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DO U.S.-CHINA EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES
SERVE AMERICAN INTERESTS?

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The Government and NGO Perspective:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. ALLEN: Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. For those of you that I have not had the honor of meeting, I'm John Allen, president of the Brookings Institution in Washington D.C. On behalf of my colleagues here at Brookings, in particular the John L. Thornton China Center, I'm pleased to welcome you all to this event, which aims to provide a venue for sharing perspectives on the current state of U.S.-China educational exchanges and the future direction of these programs. I'd like to begin by offering my profound thanks to the distinguished guests who will be joining us today. Who represent the best of the diplomatic and higher education establishments. I know how busy you all are, ladies and gentleman, especially given the many challenges facing institutions throughout the country today, and around the world. It means a great deal to us for you to join us for this important event. Thank you sincerely.

This great group of thoughtful leaders, from universities and educational institutions and the policy sector, have deep experience establishing and sustaining educational exchanges. They'll help provide us understanding about how changes in the U.S.-China relations have impacted these programs. We also invite them to offer their thoughts on the benefits of such exchange programs, and provide some concrete suggestions for imagining such programs and exchanges as we go forward in this educational environment. For our part here at Brookings, we've had a long championing for educational collaboration, both in the United States and around the world. For more than 60 years, Brookings has partnered with sister institutions. One in particular, Washington University in St. Louis, which was also founded by Robert S. Brookings, to educate the public and the private sectors. I'm so pleased that this long-standing partnership is reflected today, with the participation and the presence of Washington University's Vice Chancellor Kurt Dirks.

Furthermore, for the past 50 years Brookings has hosted an exchange visitor program with the U.S. Department of State. To that end, I'm also delighted that we're able to be joined this morning by my friend, Richard Stengel, who oversaw many of these people-to-people exchanges as the undersecretary of state for public policy and public affairs. Ambassador Stapleton Roy, Ambassador Julia Bloch Chang and Susan Thornton, three of our distinguished guests, have also worked in a diplomatic sphere to ensure educational exchange. Fifteen years ago, Brookings established the Tsinghua Center

as the first of its kind platform to promote exchanges between a U.S. think tank and a Chinese University.

To that end, I am thrilled that we are joined by higher education leaders who formed similar partnerships in China, including Columbia University President Lee Bollinger, New York University Shanghai Vice Chancellor Jeffrey Lehman and the American Council on Education President Ted Mitchell. Since the revival of people-to-people relations with China a half century ago, these and other bilateral exchanges have sustained the U.S.-China relationship. Forming countless bonds across the Pacific that have endured many ups and downs, and in fact, supported the relationship when other aspects seems so much under strain. Indeed, it has become clear over these years that at the core, U.S.-China relations are not just determined by each national government. They're defined by individuals, by mayors, and school administrators, and teachers, and scientists, artists, athletes and so many more. That have built people-to-people relations between our two great countries.

But we face the reality that China-U.S. relations have grown strained in recent years. Often characterized by confrontation, the people-to-people relations have also been impacted even before the COVID-19 froze travel last year. Some recent incidents in both countries have raised serious concerns. In the United States, racial profiling and rising anti-Asian violence. In China, growing anti-American nationalism. This also occurs against the backdrop of increasing American and global pressure on China's human rights record against the Uyghurs, and Hong Kong democracy, and the increasing frequency and intensity of threats against Taiwan.

By bringing these thoughtful leaders together today, we hope to begin looking ahead. To where exchange programs that promote respect and understanding in both societies can go from here. And in so doing, our discussion will build on the efforts of those that have laid this path for us in the past. The U.S. signed its first Fulbright agreement with any nation, with China in 1947. In the words of Senator Fulbright, whose namesake program has allowed thousands and thousands of students and scholars to study and work abroad over the past 75 years, I quote him now by saying, "We must try to expand the boundaries of human wisdom, empathy and perception. And there is no way of doing that, except through education."

Unfortunately, the Fulbright and Peace Corps programs were cancelled in the past couple of years. I nevertheless hope that Fulbright's powerful words can guide our discussion today, as

well as our collective efforts going forward. In this evolving environment, serious discourse is needed to determine what policy adjustments might advance American interests in the years to come. We at Brookings are pleased to offer a forum to contribute to that discourse today. So now I'd like to turn the program over to the moderator of the first panel, my friend and colleague, Senior Fellow Cheng Li, who is the director of the John L. Thornton China Center here at Brookings. He'll introduce our first panel of distinguished guests. Again ladies and gentlemen, thank you, and thank you to the audience as well. Cheng Li, the floor is yours sir.

