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Analysis on The Framing and Evolution Trend of Sino Us Narratives Under the Crisis of The New Crown Pneumonia Epidemic

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Abstract

Strategic narratives are meaning-making devices implemented by political actors and constitute a discourse weapon for great power competition. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, discourses of fear, conspiracy theories, exclusive nationalism and populism are spreading rapidly on social media platforms. The “other” narrative is committed to deconstructing the other party’s leadership legitimacy and advancing narrative coercion and emotion. mobilization. During the first half of the epidemic, the Trump administration’s rhetoric and hostile narrative caused Sino-US trust to spiral downward. In the post-epidemic era, the new Biden administration came to power and provided a window of opportunity to break the narrative inertia. As a typical establishment president, although Biden will still emphasize competition with China, his narrative style is more rational and balanced. In response to the Biden administration's narrative orientation of relative restraint, maintaining "strategic patience" and limited multilateralism, China can adopt a more diversified narrative response strategy and "walk slowly" to reshape the narrative space between China and the United States.

Keywords: Pneumonia epidemic, Sino-US mutual trust, narrative competition, narrative script

Introduction

Strategic narratives are meaning-making devices implemented by political actors and constitute a discourse weapon for great power competition. In the

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context of the COVID-19 crisis, narrative discourse has shaped the identity of China and the United States and the way they compete for power. To understand Sino-US competition from the perspective of strategic narrative is to pay attention to discourse framing and storytelling under the political game. The COVID-19 pandemic (hereinafter referred to as the "epidemic", COVID-19) provides an observation window for understanding the escalation of China-US narrative competition. During the pandemic, China and the US have engaged in a war of words over the origin and attribution of the virus. U.S. accuses China of covering up information and misleading the country in the early stages of the Wuhan outbreak international society, thereby allowing the virus to spread around the world (Alqutob R, Al Nsour M, Tarawneh MR et al. 2020).

China emphasizes the unknowingness of the virus and implies that the earliest discovery of the virus in China does not mean that it originated in China. (Abed, F, Zucchino, D,2020) In the face of this unprecedented crisis, the narrative inertia of Sino-US competition shows the self-reinforcing effect framed by the "other". Stigmatized crisis narratives are as contagious as the crisis itself, causing panic and undermining respective strategic leadership and moral legitimacy. This article sorts out the changing process of Sino-US strategic narratives under the COVID-19 crisis, and compares the similarities and differences between the Trump administration's "new Cold War" narrative before and after the outbreak and the US administration's "strategic patience" narrative, in order to construct an inclusive Sino-US narrative. Templates provide policy inspiration.

- **Fear under the epidemic crisis and the narrative game**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rare global emergency in human history. Countless withered lives, almost stagnant economies, tightly guarded borders, and fear and confusion have profoundly shaped the current shape of human society. Different from other pandemics in history, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only caused economic crises, but also feared social crises, political crises, and "complications" such as international order crises. Multiple crises, concentrated in a short period of time, create more fear than any other single pandemic "symptom" in history. In this regard, UN Secretary-General Guterres even believes that the new crown pneumonia epidemic is "the greatest challenge since the founding of the United Nations 75 years ago." Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger pessimistically pointed out that the political and economic turmoil caused by the new crown virus

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may last for generations. (Ahmadi, B, 2020) In the era of interdependent globalization, the fear of distrust is like a virus, spreading rapidly, conspiracy theories, exclusive nationalism and populism, all making the cost of joint anti-epidemic higher and higher, the stigma narrative framed as A war of words that undermines the legitimacy of the other side.

- **Fear under the impact of crisis**

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) first declared the new crown pneumonia epidemic as a world health "emergency", and on March 11, it was officially upgraded to a "global pandemic", and the epidemic posed the highest threat to the security of all mankind. Since then, more than 7 billion people around the world have been living in the shadow of the epidemic crisis. In an era of global hyper connectivity, no one is an island, viruses spread rapidly across borders, and governments have been forced to adopt unprecedented draconian policies to block social activities to curb the spread of the pandemic. In terms of economic impact, the global economy fell into depression during the "Great Lockdown" of the epidemic, and the global economy will shrink by 3.5% in 2020, of which global trade will drop by 9.6% and oil prices will drop by 32.7%. (AKDN, 2017) The economic crisis has caused political and social pressure. Although governments of various countries are striving to maintain a difficult balance between epidemic prevention and control and economic development, the health crisis, economic crisis, psychological crisis and social order crisis are superimposed on each other, and the pace of economic recovery in various countries is uneven. , the new wave of infection and the mutation of the virus have strengthened the sense of ontology insecurity. In a state of insecurity, the strategic competition between China and the United States has fallen into a conflict spiral of narrative competition. As the most sensitive parties to the global power transfer, the ambivalence and fear between China and the United States under the new crown pneumonia epidemic are reflected in three levels.

