

China-US non-governmental cooperation in response to COVID-19: Current conditions, challenges and prospects

Center for China and Globalization (CCG)



Supported by:

Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC)

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about the world's largest public health crisis, leading to the deepest global recession since World War II, requiring enhanced international solidarity and cooperation. However, at a time when US-China cooperation is indispensable in forging solidarity and global governance measures to combat the pandemic, the bilateral relationship is undergoing a downward spiral due to a number of factors including the upcoming US presidential election, ongoing tensions over trade and technology, and intensified strategic competition, prompting pessimistic outlook for cooperation between the Chinese and US governments. But are interactions taking place at the federal/central government level the only lens for the world to gauge willingness and ability of the two sides to cooperate in the face of the pandemic? Looking forward, how can China-US coronavirus cooperation be ordered in proper perspective so prospects can be identified and hopes raised to help avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy?

This report is conducted by the Center for China and Globalization (CCG). Supported by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and China Friendship Foundation for Peace and Development (CFFPD), it seeks to provide a fact-based assessment of the current scope and depth of the bilateral coronavirus cooperation that occurred at non-governmental level via collecting facts and evidence supporting US-China cooperation driven by societal forces and private sectors. The report also analyzes factors militating against further development of bilateral cooperation at nongovernmental level and identifies areas in which social cooperation can be enhanced and proposes broader measures for promoting people-to-people ties between China and the US.

The report looks at various nonstate actors of cooperation in both countries, including sister cities, business communities, medical expert circles, intellectual elites, charity and civil society organizations, individuals and diaspora communities; accounts data released by organizations such as AmCham China and traces activities such as donation of PPEs, moral support through letters and messages, information sharing and research collaboration, advocacy events, and so on. It also collects and analyzes extensive media coverage and stories published on the news outlets and circulated on social media platforms. The report also includes a public opinion survey in which some 2000 respondents participated and over 200 rich, contextualized accounts.

Despite the souring diplomatic relationship between China and the US, this report shows, shared ideals of humanitarianism and charity and bonds developed out of over four decades' engagement can transcend nationalist sentiments and political winds shifting towards decoupling to foster acts that warmed the hearts of the two peoples. Looking ahead, more efforts can be placed to overcome challenges of future cooperation rooted in the broad de-globalization trends, volatility in China-US relations, and narrowing pathways for exchange at the local level.

The report makes a set of recommendations under three areas that can potentially strengthen China-US non-governmental cooperation amidst COVID-19: 1) jointly contain politically motivated disinformation, promote vaccine research collaboration, establish one-to-one mutual assistance scheme for sister cities network, and co-develop relief plans for developing countries; 2) co-explore opportunities in the digital sectors and plays a constructive role in stabilizing the global value chains; 3) broaden channels of communication via people-to-people exchange, especially the "Track II diplomacy" mechanism to enable dialogue and conversations between Chinese and American think tanks experts.

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Background on China-US non-governmental cooperation in response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has become the world's largest public health crisis since World War II. It has not only caused great harm to people's lives and health, but also brought serious challenges to economic cooperation and dialogue between countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that the world economy will contract by 3% by 2020. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has warned that global trade in 2020 could be reduced by about one-third under a pessimistic scenario. The severity and complexity of the current global economic challenge exceeds that of the 2008 financial crisis and is even comparable to the 1930s depression.

In an age of unprecedented globalization, the destiny of all of humanity is deeply entwined. No country is an island unto itself. As the two largest economies in the world, anti-pandemic efforts by China and the US will have a crucial impact on pandemic containment and post-pandemic economic recovery. Many leading strategic thinkers in China and the US have called on both countries to strengthen cooperation and work together to address global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the pandemic has exposed shortcomings in the global governance system for public health. All countries have faced problems related to insufficient medical supplies. The lack of an international coordinated anti-pandemic mechanism has also been exposed, a situation that needs to be fixed.

It is lamentable that at a time when US-China cooperation is indispensable in forging solidarity and global governance measures to combat the pandemic, the bilateral relationship is undergoing a downward spiral due to a number of factors including the upcoming US presidential election, ongoing tensions over trade and technology, and intensified strategic competition, prompting pessimistic outlook for cooperation between the Chinese and US governments.

The COVID-19 global pandemic is far from over and the situation in many countries remains grim. Some experts speculate that the outbreak may even reach new peaks if not controlled properly. Facing this prospect, China and the US should cooperate via various channels to fully mobilize the energies of their people. Strengthening cooperation would help bring the pandemic under control sooner. In addition, more attention should be paid to the global post-pandemic recovery as well as innovation of global governance. These joint efforts would promote the sustainable development of human society.



2 Process and characteristics of China-US non-governmental cooperation on COVID-19

Non-governmental cooperation has gradually become the backbone of China-US cooperation. It is built on grassroots organization and spans across various fields, involving multiple actors and diverse resources, forming a solid foundation for cooperation between China and the US.

To deal with the global public health crisis, great efforts have been made via non-governmental channels, including assistance between sister cities, medical personnel, overseas Chinese students, business communities, civil society organizations, experts, scholars and the general public.

i. Channels of China-US non-governmental cooperation

1. “A friend in need is a friend indeed” : Cooperation between sister province-state and sister city pairings

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“We have read stories of sister cities in China and the US helping each other during this time. My own city is an example. Members of our local community came together to assist our sister city Wuxi by raising funds to purchase needed supplies. Now, our sister city has turned around and offered assistance to our community pledging a shipment of more than 30,000 masks. These acts of compassionate exchange have been important symbols reinforcing the reality of our common experience.”

—Ron Nirenberg
President of Sister Cities International (SCI) America,
Mayor of San Antonio, Texas¹

¹Ye Zi, “A Message from Chairman of Sister Cities International,” *CPAFFC*, April 30, 2020, <https://www.cpaaffc.org.cn/index/news/detail/id/6900/lang/list.html>.

Sister city exchange is an important channel of civil diplomacy, playing a positive role in enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between people of different countries. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many sister province-state and cities in China and the US have supported and helped each other, a true embodiment of the saying of "a friend in need is a friend indeed."

Wuhan's public health system was paralyzed by the epidemic for a while after the initial outbreak in China. Soon afterwards, Hubei and other places in China encountered shortages of medical supplies. Hubei province and Ohio State were the first sister province-state pair established between China and the US. On hearing about the severe epidemic in Hubei, Ohio Development Service Agency allocated masks and protective suits from the state Department of Health and immediately donated them to Hubei. Donated supplies included 1,000 N95 respirators, 3,000 surgical masks, 8,100 packs of disinfecting wipes, and 50 units of protective clothing. Shandong, Hebei, Guangdong, Fujian, Sichuan, Shanghai, and many other Chinese provinces and cities also received anti-pandemic medical supplies from American sister states and cities.

With the spread of the pandemic in the US, many provinces and cities from China have offered help back by providing medical supplies to the US, supporting the fight against the pandemic.

By May 26, according to incomplete statistics from the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, total cash of donations received (excluding Hubei) from sister states and related organizations in the US reached around CNY 666,000. Other donations included 171,088 masks of various kinds, 1,300 items of protective clothing, 893 pairs of goggles, 1,360 face masks, and other equipment to a valuation of CNY 200,000. Chinese provinces and cities made a large donation to US sister cities, including 2.11 million masks, 35,937 items of protective clothing, 136 thousand pairs of medical gloves, 30,220 goggles, 20 thousand shoe covers, and 200 face masks.

