful and prosperous place in the past decades, into chaos and uncertainties. This is probably the reason why Wolfgang Ischinger, Chairman of the Munich Security Conference, had ever said that “the world is in a mess”. What are the underlying causes for all these changes we have witnessed? What are the implications of these changes to our world, and especially to China? How should we respond to these changes?

Indeed, one may argue that the only thing for certain is that nothing’s certain after Trump presides over the White House. Some others hold that his election would change international relations from its root. But few would disagree that the “Trump Phenomenon” is unprecedented in terms of both uncertainties and uneasiness it has brought about to our world, and rarely have we

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seen its long-term impact on western politics and on how the West perceives itself. After the initial shock, people began to realize that we could now be facing “a historic juncture as critical as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989”.

I. WHY TRUMP?

The election of Trump did have chance factors. For example, Trump refused to quit and fought through to the end despite bipartisan oppositions and mainstream media’s hostility. Trump and his campaign team made good use of the social media and made relatively sound analyses of the opinion polls. He adopted the right campaign strategies. Meanwhile, weakness and misjudgment of the situation by the Republican Establishment also contributed to the Trump victory. In addition, the FBI’s renewed investigation into Hilary Clinton’s email scandal at the eleventh hour surely played a part in the general election.

Besides those chance factors, it is the necessary factors that essentially determined the election outcome. In a way, Trump was “escorted” to the White House by two forces: the fear of the American elites for the decline of the U.S. hegemony, and the anger of the middle-class white Americans.

From the elites’ perspective, a heated discussion has been going on in the past three years among American decision-makers on the U.S. foreign policy, especially its policy towards China. A key question asked in this debate is whether it was a mistake for the U.S. to establish and develop relations with China. Have all the dialogues, cooperation and interactions with China from every U.S. administration ended up a success or a failure? Is China becoming, or has it already become, the biggest rival to U.S. supremacy? Actually, the core issue underlying these doubts about America’s China policy is that whether

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America has begun to decline. Mr. Fukuyama, a prophet of the “end of history”, holds that the U.S. is lagging behind now.² However, Joseph Nye is less pessimistic. He argues that a country’s global position hinges on the structural effect of military, economic and soft power. The U.S., from this perspective, still boasts the advantageous positions insurmountable by the others.³ The core and highest national interest is to maintain the U.S. hegemony in the world. Despite various challenges and difficulties, President Obama still claimed that America would “lead the world for the next 100 years”.

However, since the turn of the century, the size of China’s economy has increased from the 7th in the world to the 2nd in 2010, and from merely 11% of America’s economy in 2001 to 61% in 2016. China’s fast growth has brought about deep concerns and anxiety among the U.S. elites. Under the backdrop of political polarization and stagnated reform, the U.S. elites cry for changes, and a new president who could break the routine, might be the one who could “make America Great” again, so as to maintain the U.S. hegemony and primacy in the world. A former U.S. president’s national security assistant thinks that “Trump’s election is how the American political system remedies and reshapes itself”. Perhaps this exactly echoes Professor Fukuyama’s prophecy: “The decay of American politics will probably continue until some external shock comes along to catalyze a true reform coalition and galvanize it into action.”⁴

On the other hand, the ordinary white Americans have all but lost confidence in America’s political elites, who have long alienated from ordinary American people. The Washington elites, with Hillary Clinton as their typical representative, are nothing but limousine Democrats and leftie liberals, abusing power for their own interests. As a result, the general public vented out their anger and expressed their demands with their ballots, which in turn brought forth a “change of dynasty”. Economically, the growth of America’s macro-economy has failed to give any lift to ordinary people’s income. On the contrary, the income and wealth gap between the top 1% and the bottom 99% has been widening, with the 0.1% billionaires having gripped virtually all the benefits of economic growth. For the first time since World War II, the

Americans are afraid that their next generation will not do better than them. In other words, the ordinary people's "American Dream" may not come true.