Firstly, the “other” narrative and “Coro nationalism” under the fear are intensified. Under the global crisis, it is difficult for one country to deal with the virus crisis alone. Originally, the world needs more transnational solidarity and cooperation, but the reality is just the opposite. Discourses of conspiracy theories, exclusionary nationalism and populism spread rapidly, and tensions pervaded the narrative frame of the “other”. At one point, more than 80 countries closed their borders to

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those arriving from China, and social media platforms were also full of ridicule and abuse of Chinese people. For China and the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the political confrontation between China and the United States. Even before the pandemic (early March 2020), American public opinion gloatingly predicted that China's rise would be "failed" by the "Wuhan virus". The meta-contradictory narrative model has worsened the already tense Sino-US strategic relationship. From the bigger picture, we can see that a global nationalist trend is emerging in crisis. (Al-Sharafat S ,2021) Some international media refer to "Wuhan virus" and "Chinese virus" Titles such as "Yellow Peril" convey anti-Chinese or anti-Asian prejudice sentiments, implying that Chinese or Asians are responsible for the spread of the virus. Xenophobic nationalism and racism have further marginalized the status of ethnic minorities Chinese students have spoken on major social platforms about the discrimination they have suffered abroad due to the new crown pneumonia. Although Chinese propaganda departments have worked hard to reshape the narrative of the new crown pneumonia epidemic to defend against this reputational smear, American hawks have made a big fuss about China's mistakes, and some lawmakers have even claimed that the virus originated in a Chinese bio-weapons laboratory in Wuhan, conspiracy The Chinese government has long been aware of this. To be fair, China has respected the laws of science in epidemic prevention, and has repeatedly invited the World Health Organization and some American experts to Wuhan to investigate, maintaining an open and objective stance on the traceability of the virus. However, the construction of the "other" narrative destroys the atmosphere of trust and promotes the downward spiral of Sino-US relations (ANI News ,2021).

Secondly, the epidemic strengthens the decoupling of threat perception and strategy. In 2018, the Trump administration cited 1974 Section 301 of the Trade Act accuses China of engaging in forced technology transfers, cyber theft of U.S. intellectual property and trade secrets, discriminatory and off-market licensing, and targeted asset acquisitions that threaten U.S. national security. In response, the U.S. added tariffs to about $250 billion in imports from China, and China retaliated with tariffs on $110 billion worth of U.S. products. After several rounds of negotiations, China and the United States signed the first phase of the agreement in January 2020, and the competition situation has eased. However, the sudden impact of the epidemic has caused huge obstacles to the fulfillment of these commitments. The corona virus pandemic has hit the U.S. hard, further

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reinforcing America's rethinking of its over-reliance on Chinese supply chains. China is a major global supplier of anti-epidemic materials, medical equipment, antibiotics and active pharmaceutical ingredients. The United States has long relied on China's industrial chain. For example, the US antibiotic market relies on China as high as 95%. At the beginning of February 2020, China reduced the supply of medical supplies in the global market in response to the peak of the epidemic, which led to a shortage of medical supplies in the United States, which is highly dependent on China. (Akande, D, Lieflander, T ,2013). The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed exposed risks to the U.S. supply chain, prompting the U.S. Congress to advance legislation to increase the diversification of import sources. The risk of comprehensive "decoupling" between China and the United States has been further amplified by the impact of the new crown pneumonia epidemic.

Thirdly, cyberspace smears, and social media drives hype. In a free and open cyberspace, political actors deliberately create buzz to influence and persuade target audiences. Unfounded conspiracy theories, rumors and hoaxes spread through social media serve as narrative weapons to discredit opponents. From "5G technology spreads the virus" to viewing the outbreak as a government conspiracy, conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 outbreak have spread widely on social media. Social media is a mixed bag, and harmful information is more likely to be used to incite hatred, prejudice and opposition. For example, some U.S. media took advantage of the uncertainty over the origin of the virus to hype the corona virus as a deliberate conspiracy by China; meanwhile, U.S. officials publicly questioned the accuracy of Chinese statistics. In addition, there are also international public opinions accusing China of expanding its geopolitical influence through "mask diplomacy" or exerting political influence over other countries. Combined with the narrative of "China's cover-up of the epidemic", these claims are more provocative and disseminated. Harris Poll Center more than half of Americans (55%) believe China is responsible for the pandemic, according to a Harris Poll. (Al-Atoum, N, Khudairat, O, Najadat, A, 2017). In response to the smearing and demonization of the United States, China's online nationalist sentiment is also angry with the United States, refuting and denounced Trump's "Chinese virus" narrative.

