

Parsing Post-Pandemic U.S.-China Competition: Mutual (Mis)Perceptions and Dueling Geostrategies

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Abstract

As the world navigates the third decade of the twenty-first century, relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China can best be characterized as elevated great power competition or rivalry. Indeed, at the midpoint of the Joseph R. Biden administration there appears to be greater continuity than change in U.S. China policy and no indication of change in Beijing's policy toward the United States. Thus, a condition of heightened great power competition is likely to extend into the foreseeable future. This competition encompasses multiple dimensions and arenas with a considerable number of contentious issues and significant diverging interests. Key challenges in the bilateral relationship include the need to overcome deep mutual distrust and suspicion and reconcile competing geostrategies. For qualitative improvement not only must the two states address perceptions and misperceptions, but each needs to fundamentally alter their images of the other.

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