Table 1: Chinese Province/city donations to US states/cities

(Partial list as of May 26; presented in no particular order)



Shanghai	Shanghai City	San Francisco, CA	21,200 N95/KN95 masks
		Chicago, IL	21,200 N95/KN95 masks
		Huston, TX	21,200 N95/KN95 masks
Beijing	Haidian District	Lansing, MI	5,000 surgical masks
Chongqing	Chongqing City	Seattle, WA	116,000 surgical masks, 500 items of protective clothing, 135,600 pairs of gloves
		Sacramento, CA	8,936 N95/KN95 masks
Anhui	Anhui Province	Maryland State	140,000 surgical masks
Fujian	Fujian Province	Oregon State	50,000 surgical masks
		Virginia State	50,000 surgical masks
		Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	50,000 surgical masks
		New York State	50,000 surgical masks
	Fuzhou City	Tacoma, WA	70,000 surgical masks, 500 items of protective clothing
		Honolulu, HI	20000 surgical masks
	Xiamen City	Baltimore, MD	50000 surgical masks
	Heren Foundation	Ohio State	1,000,000 masks, 10,000 items of protective clothing, 30,000 pairs of goggles, 10,000 shoe covers
Hunan	Hunan Province	Colorado State	10,000 surgical masks
Heilongjiang	Heilongjiang Province	Wisconsin State	10,000 N95/KN95 masks, 1,000 items of protective clothing
		Alaska State	15,000 surgical masks, 1,000 items of protective clothing
	Harbin Province	Anchorage, AK	10,000 surgical masks, 1,000 items of protective clothing
Shanxi	Shanxi Province	Wyoming State	10,000 surgical masks, 200 items of protective clothing, 200 masks, 200 pairs of goggles
Gansu	Gansu Province	University of Central Oklahoma	10,000 surgical masks
Liaoning	Liaoning Province	Utah State	3,000 masks, 70,000 surgical masks, 7,000 N95/KN95 masks
		State of North Carolina Department of Commerce in China	2,000 surgical masks

Hebei	Hebei Province	Luka Bellon and other individuals	20,000 surgical masks, 600 items of protective clothing
		Iowa Council of Foundations (ICoF)	20,000 surgical masks, 2,000 N95/KN95 masks
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	Michigan State	10,000 N95/KN95 masks
		Lansing, MI	10,000 N95/KN95 masks
		California State	20,000 N95/KN95 masks, 1,000 items of protective clothing
Jiangxi	Jiangxi Province	Utah State	100,000 surgical masks, 5,000 items of protective clothing
Jiangsu	Jiangsu Tianyuan Clothing company	Arkansas State	2,000 surgical masks, 1,000 items of protective clothing
	Liyang City	Columbus, MD	10,000 surgical masks
		Union City, CA	9,000 surgical masks
		Irving, CA	3000 surgical masks
	People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries of Xinwu District, Wuxi City	Dublin, CA	10,000 surgical masks
	Yancheng City	Salt Lake City, UT	10,000 surgical masks
		San Diego, CA	20,000 surgical masks
Zhejiang	Hangzhou City	Seattle, WA	10,000 N95/KN95 masks
		Boston, MA	10,000 N95/KN95 masks
	Quzhou city	Red Wing, MN	20,000 surgical masks, 2,000 items of protective clothing
	Zhejiang Province	Children of the Doolittle Raiders	20,000 surgical masks, 2,000 items of protective clothing
		Brooklyn, NY	15,000 surgical masks
		Indianapolis, IN	20,000 FFP2 masks
Hainan	Hainan province	North California	6,000 masks
		Washington D.C.	5,000 masks
		University of Nebraska	2,000 masks
		University of East-West Medicine	2,000 masks, CNY 6,000
Guangdong	Guangdong province	California State	15,000 N95/KN95 masks
	Guangzhou City	Los Angeles, CA	200,000 surgical masks, 3,000 items of protective clothing
	Shenzhen City	Charlotte, NC	40,000 surgical masks
		Seattle, WA	40,000 surgical masks

Shandong	Shandong Province	Continental USA and Legg Mason Inc.	3,220 masks
		New Jersey State	5,000 surgical masks, 4 forehead thermometers
		University of California, Santa Barbara	500 KN95 masks
		Central Connecticut State University	300 KN95 masks, 400 surgical masks, 400 pairs of gloves, 2 items of protective clothing
		Connecticut District Export Commission	5,000 masks
		Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut	5,000 masks
		Community College of Denver	200 masks
		Michelin North America Inc.	600 masks
		Cooper Tire & Rubber Company	3,200 masks
		Pfizer Inc. (PFE)	3,000 surgical masks
		Thermo Fisher Scientific	3,000 surgical masks
		American Chamber of Commerce in China	2,000 surgical masks
		Newark, DE	220 KN95 masks
		Pennsylvania State	200 KN95 masks
		Yale University	20,000 surgical masks
		Texas Medical Center	750 items of protective clothing
	Zibo City	Erie, PA	50,000 surgical masks
	Linyi City	Leighton, AL	40,000 surgical masks
Yunnan	Xishuangbana City	Austin Sister Cities International	500 masks, 20 pairs of goggles
Sichuan	Sichuan Forestry and Grassland Administration and Sichuan Administration on Giant Panda National Park	Utah State	10,000 N95/KN95 masks



Picture 1: Shaanxi province donated materials to Wyoming state



Picture 2: Liaoning province donated supplies to Utah state

In addition, since the outbreak of the pandemic, sister province-state and city pairings in China and the US have expressed condolence and support through letters, telephone calls, videos and even congressional resolutions.