MR. LI: Thank you John, for your passionate and insightful opening remarks. The quote by Senator Fulbright not only provides a historical perspective on public diplomacy, but also illustrates the far-reaching impact of educational and cultural ties. When top Chinese and American leaders launched bilateral educational exchanges in Washington D.C. in January, 1979, really 42 years ago,, the explicitly linked Sino-U.S. educational exchanges with broader exploration for world peace and regional stability. Deng Xiaoping told the international media, "It is my belief that extensive contact and cooperation among nations and increased interchanges between people will make the world we live in more safe, more stable and more peaceful. In response, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed, "Our aim is to make the kind of change between to our countries no longer the exception but the norm; no longer a matter for headlines and historians but a routine part of everyday life of both the Chinese and American people."

Over the past four decades, U.S.-China education exchanges have indeed become so commonplace that the people tend to overlook the depths and the breadth of these exchanges and there is transformative impact on the educational system in both countries and beyond.

In 2019, about 370,000 PRC students were enrolled in American schools marking the 10th consecutive year that Chinese students represented the largest proportion of foreign students in the United States accounting for about 34%.

Today, however, the pervasive view in Washington about education exchanges with China is no longer one of hope for positive change through engagement but rather one of fear that these engagements may undermine American supremacy and American security.

Such a fear led the Trump administration to attempt to decouple with China these policy initiatives including sensationalizing China has the whole of society's threat to the United States targeting

Chinese and Chinese-American scientists, claiming that Beijing is weaponizing Chinese students enrolled in U.S. universities and serving in the Peace Corps and Fulbright program in China, as John just mentioned, and the restricting members of the Chinese Community Party and their families, about 300 million people from visiting the United States.

Note, similarly, the bipartisan legislation proposed last week on the Senate floor, the Strategy Competition Act of 2021, is very much in the same spirit. Of course, these U.S. initiatives could be seen as response to controversial conduct and the restrictions made by Chinese side.

Yet, one can really argue that what is at stake is not just the gloomy outlook of four decades of education exchanges coming to an end, but at worse the dark prospect of disastrous confrontation between two superpowers.

The Biden administration is reviewing its China policies. While President Biden's official ban on using phrases like, "China virus," "Chinese virus," or "Kung flu," and his exact order against racial profiling of Asian-Americans are some of the policy moves the new administration's rhetoric on cooperation is short in specifics including on educational collaboration.

For the foreign policy community, think tanks, and educational institutions serious discourse is needed to address the key question: Do U.S.-China educational exchanges serve American interests? We need to have a clear-minded and fact-based variation about the past, present, and the prospect of these exchanges.

Our first panel will look into educational ties their impact from the government and NGO perspective. We are honored to have with us three dignitary figures, all of them have served as senior U.S. government officials, all have had substantial experience in educational engagement, and all have been instrumental in promoting public diplomacy.

Ambassador Staple Roy was born in Nanjing and he grew up in Shanghai. In his various roles from his participation in the secret negotiations get into the establishment of diplomatic relations to his service as ambassador of China from chairing the Advisory Council of the Hopkins Nanjing Center to directing the Kissinger Institute for Chinese-U.S. Studies.

He has always viewed U.S.-China relations as not limited to state-to-state affairs but also include people-to-people ties, a Rhodes scholar and a Time Magazine editor, was the longest serving

undersecretary of state for public policy for work at diplomacy in U.S. history in the Obama administration where he oversaw education exchanges including the Fulbright program.

His 2019 book, "Information Wars: How We Lost the Global Battle Against Disinformation and What We Can Do About It" is based on his experience as undersecretary of state which was a member of the Joe Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team to support the transition efforts related to the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

Not excluding not the least, Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch was born in Shandong and grew up in Shanghai. As ambassador to Nepal, appointed by President George H.W. Bush, Julia was the first U.S. ambassador of Asian descent in American history.

Early in her career, she was a Peace Corps volunteer in Malaysia and went on to hold many leadership posts in the public and private sectors. Julia is the founder and president of the non-profit U.S.-China Education Trust.

