



The Global Foundation
 Together, we strive for the global common good

The Year Ahead Roundtable Report

***Roundtable session with Dr. Henry Wang,
 President, Center for China and
 Globalization, via Zoom, 9 December, 2021***

'China and Globalisation in the 21st Century'

Guest of honour, Dr. Henry Wang, President of the Center for China and Globalization, one of China's leading international think tanks, addressed a significant online audience of Foundation members, in the final online roundtable discussion for the year. The session was conducted according to the Chatham House rule.

Secretary General, Mr Steve Howard, led the discussion, which centred around China's approach to globalisation, in particular a recent publication by Dr Wang's organisation which harnessed a number of prominent global voices in support of a 'consensus rather than conflict' approach to world affairs.

In the exchange, it was agreed that we are currently at a 'global crossroads'; considering an unforeseen rampant pandemic has taken hold of the world and has affected global relations for two years now. It is important that we learn from history and keep close watch of global government trends and geopolitical status, for 'if we don't reach consensus, it will lead to conflict'.

Discussion centred on practical solutions in calming the US-China and China-Australia relationship and how the Foundation might



Dr Henry Wang, President, Center for China and Globalization

continue to facilitate collaborative and cooperative engagement.

It was acknowledged that China started to embrace globalisation upon joining the UN, 70 years ago. WW2 gave birth to many global systems and standards that set up a position of globalisation, including the IMF and the WTO. Whilst this has sustained us, now as the global population booms, we weren't prepared for a worldwide pandemic, which has had an effect similar to war. The lessons we have learned from the past seven decades are of 'peaceful trade arrangements and joint prosperity'.

It was agreed by participants that we must continue to strengthen these systems and trade agreements. China now needs to work together with western countries and 'infrastructure will



be the biggest peacemaker for the next 50 years'. Leading powers across the world are embracing large scale infrastructure spends and this provides a great opportunity to work together to deliver state of the art transport and services across the US, Europe, China and Australia. It appears that with more engagement, we can achieve more progress.

As one participant remarked: 'To change the narrative of the cold war, geopolitical (issues), AUKUS, there is a lot of work to do'.

The importance of a recent meeting between US climate envoy, John Kerry, and China's chief climate negotiator, Xie Zhenhua at COP26 was discussed. This meeting led to an agreement of support on closing the emissions gap. It is particularly relevant due to the long relationship Xie Zhenhua has had with the Foundation.

However, there is concern that Australia might now miss an opportunity to move forward with China, while the US begins to collaborate more effectively. 'I think persistence and dedication is very important', said one speaker. For Australia, the importance of Chinese university students is a vital element to a strong political relationship. The US has already welcomed 200,000 students back to the US, during the pandemic, however Australia needs to start embracing more students again, which in turn, would have a significant impact.

It was apparent that many who helped build strong ties, cultural exchanges and mutually beneficial arrangements between Australia and China, when China opened up to the world, are very disappointed to see the relationship dissolve to its current state.

'How we get this relationship back to a condition where it serves both countries,' is now of great importance. 'We need to seek ways for positive engagement on all levels', were remarked.

Roundtable participants agreed that dialogue and organisations, like think-tanks and the Global Foundation, can lead to greater levels of respect and understanding by engaging dialogue. 'Let's change the narrative, and let's work for the benefits, because after all, Australia and China are the largest trading partners, and our future is in the Asia Pacific, we have to work together.'

The Foundation looks forward to furthering this discussion as part of the *State of the World Roundtable* program on Tuesday 8th February 2022.