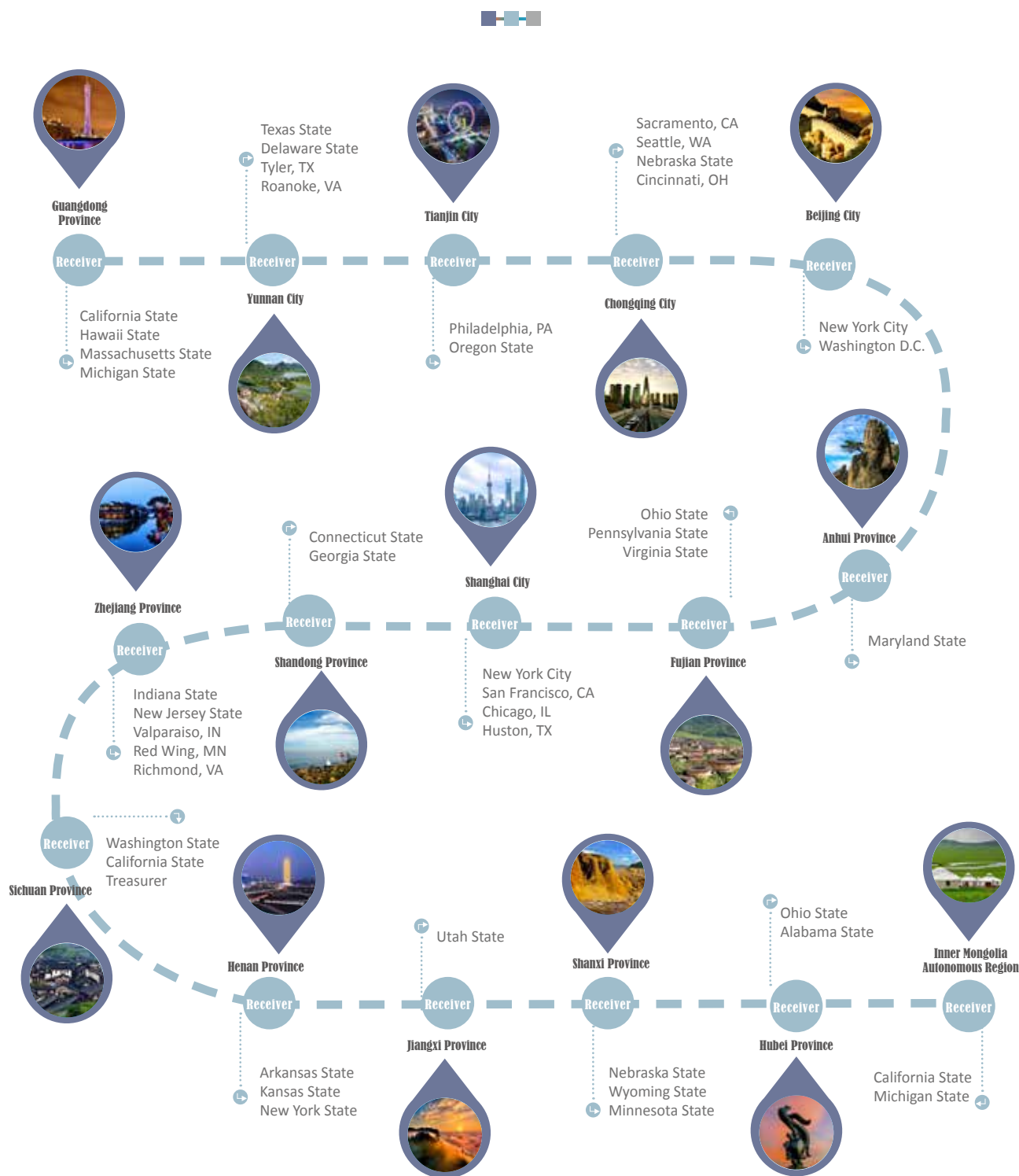
Table 2: US State /City supports to China

(Incomplete)



			
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State	Gansu Province	Letter
Utah	Utah State	Jiangxi Province	Letter
	Davis County	Huanggang City	Voice support
Missouri	Kansas City	Changsha City	Voice support
	St. Louis City	Nanjing City	Letter
Ohio	Gahanna City	Ezhou City	Video
	Cincinnati City	Liuzhou City	Letter
		Chongqing City	Letter
Minnesota	St. Paul City	Changsha City	Voice Support
Georgia	Grange City	Liuzhou City	Letter
California	San Francisco City	Shanghai City	Call & email
	Sacramento City	Chongqing City	letter
	Alameda City	Jiangyin City	Letter
	Dublin City	Xinwu district, Wuxi City	Video
Illinois	Chicago City	Shanghai City	Call & email
Texas	Huston City	Shanghai City	Call & email
Delaware	Delaware State	Yunnan Province	Letter
Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh City	Wuhan City	Letter
Kentucky	Kentucky State	Jiangxi Province	Letter
Maryland	Maryland City	Jiangxi Province	Letter
North Carolina	Charlotte City	Shenzhen City	Letter
		Baoding City	Letter
Nebraska	Nebraska City	Chongqing City	Letter
Washington	Seattle City	Chongqing City	Letter
Indiana	Indiana State	Zhejiang Province	Letter
	Wabash County	Linhai City	Letter
New York State	Brooklyn, New York City	Yiwu City	Letter
Michigan	Lansing City	Haidian District, Beijing City	Letter
Hawaii	Honolulu City	Qinhuangdao City	Letter
Iowa	Cedar rapids City	Tangshan City	Letter
Iowa	Dubuque City	Handan City	Letter

Table 3: Condolence letters from China's province to sister states/cities in the United States
(Incomplete)



By May 26, two multilateral video conferences and around 16 bilateral exchanges had been held under the China-US sister cities mechanism, with two more bilateral video conferences planned.



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Picture 3: Medical staff from the First Affiliated Hospital of Anhui Medical University communicating with experts in Maryland via video conference.

2.Science without borders: The persistent efforts of Chinese and US medical staff and researchers

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"We took advantage of the people that we know in China who were very open and from the beginning they told us, 'You got to get ready and you got to be aggressive.' We listen to them and that's what we've done."

—Gerard J. Criner

Director of Temple University Hospital's Lung Center ²

Medical workers are front line heroes in the battle against COVID-19. Chinese and US medical experts and researchers have also continuously worked backstage on medical R&D.

After the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, while some politicians continued to quarrel, there has also been ongoing China-US cooperation including sharing of experience, knowledge and technologies in the field of medical research. Later, as China gained first-hand experience in pandemic containment and treatment, there was timely sharing of the latest research results and knowledge on epidemic prevention and measures via video conference. English manuals and other materials provided passed valuable information to American medical staff and experts.

² Jonathan Cheng, "As U.S., China Clash Over Coronavirus, Their Doctors Quietly Join Forces," *Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-u-s-china-clash-over-coronavirus-their-doctors-quietly-join-forces-11586516401>.



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On March 19, a high-profile online conference titled "China's Experiences in COVID-19 Prevention and Control" was broadcast worldwide. Chinese experts including Zhong Nanshan, Li Lanjuan, and Qiao Jie had in-depth dialogue with foreign counterparts on COVID-19 containment. Nearly 70,000 medical personnel from all over the world watched online. (Source of picture: Tencent)

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Ye Baixin, hematologist with Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University, led a group called "Global health professionals on COVID-19" via WeChat to share medical experience, knowledge and equipment in response to COVID-19 for the international frontline medical community. As of April 1, more than 2,000 doctors around the world have joined this group. Picture: Dr. Ye showing the WeChat groups. (Photo: Xinhua)



While there is a degree of profit-interest and competition among medical research institutes and enterprises, respect and responsibility for lives is always the ethical bottom-line in medicine. Collaboration between Chinese and American doctors and scientists has expanded to cover nearly all aspects of COVID-19 research, facilitating joint investigation the viral structure and characteristics, as well as a search for better disease detection and treatment methods.

3. Overseas Chinese and Chinese students in the US

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"We are living in a once-in-a-lifetime crisis that calls for cooperation and collaboration, not finger pointing and recriminations. As we continue to be vigilant in preventing the spread of racism, to slow the spread of the virus and ultimately find a cure and vaccines, we must bring everything—and everyone—to the table, and not fuel anxieties and fears. Now is the time that we should all unite in a common goal of finding solutions to the shared challenges we face."