Each panelists will offer brief opening remarks which will be followed by a discussion and a Q&A. As we begin our discussion, I invite our viewers to submit questions by email to events@brookings.edu, again, events@brookings.edu and join the conversation on twitter at #USChina.

With that, I would like to first turn to Ambassador Roy. The floor is yours.

AMBASSADOR ROY: Good morning or good evening, depending on where you are. Thank you, Cheng. I was 45 years in the United States Foreign Service. And I am a great fan of education exchanges because it is a premier example of a mutually beneficial program.

I confess I am prejudice of the subject. My parents were educational missionaries of China. They worked in education in China over a period spanning over 40 years. My father was on the staff of the University of Nanjing in Nanjing, China, from the early 1930s until the Communist Revolution, but we stayed on after the communist takeover.

And my brother and I spent a year in China until the Korean War broke out. When the Korean War broke out, my parents sent my brother and me back to the United States but they stayed on. It was a bad decision, the climate had turned far more hostile than the current situation in U.S.-China relations.

My parents were under house arrest for six months, culminating in a public trial, and my

father and mother were expelled from China as imperialists agents. In 1976, as an American Foreign Service Office, I began to again visit the People's Republic of China.

You would think that the entire missionary educational endeavor in China had had no impact. There wasn't a sign anywhere of anyone who had been exposed to the U.S. educational experience.

But in 1978 and 1979, when we established diplomatic relations, all of a sudden it turned out that participants in American educational programs were like 17 years cicadas. They had gone underground and you saw no indication of their presence, and all of a sudden you encountered everywhere you went in China people who wanted to boast about the fact that they had attended American educational institutions.

So it's hard to think of any other type of program that can have that type of deep long-lasting impact on a country when relations have gone from friendship and wartime alliance to hostility and actually physical combat between our forces, and yet the impact of the educational exchanges that we had engaged in with China were a lasting fact.

If you had asked me in 1979. Whether we would have tens of thousands of Western-educated, especially American-educated Chinese officials and people imbedded in leadership positions in the Chinese government, in municipalities, in the educational system, in the legal system, in the cultural life of the country, I would have said that was laughable and yet that's exactly what has happened.

The majority of the Chinese who come to the United States for education are here because of the quality and the prestige of an American academic degree. In 2015, the undergraduates actually for the first time exceeded the number of graduate students who were coming to the United States.

So this idea that all China does is to send students to the United States to study hard sciences and steal our secrets is a wild distortion of the reality. In fact, the undergraduates come in some cases because it's easier to get into American premier education institutions than it is to go through the horrendous higher education exam in China necessary to qualify for the top universities in China.

But in 45 years of dealing with foreigners, as a U.S. government official, I have never

encountered a negative example of foreigners who had gone through a U.S. educational experience, in every case, have made them easier to deal with and they had a better understanding of why we Americans behave the way we do.

That's the background I would start out with. Thanks, Chang.

MR. LI: Thank you so much, Ambassador Roy. I mean your personal story is profoundly, I mean, revealing, inspiring, actually, when you refer to students coming to the U.S. I was one of them and in the early years and I'm, you know, grateful forever. And thank you for that particular historical perspective and with your very keen observation about the impact.

So next speaker, Richard, the floor is yours.

MR. STENGEL: Thank you, Cheng. I want to thank Brookings. It's great to be here, thank my friend, John Allen, and my even older friend, John Thornton. So I'm delighted to be here. Like Ambassador Roy, I am a gigantic stand of educational exchanges and people-to-people diplomacy. I think it's the golden end of American soft power.

You have heard the statistics already. But, I mean, I remember when I was going through my confirmation hearing, it was drummed into me to say that foreign students in America is one of our largest exports. It brings in nearly \$40 billion to our GDP. In fact, the Chinese students alone bring in \$15 billion.

And, of course, the idea of these educational exchanges is not monetary. It's not about dollars and cents, it's about communicating our values; it's about reciprocal altruism; it's things that benefit both sides of the equation. And, again, I have also never seen a negative example of it.

So, of course, the answer to the question that we're here to discuss today is, do U.S.-China benefit America? The short answer is yes. I mean they're in our interests, they comply with our values.

And, by the way, I'm the only non-China expert on this panel. So I'm looking at it, more or less, as a civilian. But if I were looking at it as a policymaker, I guess what I would look at is, you know, some of these questions.