The fact is that, for 240 years since the founding of the U.S., "democratic rights", including the right to vote, were not granted to every citizen at the same time. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, only less than a quarter of the entire population had the right to vote. History shows that in every period since its independence in 1776, there was always a "backward" group of people—African Americans, women, eastern European immigrants, Asian immigrants, Hispanics, etc.—upon whom the "majority" Americans looked down. As the U.S. democracy progressed, largely thanks to a series of political movements to promote the rights of the poor and under-privileged, laws on the protection of minorities were established in the form of Affirmative Action, and "political correctness" became the mainstream social ideology. The minorities have played an increasingly prominent role in American politics. Barack Obama was elected as the first African American president, often regarded as the peak of the liberal movement. Meanwhile, those middle and lower-class white Americans, who used to enjoy a higher social status, saw all these socio-political progresses were achieved at their expenses. Moreover, they saw themselves as being constantly short changed or even victimized by "political correctness" in America's political and economic affairs. Their frustration and resentment were unleashed with the emergence of Trump. At the same time, the development of information technology and the advent of social media have enabled people to bypass mainstream media while still making their voices heard. From these perspectives, Trump's victory truly was an "uprising" of the "Hillbilly" people, or precisely speaking, an "ideological riot" against "political correctness" that has governed the U.S. and the western world for more than 20 years.

II. THE UNDERLYING CAUSES FOR THE "TRUMP PHENOMENON" AND HISTORICAL FACTORS

Just as the butterfly effect may start from the Amazon River,

historic events never happen on a solitary basis. The logic behind the “Trump Phenomenon” can be traced back into history, with its underlying reasons resulting from a historic event in human history—the 1917 October Revolution. For most of the time in the past 400 years, the western societies have monopolized almost all the sectors of human life: politics, economy, finance, science, military, technology, industry, market, religion, culture, law, rules, resources and trade routes. At its peak, 15% of the world’s population in the western world invaded, colonized and controlled 70% of land worldwide. However, with the Bolshevik Revolution and the founding of the Soviet Union, the western world encountered a rivalry. The Revolution has not only provided a new path towards liberation and industrialization, but also inspired a new epoch of national independence movement in colonized and semi-colonized areas. It even provided a solution of self-salvation for capitalism when the West was deeply embedded in the economic crisis after the Great Depression.

After World War II, colonies and semi-colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America have all been fighting for national independence and liberation. The establishment of the People’s Republic of China became a symbolic event of the worldwide national independence movement. In the 1950s and 1960s, in spite of being poor and backward in terms of national capacity, the young republic, with all peaceful options exhausted, took on the mighty America in the Korean and the Vietnam Wars, and played a vital role in bringing about the U.S. fiascos in both cases.

Still, China’s relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated in late 1960s. China, in defiance of great powers, changed the “rule” in traditional international politics, that is, the great and strong could bully and prey on the small and weak. Later on, the prevalence of national independence movement in colonized continents has forever changed international relations, making it impossible for the traditional empires,

Reshaping world order that can take care of everyone’s interests requires systemic reforms of the global governance system.

such as Great Britain and America, who thought that they had inherited powers, to behave as they wish like before but to be constrained by the newly established principles, norms and rules in the post-WWII international politics. Traditional hegemonies could no longer wage wars to divert domestic crises easily, and the world has become a better place compared with the bleak situation when “winner takes it all”. The international community as a whole could finally enjoy long-term peace, and for the first time in recent history, the rising of a major country through peaceful means becomes a possibility. Michael Hunt, an American scholar, took notice that “history was on the side of revolutionary change: The whole capitalist-imperialist system has become drastically weaker and is in the process of increasing convulsion and disintegration... Third-world voices, dismissed out of hand a half century earlier, were dominating their own national stages, making themselves heard in international forums, and advancing demands that had the North Atlantic states on the defensive. A more dramatic global transformation is hard to imagine”.⁵

“The changes pushing forward the 20th century are generated by two forces: one is development and the other equality.”⁶ If the national independence movement was about fighting for “equality” during the mid-20th century, then the rising of the four Asian Tigers is representative of how developing countries seek development and strive to keep up the pace with developed western countries since the 1960s. After entering the 21st century, the BRICS countries, especially China, and other middle-income developing countries are rising at a fast speed. Developing countries are showing more vitality and influence on international politics and economy. The increase of economic prowess has made emerging countries more confident in participating in the management of global affairs. Contrary to recent western countries’ pessimistic attitude towards the future, developing countries believe that tomorrow will be better.