— C100 Statement on Racism Against Chinese-Americans During Novel Coronavirus Outbreak and Uniting to Assist America in This Time of Need³

³Zhengyu Huang, "C100 Statement on Racism Against Chinese-Americans During Novel Coronavirus Outbreak and Uniting to Assist America in This Time of Need," Committee of 100, March 25, 2020, https://www.committee100.org/press_release/c100-statement-on-racism-against-chinese-americans-during-novel-coronavirus-outbreak-and-uniting-to-assist-america-in-this-time-of-need/.

Chinese residing and studying in the US have played key roles as COVID-19 hit in China and the rest of the world. This group has become one of the most important forces in China-US cooperation in fighting the pandemic.

In the early days of the outbreak in China, Wuhan and some other places faced a severe shortage of medical supplies. In the face of the disaster, Chinese residing and studying in the US have forged great solidarity to aid China. They voluntarily organized fundraising activities through alumni, home province, and professional networks to purchase masks, goggles, and other personal protective equipment (PPE), sending batch after batch to China through non-governmental channels like the Red Cross.



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Volunteers from the Chinese Students and Scholars Association of Cleveland Clinic and Johns Hopkins Medical Center donated supplies to Hubei province. (Photo credit: Thepaper.cn)

In March, as the number of new infections in US soared and medical supplies became scarce, overseas Chinese and Chinese students in the US, who had previously supported Wuhan and gained experience in fundraising, purchasing supplies, and shipping, grouped together to raise funds via WeChat, GoFundMe and other platforms. They established a huge network, mobilized personal relationships in China and the US, and sent a large amount of timely anti-pandemic supplies to hospitals, communities, nursing homes and other places via efficient and transparent channels.

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The donation team of "Chinese Support Hospital" delivering supplies to Maryland Hospital. (Photo credit: Reference News)



Some voices in the US government have criticized China over the origin and handling of the pandemic. Prejudice and media bias has contributed to misunderstanding, negatively impacting goodwill towards Chinese people in parts of American civil society, even leading to stigmatization and personal attacks against Chinese people. Despite these headwinds, many Chinese in the US continued to work to raise money, purchase medical supplies and deliver them to people in need.



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Delivery map of the Chinese direct donation team in New York. (Photo credit: Thepaper.cn)

Many Chinese have personally been at the frontlines of the fight against the pandemic as they live, work, and study in the US. They have recorded and shared their everyday lives and efforts to fight the pandemic in text or video via social media platforms, helping to enhance mutual understanding between peoples of the two countries. They have built bridges of dialogue in a spirit of sincerity and friendship, striving to dissolve misunderstandings caused by cultural differences and information gaps, helping to build mutual understanding and trust between the two peoples.

“Many a little makes a mickle.” Chinese overseas work to dispel misunderstanding through daily acts of kindness, conveying warmth and hope.

4. Fulfilling social responsibilities: Actions by the Chinese and American business communities

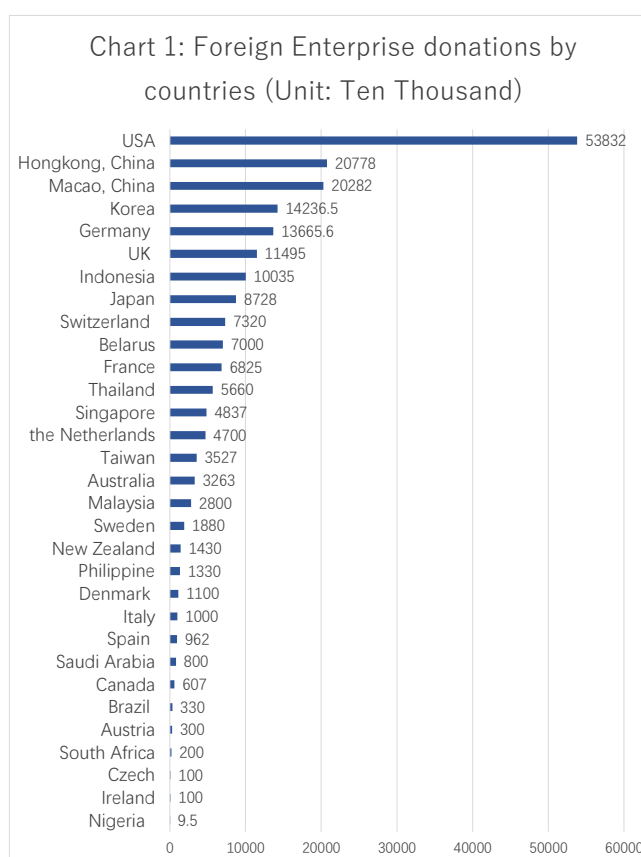
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"This is a major pandemic challenge in the era of globalization of all mankind. Today, this is no longer a crisis that any country can solve on its own, but rather requires the efforts from us all. At this moment, we have a chance to overcome this disaster only if we sharing resources and lessons without distinguishing 'us' from 'others.' 'United we stand, divided we fall!'"

——Jack Ma
Founder of Alibaba Group

Enterprises seek profit but are also stakeholders in the community with social responsibilities. In the face of various emergencies and social disasters, enterprises, having endured the tests of the market, are capable of responding rapidly with economic strength, professionalism, and efficiency, to provide strong support in the battle against COVID-19.

During the pandemic, Chinese and American enterprises donated a large amount of funds and medical supplies to people of the two countries, which helped to alleviate supply shortages to some extent. According to statistics from the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS), by February 17, 103 US companies had donated money and materials to China, totaling CNY 538 million, accounting for 25.74% of total donations by foreign companies, ranking first among all countries. In addition, enterprises in the fields of medical care, logistics and manufacturing fully utilized their capabilities, proving specialized support during the pandemic.



Resources from: Chinese Academy of Social Science, CSR Cloud

Table 4: Top ten US Companies donations (Unit: Ten Thousands)

Number	Company Name	Count
1	Citadel	5,200
2	Microsoft	4,578
3	A. O. Smith	2,627
4	Johnson & Johnson	2,165
5	GE	2,000
6	Abbot China	1,810
7	Honeywell	1,380
8	Coca-Cola	1,140
9	Anyway	1,100
10	Skechers	1,000
10	Nike	1,000
10	Nanaher	1,000
10	Budweiser China	1,000
10	Abbvie	1,000
10	NBA	1,000
10	P&G China	1,000

From: Chinese Academy of Social Science, CSR Cloud



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The National Basketball Association (NBA) projected the words "Stay Strong Wuhan" during a game

As the pandemic in the US became increasingly severe, Chinese enterprises have also made use of their advantages in manufacturing and increased the production of masks and other PPE. At a press conference on May 25, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi revealed that China has exported more than 12 billion masks to the US during the pandemic, equivalent to providing nearly 40 masks for every American.



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Ambulances donated by Qualcomm. In early February, Qualcomm donated CNY 7 million to the Red Cross Society of China to buy emergency supplies such as negative pressure ambulances. By mid-March, 20 ambulances and 1,864 protective suits had been provided to Wuhan Emergency Center, Tongji Hospital affiliated to Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science & Technology and other Hubei hospitals.



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Medical staff at Yale University Hospital express thanks after receiving medical supplies. Zhang Yichen, chairman of Harbin Pharmaceutical Group, donated 10,000 medical protective masks and a batch of protective suits to Yale University after learning of its shortage of PPE.

