

Cyber Security in the Sino-US Relationship

Abstract

Cyber security has already become a new issue in Sino-US relationship which will determine, in some aspects, the further development of Sino-US Relationship in the coming decades. This presentation briefly discussed the related fields, main effects, and possible different scenarios in the coming Sino-US relationship. A simple conclusion is that both two sides should pay enough attentions and needs to find out a new solution to solve the potential tension or even crisis in this new field before it would cause real damage to the bilateral relationship.

Till now, there are three main fields deeply affected by the rising cyber security issues, including strategic confidence building, military relationship and economic competition. The uncertainty of cyber security produce more negative on strategic confidence building among the two great powers: US tends to believe that Beijing provides potential support behind any hacker attack toward the State in all fields which proves Beijing's evil intention; while at the same time, Beijing tends to believe the States will definitely act according to its traditional strategy that could be traced back to the cold war period and take cover under the so called ICT revolution represented by the spreading of Internet and formation of global cyber space. In the military fields, both DoD and PLA understand the double swords effect of the military revolution triggered by the Internet while both sides tends to act under the generation logic "prepare for the worst" and "get there first". The natural result in this field is nothing more than a classic security dilemma in which both sides believe to have no choice but push forward the R&D of offensive and defensive weapon/technology in the cyber space. In the economic competition has a relative better further comparing with the other two: at least till now or foreseeable further, both Beijing and Washington believes the importance of profits produced by the development of e-commerce and recognized the necessary to ensure the safety and stability of global cyber space.

Generally speaking, the rising of cyber security issues leads to three important effect to the development of Sino-US relationship: firstly, it forced both sides to pay more attention on perception and misperception issues that will deeply affect the basement of Sino-US strategic relationship: how to get a proper general understanding toward each other in a networked world; secondly, provides new uncertainty in the process of power shifting between these two great powers; thirdly, produced a relative consolidate basement to boost the development of interdependence and cooperation between these two states.

In further, there will be four possible scenarios to predict the development of Sino-US relationship including parallel connected networks; limited virtual/un-man conflicts; limited virtual/un-man conflicts; limited engagement; complete cooperation. It would be important to avoid the first two scenarios which would heavily damage the Internet and global cyber space.