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❖ **The framing of legitimacy in crisis narratives**

The implementation of the strategy requires the mobilization of necessary resources at home and abroad, such as propaganda and mobilization, and the formation of alliances, and these actions are inseparable from the support of legitimacy discourse. The process of securitization of the new crown pneumonia epidemic is full of legal frameworks. Framing is a cognitive focusing and information screening mechanism, which produces "framing effects" when an actor's attention is not evenly weighted on different things. The legitimacy framework of both China and the United States emphasizes the legitimacy of their own actions and undermines the credibility of the other side. The crisis narrative of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States and its Western allies largely links China's challenge to the evolving world order; while China is striving to construct a global health community of shared destiny narrative to maintain the political legitimacy of China's fight against the epidemic sex. The narrative framework of Sino-US legitimacy under the epidemic is reflected in the following two aspects.

As there is the process of deconstructing and reshaping the legitimacy of global leadership. The effectiveness of China and the United States in responding to the pandemic will affect other countries' perceptions of the strengths of the two countries, and then choose the winners to emulate. The pandemic has diverted the strategic attention of the United States. In order to cope with the sharply rising infection curve, the US government has deliberately withdrawn from the disputes over international affairs and retreated to its homeland. Especially at the time of the outbreak of the epidemic in the United States, the domestic election fraud, the quarrel over black equality, and the transition of power have made the world's expectations for the United States once again dashed. (Billing, L, 2021) Dominated by isolationist sentiment, the Trump administration continued to pursue an "America First" strategy on a series of other global issues, accelerating the shirk of international responsibilities, from reducing support to the World Health Organization, to arrears of huge membership dues, to withdrawing World Health Organization. This selfish behavior of the United States, ignoring the safety of the world, has been criticized by the international community including China. As a world power, the United States has failed to shoulder its due international responsibilities. Although there are many harsh criticisms of China's epidemic prevention by Western public opinion, China has objectively handed over

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relatively excellent epidemic prevention answers. In this regard, some observers believe that China's amazing governance capacity and systemic mobilization effect highlights the chaos and weakness of the US epidemic prevention and control, exposes the weakness of US-style democracy, and eclipses US soft power. Western public opinion has to realize that China, which was the first to be hit by the epidemic, was the first to recover from the epidemic in the world. And this victory was almost reliant on outside aid, with China in turn giving the rest of the world a lot of aid, partly playing the role of a global rescuer. (Badarin, E, 2020). By supplying other countries with vaccines, medical supplies and medical experience, other countries' expectations of China have undoubtedly increased. As a result, the pandemic has escalated the competition between China and the United States into a soft power competition to win people's hearts.

On the other hand, advancing narrative coercion and emotional mobilization. According to the framework of the "Copenhagen School", security is not an objective condition, but a process of constructing threat perception through discursive narrative. The rhetoric, visual imagery, and symbolism of populists convey a sense of security urgency. Not only does Trump target his foreign policy rhetoric to specific audiences, but his rhetorical strategy appears to be aimed at polarization. In terms of narrative style, Donald Trump's rhetoric does not have the warm and flamboyant Obama-like rhetoric; (Ghanem, AA, Mustafa, M , 2011). According to former US national security adviser Steve Bannon recalled that Trump was an "emotional man" "in the deepest part of his heart was anger and darkness". The rhetoric of conspiracy theories under the crisis of the new crown pneumonia epidemic shows that Trump's populist and anti-establishment emotional mobilization has divided the American consensus, constantly building threat anxiety, and instilling a sense of loss in the audience. In addition, narrative has a "Flashbulb Memory"-style emotional memory function, and people's memories tend to focus on some prominent random images. (Doughan, Y, 2020). An iconic image of the deteriorating Sino-US relationship is Trump's daily press conference when he crossed out the word "corona virus" and changed it to "Chinese virus", which became a symbolic scene in the news headlines, not only to vent the negative sentiment towards China, it also achieved populist anti-China mobilization.