Is it a good thing that one-third of all of the students studying, foreign students studying in America are Chinese? This idea that people come to the U.S. and somehow are viewed with an

understanding of American values and American ideas is a good thing.

But are there some students that come here that are inoculated against that? I don't know. These are all questions that policymakers should look at and address. Someone sent me a copy of Cheng's new book which is about Shanghai, but there is a tremendous amount in it about educational exchanges.

And there is an amazing statistic and it relates to what Ambassador Roy was saying. When China opened up again about sending Chinese kids abroad, in 1978 there were nine Chinese students studying in America. In the last year that we measured it, there was 370,000. It's an extraordinary change.

And the other thing that is also interesting is when we look at these numbers of Chinese students here it's actually, even though it's a third of the students here, it's decreasing as a proportion of where Chinese students are going. More Chinese students are now going to Australia. They're going to other places.

To use Fareed Zakaria's line, "Even though higher ed for us is a big strategic advantage there has been a rise of the rest, people are going all over the world." So, again, if I were a policymaker I'd look at, is there a difference between Chinese students studying here versus French students, or Malaysian students, or students from any other country?

And then I would look at is there any policy changes that we should make? I did check with my old colleagues at ECA at the State Department. And, yes, there is a few, a handful of Chinese students, mostly researchers, that may come with a different purpose than the lion share of Chinese students, most of whom are funded personally, 90% of whom aren't.

But, again, my largest point is this: We have a soft power advantage over China, over everybody, and one of them is our openness. And, yes, there are people that can sometimes abuse our openness. But, at the end of the day, we always have to rely on our values. We have to rely on our openness otherwise we're not American.

So I would restore all of the exchanges with China. I would continue to rely on our openness and I'd have policymakers. As another policymaker once said, trust but verify when it comes to exchange students.

MR. LI: Richard, so well said, you rightly emphasize value, self-power, and also to great extent also regional stability and where peace is, you know, also John Adam said early on.

So, again, thank you so much for sharing insights and certainly that it is not about the economic and financial incentive which is relevant but it's not the centerpiece at all. Thank you so much.

So, Julia, the floor is yours.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: (No response)

MR. LI: We cannot hear you. You unmute, yeah.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Okay.

MR. LI: Yes.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Sorry about that. I said, thank you, Cheng, and thanks to Brookings for organizing this very important discussion. You have a unanimous panel. Of course, I'm a fan of education exchange as well as the other speakers.

The United States has benefitted immeasurably from education exchange by attracting the best and brightest from China and around the world, long the preferred destination of international students.

For decades, the U.S. valued education exchange as a powerful tool, a soft power, as Bruce Stengel said, to create understanding and influence with other nations. Beginning in 1978, when China launched its reform and opening up, education exchange has been a pillar of U.S.-China relations promoting mutual understanding, fostering trust, encouraging research and innovation.

U.S.-China education exchange today, however, as others have mentioned, has become enmeshed in the bitter state of relations between the two countries. China's new geopolitical aggressiveness and America's alarm about the potential of China to out compete it economically and technologically which is now nationally entrenched and bipartisan as shown by the recent introduction of the Strategic Competition Act of 2021 that, Cheng, you mentioned.

All of this has thrown a web of suspicion over Chinese exchange students and scholars, as well as Chinese scientists and entrepreneurs in the U.S. amid charges of academic espionage, IPRs theft, and influence of operations.

A tit-for-tat Chinese response has been to threaten detaining Americans in China if their

scholars with ties to the military are prosecuted. It's no idle threat, as in 2018, China detained two Canadians days after Canada arrested Huawei, CFO, Meng Wanzhou, to comply with a U.S. extradition request.

The two Canadians have now been charged with espionage-related crimes and held without access to consular or legal support. The securitization and criminalization of education exchange has deprived both countries of the most effective tool for lessening tensions when it is needed the most.

It has, moreover, stigmatized Asian-Americans contributing to the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes by nearly 150%, mostly, in Los Angeles and New York in 2020 alone. We need to understand the counter-productiveness of undoing education exchange as a fundamental pillar in U.S.-China relations.

The costs far outweigh benefits by making Chinese students unwelcome in the U.S. We are just shooting ourselves in the foot. Time constraints allow me to make four points as to why we should reset the Trump administration's U.S.-China education exchange policies. I shouldn't we, I should say the Biden administration should do so.