However, America and the western world still hold tight to the ideology of “winner takes it all” 20 years after the end of the Cold War. They abuse their political, economic, military and financial hegemony and have made several strategic mistakes: the first

mistake was keeping pushing Russia after the Soviet collapse in 1991. They pushed both the European Community and NATO eastward, disembodied Yugoslavia, manipulated and supported the “Color Revolution” in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. As a result, a deeply-suspicious and annoyed Russia retaliated in Georgia in 2008 and then Ukraine in 2014, causing a geopolitical crisis in Eastern Europe. The second mistake was to invade Afghanistan and then launched the second Iraqi War regardless of opposition from the international community. This led to the severe impairment of both the soft and the hard power of the western society, as well as crisis of Western hypocrisy. The third mistake was to take advantage of and stir up the “Arab Spring” in West Asia and North Africa, which in turn gave rise to the immigration crisis in Europe, and caused a series of chain effects within the European political system. The fourth mistake was to abuse financial power and privilege by financial deregulation, which led to the subprime mortgage crisis that gradually spiraled into a financial storm worldwide in 2008, wreaking unimaginable havoc to the global economy.

Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian Nobel Laureate of Literature, commented on Brexit and Trump’s election: “It all shows that the West, the place that steered the Industrial Revolution, boasts various scientific discoveries, strives for human rights, media freedom, liberal society and the right to vote, and stood as a pioneer of the world, is declining. It is happening not because the West is not as prepared for the future as other countries, but because of its own conceit and cowardice, and its fear after finding out that the prerogatives that used to belong only to the West are now enjoyed by every nation. Other nations, on the other hand, know how to capitalize on the opportunities brought by globalization and technical revolutions.”

III. THE CHALLENGES CHINA FACES

Precisely speaking, the “Trump Phenomenon” is more of a repeat of history than a revolution if looked at closely. It is more similar to “Louis Bonaparte’s Eighteenth Brumaire”. It symbolizes backwardness, anti-intellectualism, anti-globalization and all the

“reverse trends” that frown on a more just and equitable world order, and it seeks to maintain American hegemony and primacy. A hegemony itself is extremely fragile and structurally contradictory, for “a hegemon can intervene to shape developments around the world, but the train of events thus set in motion is bound to yield unpredictable outcomes. The broader the reach, the wider the array of unwelcome results”.⁸

In the long run, just as no one could prevent countries like China from rising in the 21st century, no one can stop a force that was used to manipulating the world from debilitating (of course this would take a very long time). Just as Llosa said, “Trump and Brexit won’t improve anything. Instead, they would make things worse and create even more serious problems”.

In the short term, Trump and the force he represents cannot be underestimated. Under certain circumstances, if Trump goes along with the desire for change of middle and lower class white

The Trump administration’s policy adjustment would pose a challenge to China’s peaceful rising.

Americans and forms a highly capable executive team that is made up of the “best and brightest”, namely, experienced veteran generals as well as MNC executives who can allocate resources worldwide, and pushes forward reforms under domestic and international pressures, and hypothetically the reforms go well,

then President Trump would be “remembered for generations”, and the America would also stop from “descending” and “revitalize”. In fact, regardless of America’s success or failure, its policy adjustments would bring huge impacts on the entire world order. The “recess” of hegemony can bring big adjustments to the international order; it also brings uncertainties to the ongoing collective emergence of major developing countries, especially to China’s progress toward national rejuvenation.

First, Trump’s “new policies” would inevitably have an impact on China and other emerging countries. To some extent, the changes in America’s policies are due to the fact that China and other major developing countries are growing rapidly, which in

American eyes has hampered the absolute security of American interests. It is foreseeable that the closer China gets to its “two centenary goals”, the more anxious the conservative force in the U.S. would become, and the more intense containment measures would be adopted against China. Competitions would be fiercer. China, according to its national strategies, does not intend to develop itself at the cost of any other country or to make others copy the “Chinese road to development”. However, the “zero-sum game” mentality is still embedded in the thinking of some of America’s powerful conservatives. As Richard Hass rightly said that foreign policy begins at home but does not end at home. Competitions among states, after all, come down to economic competitions, and that’s exactly what President Trump intends to focus on. Underlying the jargon of “America First” or “America Primacy”, the essence is economic interests. It is imaginable that the measures the Trump administration would take to gain economic powers would be fierce and unprecedented, which will cause substantial impact on other parties worldwide once those measures are put into practice.