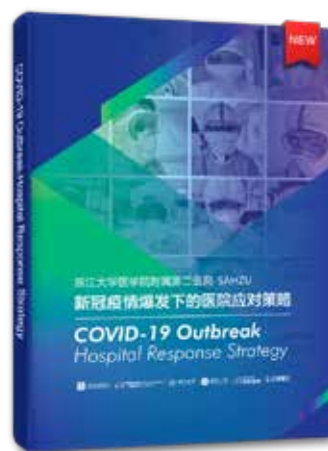


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Screenshot of the homepage of Global MediXchange for Combating COVID-19 (GMCC)

On March 27, Alibaba launched the Global MediXchange for Combating COVID-19 (GMCC), which aims to provide a platform for online coordination and experience sharing for frontline doctors and nurses around the world and to support medical research institutions with AI, big data and cloud computing capabilities. As of April 28, nearly 10,000 doctors from nearly 120 countries and regions have volunteered to join the world's largest online public campaign against COVID-19 launched by China.

Science and technology was a prominent feature of Chinese and American business communities' cooperative fight against COVID-19. A number of internet and high-tech enterprises used the latest technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data to promote the exchange of information and to facilitate medicine development.



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An epidemic prevention manual on the Global MediXchange for Combating COVID-19 (GMCC)

Chinese and American chambers of commerce have also played an important role in the combat against COVID-19 by purchasing and donating materials, proposing and guiding enterprises to make donations, and conducting research and evaluation on the impact of the pandemic. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 in China, AmCham member companies donated more than USD 74 million in cash, PPE and other medical supplies to Wuhan and other affected areas, according to Terry Branstad, US ambassador to China.

5. Voices of reason: Chinese and American think tanks and scholars

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"Diseases are political, and they necessitate political action — no one should try to suggest otherwise. Unchecked, they toss legions out of work and kill millions, ravaging the most vulnerable the hardest. The calamity that is Covid-19 demands an equal or greater political force led by governments. It must be met with a powerful, multilevel, transnational, coordinated array of responses.

Officials in Washington, Beijing and beyond should stride cautiously, however. Avoid infusing the politics needed to quell Covid-19 with tactics designed to serve partisan interests. Your power should be focused on caring for others and marshaling resources for disease prevention — not on deflecting blame, shoring up approval ratings, settling scores or demonizing people because of ethnicity or nationality."

——Scholars' Plea: US and China, Work Together on the Pandemic⁴

At present there are some negative and extreme views on whether China and the US should continue to cooperate. Experts and scholars from think tanks and universities in China and the US have provided voices of reason during the pandemic, arguing that China and the US should work together to fight COVID-19. In this period, Chinese and American scholars have issued three open letters in succession. Hundreds of Chinese and American scholars have appealed for cooperation between the two countries.



>>>>> On April 2, The Diplomat, an internationally-renowned journal, published an English version of "An Open Letter to the People of the United States from 100 Chinese Scholars," urging China and the US to make joint efforts to fight the pandemic.

⁴ "Scholars' Plea: U.S. and China, Work Together on the Pandemic," The New York Times, May 1, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/opinion/letters/coronavirus-China-US.html>.



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On April 3, nearly 100 former senior US officials and foreign relations experts released a joint open letter titled "Saving Lives in America, China and Around the World," which also called for cooperation between China and the US in the fight against COVID-19, demonstrating broad and bipartisan support for such cooperation.

Saving Lives in America, China, and Around the World

A Statement Organized by Asia Society's Center on U.S.-China Relations & the 21st Century China Center at UC San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy



The New York Times

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Scholars' Plea: U.S. and China, Work Together on the Pandemic

More than 70 scholars urge leaders in Washington and Beijing to put partisan interests aside and coordinate their responses to Covid-19.

May 1, 2020



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On May 1, The New York Times published an open letter titled "Scholars' Plea: US and China, Work Together on the Pandemic," which was signed by more than 70 Chinese and international scholars.

Chinese and US think tanks have played a crucial role in maintaining communication, building consensus and conveying the voice of cooperation by providing policy suggestions and holding webinars. US think tanks such as the Brookings Institution, the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Peterson Institute for International Economics have recommended that the Trump administration suspend trade war tariffs on medical supplies immediately and called for the two countries to create a collaboration mechanism as soon as possible and to concentrate their technological powers for the interests of mankind.



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Center for China and Globalization (CCG) held a webinar titled "How is COVID-19 impacting international education?"

As of the end of May, CCG had held more than 10 webinars, six of which have focused on China-US cooperation, covering experiences addressing the pandemic and its impacts on bilateral relations, talent mobility, trade and economic activities, and education. These webinars have voiced strong support for China-US collaboration.

6. Flexibility, efficiency and conscientiousness: Actions of Chinese and American NGOs and charitable foundations

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"The coronavirus outbreak could have happened anywhere in the world... This is a global issue that can have a global impact... We recognize that the Chinese people are doing all they can to help fight this disease, but we also recognize that they can't do it alone. It's gonna take a lot of great people coming together to help with this issue."

— Charles Redding, CEO & President of MedShare ⁵

With continued economic and social development, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in China and the US dedicated to public welfare are increasingly numerous and capable. In the course of China-US anti-pandemic cooperation, NGOs and charitable foundations have shown the strength of civil society in face of global challenges through their rapid response, flexible and effective organizational system, diverse methods of collaboration, and determined conscientiousness in the face of adverse public opinion.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan, many international NGOs based in the US have contacted government and medical institutions in China's worst-hit region, organizing timely offline and online volunteer programs, and carried out targeted assistance to China. Groups including MedShare, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, the US China Business Council, the Sino-U.S. Sister Cities Association, the US-Sino Friendship Association and other organizations quickly donated tens of millions of yuan to groups and hospitals in Hubei including the Hubei Friendship Association, Hubei Red Cross Foundation, and Hubei Charity Federation. ⁶In addition, representatives of some US charitable organizations sent letters of sympathy to the Chinese people, expressing their willingness to join hands in fighting the epidemic.

⁵ "U.S. non-profit donates 1.8 mln face masks to help China combat coronavirus outbreak," Xinhuanet, February 11, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/northamerica/2020-02/11/c_138774817.htm.

⁶ "Multiple organizations in the US are committed to donate 1.8million masks to China, which will be delivered to Shanghai and Wuhan," Ifeng News, February 11, 2020, <http://news.ifeng.com/c/7tyaeBM4fxo>.



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Medical supplies donated by MedShare to Wuhan (Photo credit: MedShare official website)

On January 27, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) pledged a USD 5 million emergency grant to China to support the fight against COVID-19, "including efforts to identify and confirm cases, safely isolate and care for patients and accelerate the development of treatments and vaccines."⁷ Since then, the Gates Foundation has increased grants multiple times for global efforts against the pandemic. As of May 4, there has been a total commitment of more than USD 300 million towards the international collective effort to develop and equitably distribute COVID-19 diagnostics, therapies, and vaccines.⁸



>>>>> Bill Gates interviewed by CCTV News.

As the pandemic spread in the US, Chinese NGOs, scholars, charitable foundations and other associations also supported the fight against COVID-19 through donations and sharing experience via video conferences. As the Chinese idiom goes, "send charcoal in snowy weather." This timely assistance provided frontline medical staff with some degree of support and assurance in their efforts to overcome the pandemic.