First, the American economy -- you say money is not important, but it is important to some people. The American economy is taking a big hit. The Commerce Department estimates that international students contributed \$44 billion to the U.S. economy in 2018, \$15 billion of which came from Chinese students.

Student visas fell by 61% in the first nine months of 2020, with the biggest drop from China which fell by almost 70%. COVID-19 has kept many Chinese students away, but Chinese students also cited uncertain visa policies and anti-Asian racists as their main concerns.

NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, reported that the continuing decline in international student enrollment since the fall of 2016 has costs the U.S. economy \$11.8 billion and more than 65,000 jobs.

Second, more than money -- I agree with the others, more than money, international students being incalculable academic and cultural benefits to our classrooms, our communities, and our country. International students and scholars create jobs, drive innovation, enrich research, diversify our universities, and become our best ambassadors and allies when they return to their countries or when they travel around the world.

Third, the Biden administration has yet to roll back the Trump administration's restrictions on student visas and academic exchanges including the cancellation of the Peace Corps and Fulbright programs, as mentioned, in China.

Time is not on our side. As international students studying in the U.S. have been declining, Canada has seen a 68% increase in international students this year. In 2020, the United Kingdom for the first time has overtaken the U.S. as the top destination of choice for Chinese student.

Fourth, while allies and competitors alike are piling our incentives to attract international students. The U.S. is squandering our edge and losing our advantage, particularly with Chinese students. We are diminishing our access and influence with Chinese policymakers, thought leaders, and the general public, and weakening the global preeminence of U.S. university systems at the same time.

While warring Chinese actions have pushed Washington to rightly adjust its China policies, let me conclude with a quote from then president of the Association of American Universities, Mary Sue Coleman and Peter McPherson, who is on USAID's advisory council and president of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities.

And let me quote, "We can safeguard ourselves from foreign threats without damaging the very open elements that have made our university-based research enterprise the best in the world." The United States should not be suffering. That's my comments.

There is an interdependence between China and the U.S., and we are bound together in many ways. We will have to find ways to deal with each other and we need the normalization of education exchange.

So thank you very much.

MR. LI: Well, thank you so much, Julia. You covered some of the, you know, very unfortunate events in the United States in, you know, the world, even China-Canada relations and also U.S.-China relations, and also provided really very important recommendations.

Now, thank you, and also thank you all three speakers for your thoughtful remarks. Now I would ask a few questions, as moderator, to begin our conversation, also including questions from the audience.

The first is a general question each of you had already covered, but I just wanted very

concise language with two sentences answers, Now what would you tell the Biden administration as it reviews U.S. policy towards China in the area of education exchanges? What should be the top priority to bring exchanges back to the right track and what missteps should be avoided?

Again, you already talked about these issues but used very strong words. I think a lot of people listened to us including, you know, people in the administration, including media and, etc. So, please, just one or two sentences.

Start with you probably, Ambassador Roy.

AMBASSADOR ROY: What I would say is, don't drive Chinese students into the higher education arms of other countries. That denies us the many benefits we have derived from their presence here and does not control the fact that they will get access to higher education in sensitive areas in other countries.

Let's remember, the Soviet Union stole our nuclear secrets without the benefit of educational exchanges. So our secrets are vulnerable and we need to protect them. But restricting educational exchanges is not the best way to do it.

My final sentence comes from Deng Xiaoping. He said he was criticized for the openness that China was going through in 1986 that was encouraging student unrest in their universities. And he said, and I quote, "There are those who say we should not open our windows because open windows let in flies and other insects."

They want the windows to stay closed so we all expire from lack of air. But we say, open the windows, breathe the fresh air, and at the same time, fight the flies and insects. That would be my advice.

MR. LI: Thank you, loud and clear, although longer than two sentences. Richard.

MR. STENGEL: I am not going to deal with insects and flies at all. (Laughter) A very short answer is we should restore the Peace Corps program. We should restore the Fulbright program. On balance, the benefits way outweigh the costs of our exchange with China, as Julia said.

And the other reason, as Ambassador Roy said, exchange programs are a big strategic advantage for us and the Chinese are spending a lot of money on their own public diplomacy and soft power.