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❖ **"New Cold War" Narrative Under the COVID-19 Crisis**

In the first decade of the 21st century, the United States pursued a policy of limited engagement with China. China and the United States carried out large-scale cooperation in the economic and trade field. China also supported the United States' global counter-terrorism strategy. The United States as a whole maintains cooperation and contacts. Until Trump was elected as the US President in 2016, the strategic risk of a full-scale confrontation between China and the United States rose, and the two sides fought fiercely on issues such as cyber espionage, technology theft, unfair trade, and responsibility for the new crown pneumonia epidemic. During Trump's four years in office, the Sino-US strategic narrative shifted from "constructive engagement" to "hostile new cold war". The "New Cold War" narrative in the Trump era is a potentially self-filling narrative, with mutually exclusive narratives worsening the so-called "Thucydides Trap". (Cook, SA, 2020, August 17) In July 2020, US Secretary of State Pompeo delivered a speech at the Nixon Presidential Library, marking the official end of US engagement with China. Pompeo's all-out attack on the Chinese regime, political party and system was very similar in tone to the Truman speech that marked the beginning of the Cold War more than 70 years ago, and clearly established an image of a righteous America and an evil adversary. The interweaving of the COVID-19 crisis and power transfer has helped push the "new Cold War" narrative to a climax.

❖ **The "New Cold War" Narrative under the Shift of Power**

In the transitional period of the international system, the strategic competition between hegemonic and rising powers will use narrative as a tool to project interests, values and aspirations. The United States has long constructed a diametrically opposite self-other story with zero-sum thinking, exaggerating its sense of self-superiority, and further customizing the threat narrative script according to the characteristics of its opponents. The discourse description of revisionism or status quo is a selective subjective construction. By labeling certain countries as "revisionist", the hegemonic narrator provides a rational basis for their policy recommendations, making the audience feel that opposing revisionists is Defend "our safety". Once China is labeled a "revisionist" by the United States, the audiences who accept this label will experience cognitive biases. The "New Cold War" narrative holds that the zero-sum confrontation between China and the United States is unavoidable, and the United States and other Western countries

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need to go all out to regain their gradually lost strategic advantages. Trumpism is rooted in fears of U.S. decline, by provoking a costly trade war, banning Huawei and (TikTok), accusing the "Chinese virus" of infecting the United States and the world, Trump's four-year measures against China are almost extreme. (Faiez, R, 2020) In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Trump has continued to escalate the narrative coercive pressure on China.

Whereas the populist rhetoric reinforces diplomatic confrontation. Trump's populist rhetoric has fixed connotations: one is to put "the people" at the center of his rhetoric; the other is to accuse an evil "institution" of conspiring to harm the interests of the "people"; the third is to declare that there is a crisis to gain political support. The most exclusive of populism, right-wing populism, sees the outside world as a "hostile place" and therefore has an "inherent distrust" of outside groups. The Trump administration's China policy is entirely premised on "sticks", and there is absolutely no "carrot" in the maximum pressure strategy to lure the other side into making concessions. American national identity has always been dominated by a rhetorical "other strategy," and only by identifying the "other" can the American "we" exist. In this context, Trump's hostile rhetoric towards China is the embodiment of finding new enemies and self-identity. On May 20, 2020, the White House released a document titled "U.S. Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China," which describes the "China threat" and U.S. response strategies, which can be considered as the December 2017 Trump A direct extension of the National Security Strategy issued by the Prussian government, it emphasizes the imposition of a full range of economic, technological, ideological and political sanctions against China. (Badarin E, 2021) Under the banner of the U.S. Department of Justice's "China Plan", the U.S. culminated in high-profile prosecutions of Chinese espionage. In July 2020, the United States closed the Chinese consulate in Houston, while China tit-for-tat closed the U.S. consulate in Chengdu. The conflict escalated, bilateral diplomatic relations were frozen, and high-level meetings basically stalled.

Also, there is a propaganda war on ideology. During the pandemic, the Trump administration has waged an all-out narrative war, with diplomatic discourse toward China replete with exaggeration and disinformation. China's accusation of criticizing the United States is unreasonable and completely wrong. It is a public opinion war, narrative war and psychological war with ulterior motives. (Barany, Z,

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2012) In fact, the U.S. propaganda war against China has gradually escalated, and its attitude towards China being hit by the epidemic has also evolved from expressing assistance and sympathy to China to ridicule the system and criticize China's malicious concealment. Immediately after the United States cut off all air routes to China, Trump openly called the new crown virus the "Chinese virus", and the crisis narrative structure in the United States is changing from a moderate narrative to a radical framing. By encouraging the world to hold China accountable, the United States framed China as a "guilty country", and the spiraling slander has plunged both sides into a vicious circle of revenge. On April 21, 2020, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai said: "There is a strange phenomenon in the current public opinion. When China initially provided medical supplies to the United States and European countries, some people said that China was using it to seek geopolitical interests; A few weeks ago, some measures were introduced to ensure the quality of exported medical materials and compliance with international standards, and the Chinese side began to accuse China of hindering the export of materials. The white paper "China's Actions to Fight the New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic" released by the press office also systematically refuted the discourse of the "new cold war".