⁷ "Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Commits \$10 Million to Global Response to 2019-nCoV," Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, January 26, 2020, <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2020/01/Gates-Foundation-Commits-10-Million-to-Global-Response-to-2019-nCoV>.

⁸ "Statement from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation about today's Coronavirus Global Response Summit," Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, May 4, 2020, <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2020/05/Bill-and-Melinda-Gates-Foundation-Statement-about-todays-Coronavirus-Global-Response-Summit>.

7. “Trickles become a river” : Mutual help between Chinese and American people

>>>>>

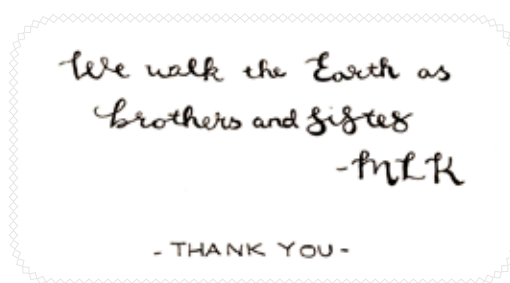
We walk the earth as brothers and sisters.

— Thank-you note from a Chinese girl to an American medical worker

This note quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "we've learned to fly the air like birds, we've learned to swim the seas like fish, and yet we haven't learned to walk the earth as brothers and sisters."

>>>>>

The card was written by a Chinese girl whose mother donated her last 5 N95 respirators to local health workers before returning to China. This anecdote is an example of China-US civil cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. While the power of an individual is limited, each small gesture adds to the foundation of civil cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. These trickles of kindness can eventually gather into a river of goodwill between Chinese and American people.



(Photo credit: Thepaper.cn)

Many Americans in China have witnessed China's progress in addressing the pandemic. Despite suspicion and hostile voices around the world, they shared their own stories during the pandemic on social media platforms, which opened a window for the world to learn about China's real fight against COVID-19 and built a bridge of communication and understanding. They have become an indispensable part of China-US cooperation.

Linked in

"Something's Not Right Here Folks" | A Look at USA 2009 H1N1 Virus Compared to China 2020 Corona Virus

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Mario Cavolo | Follow
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>>>>> A screenshot of Mario Cavolo's article.

Mario Cavolo, an Italian American who has lived in China for nearly 20 years, posted an article titled “Something’s Not Right Here Folks, A Look at USA 2009 H1N1 Virus Compared to China 2020 Corona Virus” on LinkedIn. He praised the active responses that China adopted in the face of the epidemic and refuted those malicious attacks on China. Later, Cavolo further shared his experience and life in China during the pandemic, and critically explained how China had brought the epidemic under control to the international community who had misunderstood China.⁹

⁹Mario Cavolo, “If You Still Don't Understand How China Succeeded Stopping the Virus, Read This and Be Forever Enlightened,” LinkedIn, April 4, 2020, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-still-dont-understand-how-china-succeeded-stopping-mario-cavolo>.

ii. The characteristics of China-US non-governmental cooperation

1. Multi-actor cooperation

Participants in anti-pandemic cooperation between China and the US are diverse, including not only enterprises, chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations, but also local governments, think tanks and non-governmental organizations at all levels. While different in scale and capability, they can coordinate with and complement each other.

2. A broad, multilayer relationship

Facing the fast spread of the pandemic, people from many walks of life in China and the US have drawn on their respective strengths and worked together to build broad anti-pandemic cooperation networks covering supply production, scientific research, academic consultation, public welfare donations, and logistics.

3. Flexible, efficient and targeted assistance drawing on diverse resources

China-US non-governmental cooperation has drawn on various resources including broad interpersonal networks, technical knowhow, and rich expertise. A lot of material assistance, technology, and anti-pandemic strategies have originated from and been widely used by the non-governmental sector.

4. A people-to-people and practical approach

Non-governmental cooperation can offer practical and direct help, producing human connection while governmental interaction may be constrained by diplomatic protocol, complex procedures and other factors.

5. Injecting positive energy into governmental relations

Non-governmental cooperation can help to consolidate relations between countries, expand mutual interests, and inform public opinion. In contrast to the political sensitivity of governmental cooperation, non-governmental cooperation stems more from people's spontaneous wishes and actions, making it more easily accepted by people in both China and the US, helping to create a better atmosphere for intergovernmental cooperation.

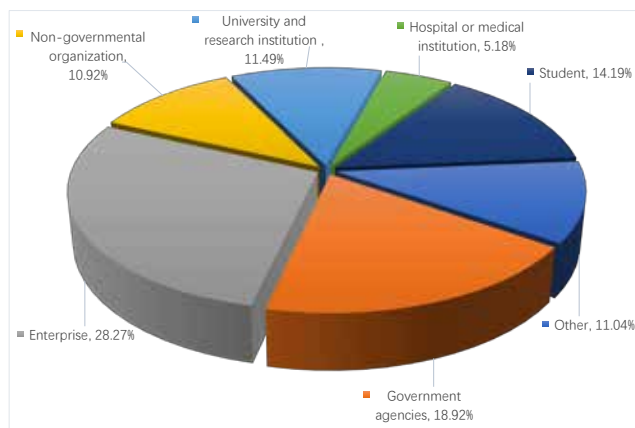


Willingness to cooperate amidst COVID-19: Non-governmental actors capture the spirit of humanitarianism and friendship

Beyond cultural differences lie shared concepts of humanity, bonds that have help forge close relationships between the US and China and enhance mutual understanding.

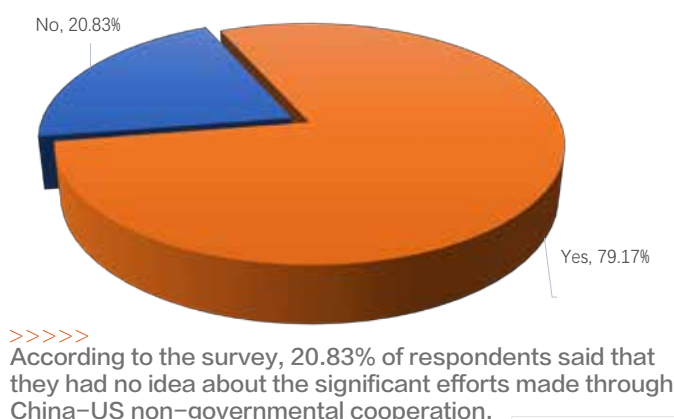
To better understand public views on China-US non-governmental cooperation, CCG conducted an online survey on this topic, receiving a total of 1,776 valid responses from people in China and the US. Findings show respondents overwhelmingly support non-governmental cooperation. Key findings are listed below:

- 98.43% of respondents agreed that countries should forge solidarity and coordination amidst the global pandemic.
- 97.59% of respondents agreed that in addition to inter-governmental cooperation, non-governmental cooperation is necessary.
- 96.74% of respondents indicated support for China-US non-governmental cooperation.