Second, the adjustments of American foreign policy would inevitably cause dramatic changes to the world order. The first change is that the China-Russia-U.S. triangle would undergo further adjustments. The second change is that there would be new uncertainties in China-U.S. interactions in the Asia-Pacific region. The third change is that the adjustments of America’s relations with its military allies and partners would bring new challenges as well as opportunities to China’s development and China’s relations with Europe, India, Japan, South Korea and other countries. In addition, China has to be prepared for various changes around its neighbors.

Third, it matters how the Trump administration defines, identifies and sets tone on China-U.S. relations. The trajectory of this relationship hinges on the stance the U.S. takes, which would bring about great influence on China’s internal and external environments. Does the U.S. see China as a rival, a threat, an enemy, or a partner? Does it see the China-U.S. relation as non-confrontational and win-win based on mutual respect, or as a zero-sum game? Does the U.S. continue to see this relationship as

the most important bilateral bond in the world, or as something inferior to America's relations with its allies? Does the U.S. see this relationship as competition and cooperation, or as containment and cooperation, or mostly as containment and thus keep suppressing China? These are the questions that call for careful scrutiny.

Fourth, the uncertainties in Trump's governing methods and decision-making style could cause substantial confusion in China's efforts to handle its relationship with the U.S. Especially in the resolving of international and regional hot issues, China and the U.S. need to establish new interactive modes. All these adjustments cannot be achieved smoothly, given the expected, though undesirable, difficulties and conflicts between the two biggest economies in the world.

IV. CHINA'S STRATEGIES

The world order is undergoing dramatic changes unseen in the past decades. Another political Sarika typhoon may bring with it unprecedented chaos and uncertainty, with substantial implications to China's external environment as well as internal dynamism. Indeed, as history is never linear development, the world powers also went up and down. Sooner or later, the changes such as the "Trump Phenomenon" would come, the question is how China should cope with it.

First, China should strive to have an accurate grasp of the world situation in our era, so as to adopt correct and effective strategic choices. Competitions between major countries always demand long-term strategies and big wisdom, and China is blessed with a rich tradition of strategic thinking. For instance, the Qin state became stronger by implementing rule by law, abolishing the hereditary system, rewarding and absorbing talents, and conquering other states with suitable strategies. Thus, it survived nearly 500 years of inter-state games and eventually rose up as a dynasty. This shows the strategic insistency and consistency of Qin's ruling emperors to a large extent.⁹ In 1969, when China was mired in domestic difficulties and international hostilities, Mao Zedong, with the help of four marshals (Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, Xu

Xiangqian and Nie Rongzhen), analyzed the global situation and mapped out the critical strategy of improving relations with the U.S., which was “unimaginable” at that time. Today, we still need talents like the four marshals to make an accurate estimate on the trend of international affairs, upon which China could take the right position and responsibilities. It takes time to carefully stipulate all the strategic decisions, so that they could most effectively serve our nation’s long-term and fundamental interests. What are our goals? How to achieve those goals? What difficulties we might encounter? What is the worst-case scenario? All these questions require careful scrutiny and deliveries.

Second, confidence is golden, and China’s confidence comes from its rational understanding and judgment of the global situation. Although irrational factors may play a part in the process of history, reason and conscience set the human race apart from other species and form the essential momentum of social development. From the global perspective, peace and development remain the two main themes in today’s world. The legitimacy of governance relies essentially on economic development and improvement of people’s livelihood. The U.S. under the Trump Presidency is no exception, and its legitimacy may rely even more upon those two factors. After the end of the Cold War, the accelerated development of economic globalization and digitalization has further unbalanced various parts of the world as well as different areas within a country. This in turn encourages people to look forward to better economic performance. The world’s coordinated efforts in reducing poverty, balancing developments, containing contagious diseases, fighting terrorist threats, dealing with ecological crises and climate change have made China more aware of its obligations to tackle the challenges to all human beings.