- **China's narrative fights back under pressure**

On the whole, Sino-US relations have dropped to a freezing point during Trump's administration, and smearing China, crazy revenge and hysterical confrontation have become his typical narrative style. Just before Trump left office, the US government also wanted to lock the Sino-US narrative on the spectrum of pessimistic confrontation. For example, by sending the Secretary of Health and Human Services to Taiwan, he touched on the decades-old norm of Sino-US relations of not dealing with "Taiwan officials"; Secretary of State Pompeo, on the last day of his departure, also fiercely accused China of being responsible for Xinjiang. Responsible for the genocide and the COVID-19 pandemic. (Hadid, D, Ghani, K, 2020) In response, China imposed sanctions on 10 then- or former Trump administration officials, including the Secretary of State, White House trade and industrial policy advisers, and national security advisers, "forbidding these individuals and their immediate family members from entering mainland China, China Hong Kong and Macau; they and their associated companies and institutions are also banned from doing business with China." In response to the

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Trump administration's reckless diplomacy and "crazy offensive", China has also worked hard to create its own anti-epidemic narrative to "tell China's anti-epidemic story" and take the initiative to counter Trump's "Chinese virus" narrative.

At the first place, the origin of the virus is unknown and inhuman, and China is the victim. In response to the menacing "China responsibility theory", China has begun to question and even strongly refute the view that the corona virus originated in China. On March 18, 2020, academician Zhong Nanshan, a well-known Chinese anti-epidemic expert, pointed out at a press conference that although the corona virus first appeared in China, it does not mean that it originated in China. He emphasized that it is still unclear where the corona virus came from, the intermediate host is not clear, and the corona virus is not necessarily brought by pangolins (traded in the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market). This position of refuting the "Chinese origin theory" quickly triggered a reversal and resonance in Chinese public opinion. For example, as early as February 29, 2020, the Global Times admitted that the epidemic "first broke out" in China, but stated that the scientific community has so far been inconclusive about the "source of the virus". (Borck T, 2021) On March 4, 2020, Zhao Lijian, the new spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reiterated at a regular press conference: "As the relevant tracing work is still in progress, no conclusions have been drawn on the origin of the virus. After mid-March, Chinese diplomats such as Hua Chunying said on Twitter: "Although the epidemic first broke out in China, it does not necessarily mean that the virus originated in China, let alone." Saying 'Made in China'." In this way, China has counter-accused the accusations made by the United States and other Western countries.

Secondly, China is responsible for helping other countries even when they have gone through great tests. As the first country in the world to be hit by the virus and the first to emerge from the shadow of the epidemic, China has begun to reap development opportunities from the epidemic crisis. When EU countries protect each other under the threat of COVID-19 and lack an overall aid system, China has provided valuable assistance to European countries such as Serbia and Hungary. China has also sent medical experts to hard-hit areas such as Spain and Italy. China's active promotion of international cooperation is in stark contrast to the Trump administration's "America First" unilateralism, which is likely to weaken

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the US's international leadership, and still assist other countries even when they have experienced great tests. responsible. As the first country in the world to be hit by the virus and the first to emerge from the shadow of the epidemic, China has begun to reap development opportunities from the epidemic crisis. When EU countries protect each other under the threat of COVID-19 and lack an overall aid system, China has provided valuable assistance to European countries such as Serbia and Hungary. China has also sent medical experts to hard-hit areas such as Spain and Italy (Yom, SL, Gause, FG., 2012). China's aggressive promotion of international cooperation is in stark contrast to the Trump administration's "America First" unilateralism, which is likely to weaken the U.S. international leadership.

In addition, there are disputes among Chinese scholars about the assessment of Sino-US competition under the epidemic, which can be basically divided into pessimists and optimists. Pessimists believe that America's global leadership is declining, but that does not mean China's great-power ambitions will go smoothly. The COVID-19 epidemic has exacerbated global pressures and destabilizing factors, the downward pressure on the global economy has increased, and the international community has increased doubts about China, which will interfere with the process of China's rise or have a negative impact on China's leadership.

Therefore, it is necessary to carefully assess the long-term impact of the epidemic on China. Optimists believe that the new crown pneumonia epidemic is the failure of the United States to send a signal of solidarity and cooperation at the global level after the end of the Cold War.

First example. They accused the United States of losing the trust of its partners, claiming that "Western ideological hegemony is in the process of relative decline". Trump's policies during the pandemic have damaged NATO's military alliances and cooperation. China has successfully contained the new crown pneumonia epidemic. In sharp contrast to Western democratic systems, China's plan provides new ideas for national and global governance. Su Xiaohui pointed out that the epidemic is a "big test" for the institutional models and governance models of various countries. The West is underperforming, has an unbalanced mentality, and fears a blow to its dominance.