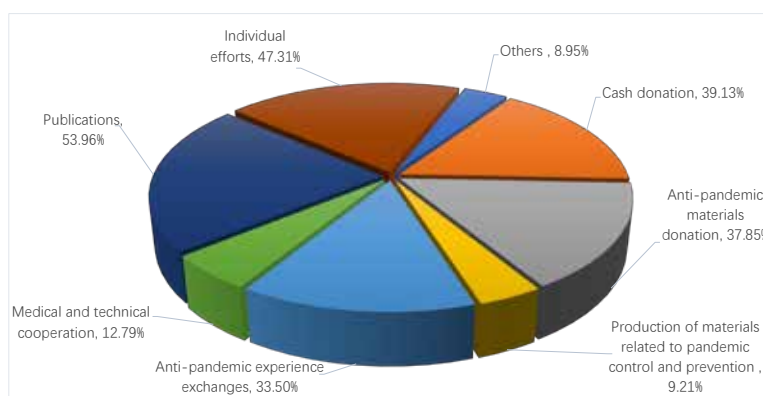
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Classification of respondents' backgrounds



- 20.83% of respondents said that they had no idea about the significant efforts made through China-US non-governmental cooperation.
- 83.85% of respondents agreed that the current state of China-US relations affects non-governmental anti-pandemic cooperation.
- 95.01% of respondents believed that news media should share more stories about China-US non-governmental cooperation.

- 84.44% of respondents believe that China-US non-governmental cooperation plays a positive role in China-US relations during the pandemic.
- 44.03% of the respondents had previously participated in China-US non-governmental cooperation such as production of supplies related to pandemic control or prevention, medical and technical cooperation, publications, or individual efforts. 66.03% indicated that they planned to participate in China-US non-governmental cooperation in future.



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Responses to the question "How have you participated in China-US non-governmental cooperation?"

Broad exchange between Chinese and American people has not only provided support during the pandemic, but also helped to promote China-US people-to-people ties and the stable development of China-US relations more generally.

i. Motivations of the American people to help the Chinese people: Humanitarianism, reason and restraint

The pandemic is a global public health crisis. Until a vaccine is available, infections in any country are a threat to global health and security. Many US experts in public health, medicine, think tanks, and universities have voiced support for China's anti-pandemic efforts and China-US cooperation, for both humanitarian reasons and rational considerations of mutual benefit.

At a practical level, the willingness of US citizens to work with Chinese counterparts to address COVID-19 reflects three main concerns.

The first relates to practical needs and considerations. In some states, people have sought to overcome medical supply shortages by importing from China. The second factor relates to broader concerns about China-US relations and globalization. Some US academics and former politicians, based on concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on the US economy and international relations, hope that these adverse impacts can be mitigated through cooperation with China and improving the international image of the US. The third factor is a spirit of humanitarianism. Many overseas Chinese

in the US made donations to China because of emotional ties and a hope to maintain cooperative relations between the two countries. In addition to economic considerations, many US companies have provided support to China based on humanitarian concerns and corporate social responsibility.

ii. Motivations of the Chinese people to help the American people: “Life is paramount”

Many Chinese people still believe it is important to strengthen bilateral cooperation to save lives, despite the politicization of COVID-19 and disputes between China and the US. China's officials and Chinese people have always called on China and the US to strengthen cooperation. The major hope of most Chinese citizens is that the global pandemic will fade and end as soon as possible, that lives can be saved and that the shock to the global economy from COVID-19 can be reduced.

iii. Historical and cultural factors in China-US non-governmental relations: Enduring friendship and cultural commonalities

Ties between nations may suffer short-term setbacks due to political or economic events, but friendly relations between people are built on shared history and can endure such headwinds.

China and the US have different political systems and ideologies. However, both countries do share some similar cultural values.

Religion has a profound influence in American social life. The spirit of humanitarianism and philanthropy holds an important position in the hearts of many Americans.

In Chinese culture, Confucianism also promotes a spirit of philanthropy, calling on people to "take the world as one's own responsibility" and "consider others in one's own place." A spirit of internationalism and humanitarianism has endured and grown in the process of China's modernization, promoting a sense of social responsibility amidst the current crisis.

There is a long history of non-governmental exchange between China and the US. The understanding and trust built up through interactions over history has nurtured continuing friendship between the peoples of China and the US. Cultural differences that do exist between China and the US should not obstruct dialogue between Chinese and American people. Peoples of the two countries

can talk in a broader sense and work together to meet global challenges, enhancing understanding and mutual trust. The healthy development of these cultural ties lays on a solid foundation.



中，美国乒乓球运动员在底特律举行友好比赛时，看台上的美国朋友举着写有中文的标语牌，热情欢迎中国乒乓球代表团访问美国。

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In April 1972, table tennis players from China and the US held a friendly match in Detroit, USA. Americans held posters in Chinese to welcome the Chinese table tennis delegation. (China Pictorial 1972, 9th vol.)



4 Analysis of the drivers and challenges for China-US non-governmental cooperation

The pandemic has shown the value of China-US non-governmental cooperation but also exacerbated challenges for this mode of collaboration. Many factors feed into these challenges, from how de-globalization affects multilateral cooperation, to the volatility of China-US relations, and narrowing pathways for exchange at the local level. However, deep people-to-people ties will not be weakened by temporary difficulties. On the contrary, current challenges only make these links between China and the US even more precious.

i. COVID-19 has exposed shortcomings in global governance.

COVID-19 has exposed shortcomings in global governance. The World Health Organization (WHO) lacks binding authority and can only appeal to reason in promulgating evaluation reports and suggestions to its members. At a time when the pandemic has increased the importance of the WHO, some countries have turned to attack the organization. The US government has announced it will withdraw from WHO, an action that not only runs against its international obligations but also harms the global anti-pandemic efforts.

It is a critical moment for China-US cooperation. If the pandemic proves to be a watershed in the decline of multilateralism, anti-globalization will eventually harm the interests of people in all countries, and may further reduce willingness to cooperate, which will in turn bring challenges to future China-US non-governmental cooperation.

ii. Ups and downs in China-US relations affect non-governmental exchange

Relations between China and the US have been strained in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. Impaired bilateral cooperation at the governmental level has also affected non-governmental interaction. Difficulties in implementing the phase one trade deal have added uncertainty to China-US economic relations. Moreover, on May 20, the US government issued the "United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China," once again emphasizing that the US will adjust and adopt a stance of "strategic competition" with China instead of "engagement." This has further increased tensions between China and the US. A series of accusations and public attacks on China by the US government has also damaged confidence in China-US non-governmental cooperation.

While both governments are still important promoters of people-to-people diplomacy, instability in the relationship between the two governments has hindered non-governmental exchange to some extent.

iii. Pathways for local cooperation have been constrained

Limitations on China-US local exchange also negatively impact China-US non-governmental cooperation. Sister city and sister province-state relations play important roles for local cooperation between China and the US. However, in recent years, due to the influence of the external environment and limited progress by local governments in building sister-city ties, the activeness of local exchanges between the two countries has declined.

Strengthening cooperation between sister cities is beneficial to make up for the shortcomings in China-US cooperation. Through three major exchange mechanisms hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), the China-US Governors Forum, the China-US Subnational Legislatures Cooperation Forum and the China-US Sister Cities Conference, sister cities can play more important roles in local cooperation and lay a solid foundation for friendly exchanges between the two countries.

iv. Damage to global value chains and challenges for China-US economic cooperation

The pandemic has showed how vulnerable global value chains can be. China and the US are essential parts of global value chains. China is known as the "world's factory" and has made innovations in the high-tech field as well. The US continues to occupy the upper reaches of global value chains in many fields and has prominent capabilities in innovation. The damaging of global value chains by the pandemic has interrupted normal business cooperation between enterprises to a certain extent. If global value chains are not restored after the pandemic, the economic cooperation between China and the US will face more challenges.