Another statistic -- and I'll leave it at this from Cheng's book, there are now African students studying in China than in the United States. That ain't a good thing.

MR. LI: Thank you so much. When we talk about the competition, that's an area of good competition. And thank you for raising that issue.

Julia.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: I wanted to say what Stape and Bruce said. But in the interest of time, I agree, stop driving Chinese students into the arms of other countries, diminishing our own soft power. But let me add a new element, I think the Biden administration has within its power to begin to reshape the criminalization and the securitization of education exchange.

Do not look at Chinese students as a whole of society threat against the United States. We derive tremendous benefits. One of which is to retain -- and Cheng this is from your book, 90% of the Ph.D. students who study STEM, they join our laboratories rather than going home. Now they can't stay, they're going home. And guess what, China is welcoming them with open arms and we are losing a tremendous brain power and asset.

MR. LI: Thank you so much. And now I will also combine some audience questions. There is a lot of good questions. I will combine them together in my -- you know, I wanted to just sort of address because time concern that restraint that I will ask each of you one question. And, please, make sure your answer is about two minutes or less.

Now, Ambassador Roy, you mentioned Soviet Union and you are not only an expert on the history of U.S.-China engagement but also of the history of U.S. and Russia relations. The difference between the U.S. ties with China and Russia is that there are a few more, you know, far more students from China studying in the U.S., and many of those Chinese students have returned to China and are playing a very important role in all walks of life.

You know, some have even rising to become high-level leaders in the Chinese government, like, Yu Hu, you know, a graduate of Harvard Kennedy School. Now is it shortsighted for U.S. to overlook this difference between U.S. relation with China and Russia, short answer, less than two minutes?

AMBASSADOR ROY: Yes, very shortsighted. There is an enormous difference in terms

of the role that the United States has played in education in China and the almost non-existent role that we have played in education in Russia; this has consequences.

One of the advantages of educational exchanges is it provides people who understand how other societies think. One of our major errors post-World War II was in failing adequately to anticipate the Russian reaction to NATO expansion. And the reason for that was some of our top officials who had so-called Soviet Russian credentials misread the Russian reaction.

But George Cannon and my generation of Soviet specialists all anticipated that Russia would react the way it did in Georgia first and in Ukraine secondly because we had lived in the Soviet Union and had a better appreciation of how Russian's looked at the question, not the way that we had academically studied Russia as an academic subject which didn't necessarily give insight into how Russians themselves thought about the question.

This is an enormous advantage that we gained from education exchanges and Chinese now have a much better understanding of how Americans think about issues than we have about how Chinese think. And that's a strategic negative on our side which educational exchanges can help to address.

MR. LI: Thank you so much, ambassador. This is really a very, very important message.

And, now, Richard, first of all, thank you for mentioning my book. Your latest outstanding book, "Information Wars," extensively discusses Russian disinformation campaigns, U.S. intelligence report released in mid-March, months ago, concluded that it was Russia not China that interfere in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

And to some extent, to echo what you, your book, of course, not to compare these countries but to largely focus on Russian disinformation. Now that finding differ from some remarks made by senior officials in the Trump administration during the campaign that level accusations against China.

Some critics consider these false accusation to be disinformation that has contributed to the increasingly negative views among the American public regarding China, rightly or wrongly, and reenforce the hawkish approach toward China in Washington.

How can, you know, we help, and especially from your experts view, help confront this kind of disinformation at home, as well as abroad? Richard.

MR. STENGEL: Yes, thank you, Cheng, and thanks for mentioning my book. By the way, John Allen is a character in my book. And the portrait of him is maybe overly flattering, but you can read those sections on him if you like.

So, yes, I also called Donald Trump in my book, "the disinformationist-in-chief," a person who, in many ways, was the font of disinformation which is the definition of which is false information used to deceived.

In that DNI report that was released by Avril Haines, the new director of National Intelligence, about what happened in the 2020 election says that the Chinese considered interfering in our election but decided that it wasn't worth it and they're much more strategic than the Russians. They realize we're not that good at this and it could backfire.

The Russians, as someone once defined Russian artillery strategy, they fire wildly in all directions. That's what the Russians tried to do. But let's also remember we have to be careful and strategic about it.

I remember when I was in the State Department in 2015, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management announced that more than 22 million personal files had been stolen from their database by Chinese government officials who do that kind of work. So the Chinese have capabilities, they're just much shrewder and more strategic in how they use them.