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- **The 'strategic patience' narrative**

During the Trump administration, the rhetoric between China and the United States was fierce, and the hostile discourse presented a self-reinforcing spiral. To break the narrative inertia of China and the United States in the post-epidemic era, it is necessary to seize the window of opportunity. The 2020 US presidential election has become an important opportunity to resolve the new Cold War between China and the United States. The new US President was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States, and early in his tenure he expressed his willingness to cooperate with China when it was in the interests of the United States, which provided an opportunity to change the course of US-China relations. Before the new administration's China policy takes shape, China and the United States will test each other through several games. Although the main tone of China-US competition remains unchanged, the US administration's narrative towards China will be relatively rational and balanced, which will leave room for flexibility in shaping a new China-US narrative framework.

- **The narrative style of the administration**

Former President Trump has cast a shadow of deep-seated mistrust on the U.S.-China strategic narrative. Especially in the late period of his administration, the high-level officials of the two sides completely cut off exchanges and spoke ill of each other. The new US President came to power under such circumstances. The outside world has expectations for the resumption of high-level contacts between the two countries, but it is also full of uncertainty. Although subject to the anti-China atmosphere in the United States, the call between the leaders of China and the United States came 23 days after the new President took office, but it brought the possibility of defusing the frozen bilateral relationship. On the eve of the Chinese New Year's Eve in 2021, the leaders of China and the United States held the first telephone conversation. The Presidential administration talked about maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region and expressed concerns about China's economic and human rights practices, but also conveyed a desire to cooperate with China. (Yom, S, 2014). The pressure changes in the US domestic politics will also have a certain impact on Sino-US relations. Although the Democratic administration will not give up its pressure on China, it also provides the possibility for the Sino-US narrative to turn around. On the one hand, Biden's

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narrative style is relatively stable and rational. Many observers believe that Biden has a mild personality.

Pleasant and outgoing, he is a typical establishment president. Therefore, he will not make deals on strategic interests and core values like Trump with extreme emotions, but maintain necessary cooperation with China while trying to repair the damaged image of the United States as a great power. As the President of the Democratic Party, Biden will lift the banner of human rights values, ally with like-minded democracies on issues of climate governance and epidemic prevention and control, and negotiate collectively with China. Although this tactic will undoubtedly put pressure on China, the Biden administration will place relative emphasis on following international rules rather than discrediting Trump's words. During the campaign stage, Biden had accused Trump of taking tough measures against China and had not been effective. Biden also warned Trump not to provoke a new Cold War, but to seek cooperation with China to deal with the new crown pneumonia epidemic and climate change. common challenges. Biden's China policy is both critical and cooperative, not one-sided. At present, the Biden administration has not made too many Trump-style outrageous remarks, and has maintained relative rationality and restraint, which provides hope for improvement for China and the United States to re-examine bilateral relations and manage competition risks. Unlike other Democratic candidates such as Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, Biden rarely blames China's political system or makes anti-authoritarianism the centerpiece of his foreign policy. The escalation of security competition between China and the United States objectively exists, but whether the Biden administration will escalate these security and economic differences into a threat to values has not yet been concluded. From an optimistic perspective, the uncertain environment provides room for narrative revision. (Vivian Salama, Atwood and Cohen, 2020) But from a pessimistic point of view, the uncertain environment may also allow the narrative template to continue, which is why China is more motivated to take the initiative to resolve the risks and pressures of possible narrative escalation.

Nevertheless, the US President places more emphasis on the non-confrontational nature of China-US competition. Although the tone of the Biden administration's China policy regards China as "the most serious competitor", it emphasizes that while competing with China in many fields, it also considers necessary

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cooperation. This comes despite President Biden saying China is challenging "America's values of prosperity, security and democracy" and calling on allies and partners to "jointly prepare for a long-term strategic competition with China." Secretary of State Anthony Blinken pointed out in a congressional question that China has weakened the US's advantage. However, the narrative focus and style of the new government will be adjusted. As many international observers have pointed out, the Biden administration's China narrative style will avoid ups and downs, showing competition while also signaling cooperation. China may seize the opportunity of the U.S. administration to make some proposals for limited concessions to ease the distrust of mutual accusations between China and the United States. Of course, given that structural conflicts are difficult to reconcile, the possibility of the United States making substantial concessions to China is very low. (Singh, M, 2020). If the Biden administration unites with its Eurasian partners to put pressure on China, it may trigger a sudden rebound in China's narrative discourse and the United States' international anti-China campaign. Mobilization will hurt China's core national interests, especially involving the South China Sea and other territorial sovereignty issues, and there is the possibility of escalating rhetorical confrontation between the two sides; however, on issues such as climate change, the Korean nuclear issue and economic recovery, China and the United States will also make appropriate compromises, which can be limited.