Third, China needs to find a way to stabilize itself amidst uncertainties, and reform is the only option to achieve this goal. Reform is of “socialism’s self-improvement and, to some extent, (can bring about) revolutionary change” (Deng Xiaoping, 1985). For 26 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, China has adhered to the strategy of “*Tao Guang Yang Hui*”, namely,

focusing on the improvement of itself by hiding its light, which however, should not be misunderstood as conspiratorial maneuvers, but is actually in line with the classical Chinese philosophy as being moderate and keeping a low profile through thick and thin. Keeping the instructions of Deng Xiaoping in mind, China analyzed the international affairs with a calm mind, actively took part in world affairs and turned crises into opportunities. It is fair to say that China has changed the world by successfully transforming itself. However, China's GNI was \$7,900 in 2015, only 14.1% of America's (\$55,980).¹⁰ The huge gap between urban and rural areas and between regions and the imbalance of economic development and environmental protection indicate a huge potential for China's further improvement. The fierce anti-corruption campaign has helped break the nets of privileged cliques, thus making the whole system readier for reforms and self-correction. The establishment of core leadership increased the ability to tackle crises and implement laws and policies, thus enhancing the overall national strength.

In fact, competitions among major countries are never only about overall national strength. Leadership, execution ability, and the quality and achievements of statesmen are also involved. There is no economy without politics, and no politics without economy. "In terms of success or failure of a nation or a society, the criterion is to see if the two demands from people (development and equality) are satisfied, and if the two demands could be less mutually-exclusive and met more or less at the same level."¹¹ It is justified to believe that in the new historical era, China could further transform itself and the world if it could keep deepening reform and opening-up.

Last but not least, China needs to align itself with every positive force in the world, including forces from within American society. Trump's task is to make the "American dream" possible again for all Americans. In today's world where every nation's interests are diversified and intertwined, no matter if it is China, the U.S. or other countries, assuring people of a better life is the common goal. The ongoing information and artificial intelligence revolutions make shared development possible worldwide. Both the "American dream" and the "Chinese dream" can be achieved, in their own way. The only difference lies in the

scale, for Americans want more improvements at a higher level. Those of us in China would never, nor do we need to, “be envious, jealous or grudging”.

“The essence of ruling is to win people’s hearts.” The hearts are what politicians strive for regardless of domestic and international arenas. China’s domestic reforms need people’s support and wisdom. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires the understanding, support, participation and contribution of every Chinese people, including our compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. Common ground needs to be identified with neighboring countries and remote areas for the implementation of foreign policies, so as to develop the broadest possible united front. The most important thing is to keep pushing forward the new type of major-country relationship with the United States, with the principles of non-conflict and non-confrontation as the bottom line.

Decision-makers from both countries have to bear in mind about the opportunities of cooperation and coordination, as well as the dangers of conflict and confrontation, so as to avoid falling into the “Thucydides Trap”. It’s not unfair to believe that the increasing common interests, cultural bonds and closer cooperation on regional and international affairs between China and the U.S. make it impossible for the Trump administration to treat China the way Truman did with the Soviet Union. Diversified interests that involve the America and its allies, and the increasing awareness of national independence will work together to prevent the world from witnessing another impasse that divided the world into two camps as during the Cold War. In fact, the U.S. cannot afford to sour its relationship with China, for the consequence of “losing China” once more is unbearable even for Trump.

China and the U.S. should increase strategic communication and trust, in order to promote the positive development of strategic interactions. This includes the following three aspects:

1. Accurately understand the other side’s strategic intentions. China’s intention is crystal clear--to realize the three tasks that Deng Xiaoping stipulated in the opening ceremony of the 12th National

Congress of the CPC on September 1, 1982: strive for socialist modernization (now referred to as the “four developments”, namely the new path of industrialization, IT application, urbanization and agricultural modernization), fight for the unification of the motherland including Taiwan, oppose hegemony and safeguard world peace.¹² The intention of the new U.S. government, on the other hand, is not as straight-forward. Time is still required to see how the policy of “America First” is implemented specifically. Of course, the core intention is to maintain the primacy position the U.S. holds in the world, and the ultimate goal is always to “be back at the top”, although the U.S. may take a “stooping” posture towards that goal. Facing domestic and international doubts, President Trump will inevitably end up taking measures to comfort American people, appease elite groups, assure international allies, and make countries that can be seen both as America’s partners and competitors, China for example, at ease.

2. Make clear the direction of the development of China-U.S. relations. For China, “cooperating with the U.S. is a strategy, not a stopgap solution”.¹³ Chairman Mao and President Nixon made history in breaking the ice and starting to communicate with each other, a strategic gesture that changed the world. During the difficult time of that relationship in 1989, Deng Xiaoping said that “China-U.S. relations had to be mended”. He was focusing on “world peace and stability”.¹⁴ During the telephone call between

The core issue of China-U.S. relations is how the two countries perceive each other.