MR. LI: Very sober analysis. But one thing also you said that really are very important that we, Americans, also openly are critical about some of the issues that our leaders and, etc., so this is also a very important.

Yes, we have some problems. We will try very hard to fix these problems -- and, you know.

Julia, one of the main objectives of the non-profit U.S.-China education trust is to promote American studies program in Chinese year is very much that Ambassador Roy mentioned that there is a lot of, you know, much better understanding from Chinese side that U.S.-China not just because of what educational exchange.

Now these programs in my observation help Chinese students and researchers better understand the American political system, economy, society, and foreign policy including its longstanding

value of rule of law, civil society, media supervision, and transparency, and inclusive self-governance.

Of course, America has a lot of problem, a lot of challenges to overcome but that's the things we wanted to, you know, have a conversation with Chinese. While some of these programs are appreciated by Chinese, the sentiment in China today is dominated by growing cynicism, criticism about United States and anti-American nationalism.

Is this observation too superficial or premature, the Chinese sentiment temporarily, or have Chinese elites become arrogant forgetting American longstanding generosity and goodwill toward China and the Chinese people, or is it more to do with the what's going on in the U.S.?

How would you reconcile this competing contending information?

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Okay, Cheng, you took more than two minutes I think.

(Laughter)

MR. LI: Okay, yeah, please pickup, then we can move to the next panel.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: I will say this: It's neither superficial nor premature. I, personally, and the U.S.-China education trust through our program have seen a rise in Chinese, I would call it self-confidence and pride in their countries achievement over the last 40 years.

And why not? Some of us, even in America, have called it a miracle, the transformation of China's economy perhaps at the expense of the United States. But still it's their achievement. And why is it not superficial because it's visible everywhere?

I mean just look at Shanghai; we're both from there. I went back to China in 1977, for the first time, when China was just opening up and I went with the American Council of Young Political Leaders, I was young then. (Laughter) Anyway, our plane landed, there was hardly an airport, there were hardly any lights, and when the plane stopped they put bricks underneath the wheels, and when we got on the bus it was a decrepit bus.

We went to town and their street lights, there were hardly any, and where there was some lamp posts, there were men playing cards, or whatever, underneath the light. Obviously, they didn't have electricity in the homes, not in all of the homes. And when we woke up the next morning, over Tiananmen Square, you only heard the bells of bicycles, there were no cars.

Look at Shanghai today. I don't like the traffic, but look what they have accomplished

with theirs, you know, elegant and, you know, brilliant skyscrapers, there are highways, there are streets without potholes, like in Washington, D.C., and their airports are state-of-the-art.

And let's not even mention trains. I would love to go from Washington, D.C. to New York post-pandemic in one hour. They have those kinds of smart trains, bullet trains, we do not.

MR. LI: Thank you.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Is that enough for you?

MR. LI: Well --

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: I'm not finished because you were pointing your finger at me.

MR. LI: But, certainly, you can see the multidimensional impact of educational exchanges: economic, social, even political, to a certain extent. Yes, of course, is not moving towards democracy. But there is not real change in Chinese society.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Yes, and --

MR. LI: Very important.

AMBASSADOR BLOCH: Yes, I agree.

MR. LI: And, of course, that the income of climate change, contact collaborative change, civil society, they're all emerged, you know, in China by Chinese, some, well, some educated in the U.S., some not.

Now there is a question just coming in, but probably we will not have time to discuss. But maybe it's good for the next panel -- actually it is good for the next panel -- is from Peggy Blumenthal at the Institute for International Education.

Her question is: Will students and scholars from China still want to come to the United States, or will they prefer Canada, or U.K., or Australia, as also Richard mentioned earlier. So I will leave it to whether the next panel will have time to discuss that question.

Now I know that we could continue this, you know, really stimulating conversation for much longer but we have to end the first panel discussion now. Thank you to our three distinguished panelists from whom we have learned so much in such a short amount of time and for me I have learned a great deal.

Staple, Richard, and Julia, we are so grateful for your ongoing work to advance

people-to-people relations. Now it's time to turn to our second panel featuring perspective from the high education arena which will be moderated by my good friend and colleague, Susan Thornton.