- **The possibility of stepping out of "Trump's shadow"**

After Biden enters the White House, both China and the United States are likely to take the initiative to revise the tone of the "new Cold War" narrative left over by Trump. China has shown an open stance towards the Biden administration taking office, sending a positive and optimistic signal on the whole. For example, former Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Fu Ying, Chinese Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai, and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi have all called on the United States successively, proposing that China and the United States should start dialogues at all levels, and that any issue can be brought to the table for discussion. Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out: "A sound Sino-US relationship is in the fundamental interests of the two peoples and is also the common expectation of the international community. (Saraireh, D, Muslim, SA, 2021). I hope that the new US administration will meet the Chinese side in the same direction and promote Sino-US relations. Return to

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the right track of development as soon as possible." From this, we can see that China has placed certain hopes on the Biden administration to push "Sino-US relations back to the right track". Of course, the overall situation of the Biden administration's foreign policy toward China has not yet been revealed, and there are still certain uncertainties. We must not have unrealistic illusions about the Biden team. The pattern of strategic competition between China and the United States makes it almost impossible for Biden to make concessions to China. But unlike Trump's radical approach, Biden will make a more comprehensive and comprehensive assessment of relations with China and his China narrative may exhibit three characteristics.

One is to build a relatively restrained narrative based on rules-based competition. The rational narrative style displayed in the early days of the Biden administration means that China's positioning as a long-term competitor of the United States has not fundamentally changed, but the response strategy has been more restrained, and no remarks regarding China as an "enemy" or "evil adversary" have been made. There is a distinction between Trumpism, which is the main line of radically curbing Huawei. From this point of view, the Biden administration's China policy is "prudent checks and balances", that is, a mixture of "containment/competition + cooperation": confrontation in the fields of security and ideology, active competition and checks and balances in science and technology and trade, climate change, Limited cooperation in infectious disease prevention, nuclear proliferation, and people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Competition/containment as the main, cooperation as the supplement, is still better than the whole-government confrontation in the Trump era. In the first high-level meeting of the "China-US 2+2" Anchorage, the two sides tested each other's bottom line and determination. China has expressed strong dissatisfaction with the "malicious" interference in China's affairs by the United States. The United States believes that China's "hostility is obvious", but even so, China and the United States are still rapidly approaching climate cooperation. (Ryan C, 2018) Jordan and the Arab Uprisings. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press. In fact, both sides send a double signal. On the one hand, the United States cannot accuse China in a condescending manner; on the other hand, it is necessary to promote practical cooperation. space. (Ryan C, 2014) On March 2, 2021, the President's special envoy on climate issues, John Kerry, called for treating climate

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change as "an independent issue", hoping that constructive cooperation could still be carried out in a competitive atmosphere between China and the United States. The Global Climate Summit held on April 22, 2021 is the first large-scale multilateral summit of the Biden administration. China is also invited to participate in the summit. Both China and the United States have made new global climate change initiatives and commitments.

Second, focus on gradual progress and maintain "strategic patience". Before China and the U.S. slipped into a structural conflict, the narrative tone of the Biden administration was competition. No matter how fierce this competition was, it would play against its opponents within the framework of mutual respect, similar to the "Rock culture" in international relations; Trump-style extreme pressure is almost close to the "Hobbesian culture" of international relations theory, with hostility and destruction as the keynote. By observing the China-related remarks of Biden himself, Blinken and Sullivan and other diplomatic teams, we can see that "competition of strength", "democracy and human rights", "strategic patience" and "ally partner" are some important high-frequency words. Among them, "competition of power" refers to enhancing the comparative advantage of the United States. Trump's four years in office have seriously damaged the national interests and reputation of the United States. (Rousselet, L ,2014) The trade war with China, withdrawal from international organizations, threats to allies, election chaos, and poor handling of the epidemic all require a comprehensive review. In addition, "strategic patience" is a new feature of Biden's handling of relations with China, that is, he is not in a hurry to showdown with China, concentrates on dealing with internal affairs and allies, and deals with Trump's legacy policies, providing buffer space for China and the United States to reflect on existing relations, which helps to avoid Trump-style indiscretion and impulsiveness.