President Xi Jinping and President Trump after the latter was elected, Xi expressed that since the two countries established formal ties 37 years ago, bilateral relations have been continuously progressing, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples and promoting world and regional peace, stability and prosperity.¹⁵ The relationship goes beyond bilateral bonds.

More and more people of insights in the U.S. have realized that the America would face an archrival if it keeps demonizing China while disregarding the developments and changes happening around the world. In light of this, the core issue of China-U.S. relations is how

each country sees itself and the other.

3. Foster common grounds and expand cooperation. As the world’s most important bilateral relationship, China-U.S. ties significantly influence the world order and even the future. Without cooperation, the reform and development of the two countries themselves, and the resolving of many international and regional hot issues, would both be impossible. Looking back into history, it is evident that the benefits both countries, especially the U.S., have gained from the 30-odd years of cooperation are huge. Looking ahead into the future, the benefits China-U.S. cooperation would bring to both countries and to the world for the next 30 or 50 years are easy to foresee. Those solid proofs are the best defense against those people who are skeptical of this partnership. The “Big Plan” Americans always ask for is exactly in accordance with the planning and mapping of China-U.S. cooperation.

Currently, China is once again at a critical moment in history. But this time, we are stronger than ever and enjoy a much more favorable international and domestic environment. The ongoing changes in the world require us to be alert and prepare for any contingencies. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has also to be realized even if the environments change dramatically and serious challenges appear. For any country, especially for a big country like China, it is never possible to wait for others’ act of benevolence; strategic opportunities only lie in the hand of self-striving and one’s own big wisdom. Realizing the rejuvenation of China is no easy task. As the Chinese saying goes, “The last leg of a journey marks the halfway point.” The closer we approach our goal, the more cautious and careful we need to be, the more prepared we have to be for unexpected situations, and the more focused we need to be on our own roadmap. In a world that is filled with noise and fury, the strategic safety and security of a nation is of utmost priority. Just as stated in the report of the 18th National Congress of the CPC, no strategic mistakes, especially subversive errors, are to be tolerated. We must be prepared to carry out a great fight with many new historical features.

¹ On January 20, 2017, Trump was sworn in as the U.S. President. In his inaugural address he said, “The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action.” An activist president leading a cabinet of go-getting MNC executives and generals, what difference will they make? The entire world is anxiously looking on.

² Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, Farrar Straus and Giroux, New York, 2014.

³ Joseph Nye, *Is the American Century Over?* Polity Press, Cambridge, UK and Malden MA, U.S., 2015.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, “American Political Decay or Renewal?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 95, Issue 4 July / August 2016, pp.58-68.

⁵ Michale Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance*, translated by Ma Rongjiu, et al, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, Shanghai, 2011, p.220.

⁶ Zi Zhongyun, “America in the 20th Century”, from *Leng Yan Xiang Yang*, edited by Zi Zhongyun and Chen Lemin, SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, 2007.

⁷ “Western countries are on the decline”, *Reference News*, November 22, 2016.

⁸ Michale H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance*, translated by Ma Rongjiu, et al, Shanghai People’s Publishing House, Shanghai, 2011, p.338.

⁹ Ye Zicheng, *The Rising of a Great Nation--500 Years of History of China*, People’s Publishing House, Beijing, 2013.

¹⁰ Data from:<http://data.worldbank.org/>.

¹¹ Zi Zhongyun, “America in the 20th Century”, from *Leng Yan Xiang Yang*, edited by Zi Zhongyun and Chen Lemin, SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, 2007.

¹² Deng Xiaoping, “Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 12th National Congress of the CPC”, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, People’s Publishing House, Beijing, 1993. p.3.

¹³ Niu Jun, “Cooperating with the U.S. is a Strategy, Not a Stopgap Solution”, *American Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, 2015.

¹⁴ Deng Xiaoping, “China-U.S. Relations Need to Be Fixed and Improved”, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, People’s Publishing House, Beijing, 1993, pp.350-351.

¹⁵ “Xi Jinping and the newly-elected President Trump talk over the phone”, *People’s Daily*, November 15, 2016, p.1.