5

Proposals to strengthen China-US non-governmental cooperation

Non-governmental cooperation amidst COVID-19 is a model for China-US non-governmental cooperation more broadly. Facing the pandemic and other global challenges, people in both countries should continue to work together to curb the pandemic, boost the world economy, and enhance mutual understanding and trust in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation.

i. Jointly strengthen anti-pandemic cooperation

1. Cease finger-pointing and focus on anti-pandemic cooperation

As COVID-19 spreads, so too has a kind of "political virus," corroding cooperation between China and the US. The so-called "infodemic" will not have a positive effect on curbing the pandemic. In this regard, people should actively speak out to stop the spread of the "political virus" and continue to develop China-US non-governmental anti-pandemic cooperation while calling on the US government to strengthen cooperation with China.

2. Strengthen cooperation in vaccine research between pharmaceutical companies and research institutions in China and the US

Experience shows that vaccines are critical to control and eventually eliminate pandemics. China and the US are leading countries in vaccine development. Pharmaceutical companies in China and the US should further strengthen scientific research cooperation, accelerate the development and testing of vaccines and specific drugs for the treatment of COVID-19, and

achieve mass production soon. Subsequently, China and the US can cooperate to make vaccines available worldwide, contributing to global public goods that will curb the spread of the pandemic.

3. Strengthen China-US sister-city network cooperation and establish one-to-one mutual assistance mechanisms

Deepening mutual assistance through the sister-city mechanism is an important channel for cooperation in the fight against pandemic. Its beneficial effect could be further strengthened. Future efforts can draw on the experience of China's National Health Commission in establishing support relationships between 16 provinces that provided support to counterpart cities outside Wuhan. By developing sister city or sister province-state one-to-one mutual assistance cooperation mechanisms, the existing China-US sister cities network could play a greater role.

4. Cooperation to establish anti-epidemic funds and provide more joint help to developing countries

China and the US need not only to cooperate and provide mutual assistance, but also make joint efforts to help other countries in the world. At present, South America, Africa and other regions are facing a higher risk of outbreaks. Some developing countries lack capacity to deal with the pandemic because of relatively insufficient medical resources or limited economic resilience. Therefore, it is necessary to start with prevention and avoid large-scale infections. In this regard, China and the US can establish anti-epidemic funds by strengthening cooperation between charitable foundations or other institutions to provide more funds, supplies, personnel support, and anti-epidemic expertise for developing countries to help them combat outbreaks and contain risks.

ii. Strengthen economic cooperation and revitalize global economic development

1. Enhance China-US local economic cooperation via the sister-city network

Sister city ties are an important bridge to promote China-US relations and deepen local exchange and cooperation between the two countries. During the pandemic, some touching stories emerged from mutual assistance between sister cities. After the pandemic, on the basis of economic and trade consultations between China and the US, it is possible to further mobilize non-governmental forces, promote the development of economic and trade cooperation, and build a platform for cooperation between enterprises through the sister-city network.

2. Deepen cooperation in digital economy and create new growth points for economic recovery

COVID-19 has created opportunities for the development of digital economy. Online conferences, online education, online medical care, remote working and other formats have become increasingly normalized, creating opportunities for the digital economy. Through cooperation and innovation, Chinese and US enterprises can harness the power of the digital

economy to boost the economy and contribute to global development.

3. Strengthen economic cooperation and protect global value chains

Facing the possible disruption of global value chains in the wake of COVID-19, enterprises and chambers of commerce should collaborate to maintain the stability of global value chains. In particular, American companies in China, as stakeholders of China-US trade cooperation, having a deep understanding of China, should shoulder social responsibilities, act as messengers on the importance of China-US exchange, and promote China-US economic and trade cooperation.

iii. Broaden non-governmental exchange in multiple fields and deepen mutual understanding between the two societies

1. Establish a "Track II diplomacy" mechanism for Chinese and US think tanks and increase opportunities for dialogue between the two countries

During the pandemic, although exchange between the two governments has decreased, people can still cooperate to create opportunities for dialogue between the two countries. To promote non-governmental dialogue and mutual trust, a Track II diplomacy mechanism could be created to facilitate dialogue between think tanks, keeping communication lines between the two countries open, helping to prevent "decoupling" and promote intergovernmental cooperation.

2. Increase people-to-people exchanges in various fields such as tourism and education to deepen mutual understanding and trust

International education, tourism and other forms of cultural exchange can bridge gaps between China and the US in a more grounded way. When the pandemic abates, China and the US should promote people-to-people exchange and lay a good foundation for long-term non-governmental cooperation by supporting the "China-US Tourism Year", strengthening cooperative education, and producing materials such as documentaries and films on the theme of China-US non-governmental anti-pandemic cooperation.

3. Enhance communication and increase willingness to cooperate

In the process of China-US non-governmental anti-pandemic cooperation, although international public opinion has been mixed, many people in both China and the US have shared experiences through social media, sharing positive feelings that help to create an atmosphere conducive to China-US non-governmental cooperation. After the pandemic, people should continue to maintain goodwill towards each other, communicate in an active and friendly way, and enhance willingness to cooperate. As a platform and channel for conveying social voices, Chinese and American media should also speak from the perspective of the public and promote humanitarianism, respect for facts, and optimism to support long-term non-governmental cooperation and realize the common interests of people.



6 Overcoming challenges together

Humanity once again stands at the crossroads of destiny amidst the pandemic and its socio-economic impacts. It is the most rapid, widespread, and difficult public health challenge China has faced since 1949. COVID-19 is an enemy to all humanity from which no country can isolate itself. While there has been significant progress in pandemic containment in China, other countries are still being hit. Facing this shared challenge, Chinese people wish to try their best to help and cooperate with other countries to defeat this common enemy.

During the process of the fight against the COVID-19, joint efforts by Chinese and American people not only slowed down virus transmission and saved lives, but also contributed to global cooperation against COVID-19. Many positive examples emerged, such as humanitarian spirit, financial and material support, and technical exchange. These connections have shown friendship and care for the world among Chinese and American people. Despite current China-US tensions, this cooperation has planted a seed for a brighter future for bilateral relations.

Humanitarian spirit combined with long-lasting people-to-people ties and frequent cultural exchanges offer a solid foundation for China-US non-governmental cooperation against COVID-19. Despite cultural differences between China and the US, both countries emphasize the needs of spreading humanitarian practices, and there is a broad space for cooperation in dealing with international crises. However, the inadequacy of existing global governance mechanisms, the situation in US domestic politics, ups and downs of China-US relations, and public misunderstandings toward China have created problems and challenges for further China-US cooperation.

Facing grave threats to humanity, China and the US should form a peaceful and harmonious bilateral relationship to forge better leadership on global governance and trade and economic development that will make both winners, instead of falling into zero-sum thinking and unbridled competition.

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