Third, limited multilateralism, using a network of allies. The new US administration attaches great importance to strengthening "coalition cooperation" and avoiding Trump-style unilateral actions. Taking US-EU relations as an example, the new government advocates strengthening cooperation with European allies on issues such as economy, technology, human rights, the international system, and climate change, in order to cope with the pressure of China's rise.In terms of epidemic response, the new US administration adjusted its strategy, including stopping accusations and reprimands, returning to the World Health

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Organization, and strengthening exchanges with China on epidemic prevention and control. From the first international diplomatic speech at the Munich Security Conference to the first virtual summit of the Indo-Pacific "Quartet Security Dialogue", Biden has clearly demonstrated the attitude of "America is back" and actively reinvigorated the global leadership of the United States. In the face of complex challenges in the post-COVID-19 era, the Biden administration has focused on promoting limited multilateralism and limiting the scope of multilateralism. For example, after the Biden administration worked hard to recover and return to the World Health Organization, it did not use it as a multilateral platform for global vaccine distribution, and the United States has so far opted not to donate vaccines to multilateral mechanisms such as the COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation Plan (COVAX). (Rod Laird Organisation ,2012). Since the beginning of the pandemic, USAID and the State Department have committed more than $1.6 billion in health, humanitarian, economic, and development assistance for the global response, but most of this assistance is bilateral. For example, in March 2021, the Biden administration pledged to jointly provide 1 billion doses of new crown vaccines to Southeast Asian countries through the "quadruple alliance" of Australia, India, Japan and the United States by the end of 2022, and announced that it would donate 4 million directly to Canada and Mexico. dose of vaccine. [3] In January 2021, Biden ordered a study on whether the United States should issue a “vaccine passport” or similar documents, in March the European Commission approved e-passports, and in April the EU opened to U.S. citizens with vaccination certificates. (Moody's Analytics, May 2021) The global epidemic prevention and control situation is steadily improving, there are still unknowns in Sino-US relations, and the pattern of multilateral resistance against China has emerged.

Conclusion

The framing effect of discourse narrative makes the competition between China and the United States more complicated under the COVID-19 crisis. The crisis narrative of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated two challenges: on the one hand, Sino-US hostility and distrust have grown, and internal psychological threat perceptions, conspiracy theories, and stigma narratives are widely spread on new media platforms; on the other hand, external geopolitics the conflict between competition and global governance has worsened, and the world lacks an

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adjustment mechanism to buffer the vicious competition between China and the United States. The U.S. maliciously stigmatizes China by taking advantage of the epidemic. In this regard, China also needs to have a more diverse narrative response strategy, innovate the concept, content, form and method of external communication, and tell the story of China well. But it is more important to note that narratives are neither fixed nor capricious. The Sino-US discourse game under crisis is divided into two parts, and the narrative game may also be transformed into the beginning of understanding under certain conditions, which requires grasping the discourse opportunity structure. That is to say, although the COVID-19 epidemic has intensified the trend of Sino-US hostility, mistrust and suspicion, leaders' personalities, policy choices and external shocks may provide certain opportunities for the Sino-US narrative shift. Reshaping the narrative space between China and the United States and changing the "quasi-tragic" identity competition not only requires policymakers to have a broader strategic vision, but also requires closer interaction between Chinese and American civil societies.

On the one hand, it is possible to construct small stories that are close to the people. In the era of self-media, short stories can build a bridge between people's trust. The grand narrative of rising conflict needs to be eliminated and supplemented by the “small narrative” of non-governmental cooperation. Numerous small stories help to build a multi-dimensional connotation of Sino-US relations, transfer the inertia of tragic narrative, and highlight the interdependence in daily practice. On the other hand, incremental efforts to build trust gradually embed Sino-US relations in a broader historical perspective. In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, China and the United States need to acknowledge their respective responsibilities and mistakes in the crisis, and put forward new initiatives, new plans and new ideas for the turnaround of Sino-US relations. Step by step, try to move beyond the negative narrative mode of blame and counter-blame, and construct a narrative script that is more beneficial to both parties rather than one party. Of course, forming such an inclusive narrative model requires repeated exploration, extensive dialogue, and seeking common ground while reserving differences. The Biden administration's China policy has not yet been finalized, and there is more room for flexibility amid uncertainty. Reversing the Trump-style "new Cold War" narrative between China and the United States requires rational restraint on both sides, recognizing that there is a certain degree of cooperation in addition to conflicts of interest space. In the context of structural conflicts, there is

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still the possibility of putting forward creative diplomatic initiatives. Only by fully exerting diplomatic wisdom can the two sides frame Sino-US relations in the discourse of "constructive cooperation and stable competition" and bid farewell to the tragic narrative.

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