After retiring from her position as acting assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs after almost a 30 years in the diplomatic corps, we are thrilled that she accept our invitation to join the Brookings John L. Thornton China Center as a nonresident senior fellow two years ago.

By the way, she is not related to our namesake Thornton. (Laughter) Susan is one of America's greatest sources of knowledge and insight on U.S.-China relations today. Susan, over to you.

MS. THORNTON: Thanks so much, Cheng, for that very generous introduction. And I have been listening to my former colleagues with great interests and admiration and thanks to all of the former panelists for being with us today. It's such an important topic.

The previous panel spoke to us from the perspective of kind of government policymaking, what are we looking at in terms of potential policy remedies and actions? But the second panel here today is assembled from a number of luminaries from our academic community.

And it's really America's universities that have been on the frontline in trying to deal with all of the tumult in the policymaking surrounding U.S.-China educational exchange over the past few years and those who have the best lens on exactly what are U.S. interests in these U.S.-China educational exchanges.

So I am really pleased today to be able to introduce to you, and have shared comments with us, four distinguished academic representatives.

First, we have Lee Bollinger, who is the president of Columbia University. He is the longest serving Ivy League president since 2002. He is also a member of the law school faculty at Columbia and one of the nation's preeminent First Amendment scholars, which really warms my heart, as I am also a fellow at the Yale Law School in the China Center there. So I really appreciate that perspective. He has got a number of books out, most recently, "National Security: Leaks and Freedom of the Press" which is probably timely for our discussion today.

We also have with us, Kurt Dirks, who is the vice chancellor for international affairs and a director of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy at Washington University in St. Louis. The McDonnell International Scholars Academy is an academy that brings together a number of different

foreign students in academic disciplines and from a diverse set of countries to develop leadership abilities and connections with each other.

We also have Jeffrey Lehman with us. He is the vice chancellor, as John Allen mentioned, of the NYU Shanghai, which is the first Sino-American joint university. He is also a chair of the Board of Governors of the AmCham in Shanghai. And he is also a former president of Cornell University, but he has been living in China for the last 13 years. So he'll be bringing his on-the-ground experience in addition to all of his other previous experiences.

And then we also have with us, Ted Mitchell, who is the president of the American Council on Education, and Ted has a very rich background in academics. And he is currently working in a NGO sector, but he is also formerly the CEO of the New School's Venture Fund, which was a national investor in U.S. innovation. He has also served in leadership roles at UCLA and was the president of Occidental College.

So we're going to hear from each of our panelists, their perspectives on what our U.S. interests in U.S.-China educational exchange. Why are these exchanges important? What does the future look like and what have they been grappling with in trying to deal with the policy changes there?

So why don't I start, please, with you, President Bollinger, for your thoughts on the subject?

MR. BOLLINGER: So thanks very much for having me. I mean I think I should say, at the outset, that I have a very limited perspective on all of this, that is, over the past several years there has been a claim that the Chinese government was using exchange programs faculty and students coming from China to U.S. universities to steal ideas and to steal secrets, and so on.

And I cannot speak, I don't feel capable of speaking to the sort of underlying problem, that is, how serious is it, and the like. What I can say is that American universities have become the greatest system of higher education in the world over the past many decades precisely because we have invited the best people, the most talented people from all over the world including from China.

And we have thousands of students who come and faculty every year to Columbia and this happens all across the United States and we just benefitted enormously as a society and as a world by having these students and faculty come.

So let's assume there is a problem, the fact of the matter is, it has to be put in a context of something that is just of great, great value to the country, great value to our universities. The second thing I'd say is that we really, as a country, lack knowledge about China. We lack knowledge about lots of parts of the world, have a way too provincial sense of international affairs in the United States.

But with China, in particular, it's striking to me how little we know in this country about China. And that's, in part, the fault of American universities because I think we have not built up adequate research programs on China. Of course, we have some great ones, that's not the point; the point is how much and I think it's insufficient.

So the exchange programs we have are enormous benefit on the kind of search for knowledge that we emphasize. But it is also the case that we need to learn more about China and the rest of the world and student/faculty exchanges are a way to do that.

MS. THORNTON: Great, thank you so much for that. Those are terrific introductory comments. And I think it gets right to the heart of this sort of dilemma that we have kind of been talking about already in the previous panel which is, you know, the fact that our education base is such a huge comparative advantage for the United States.

And a lot of people have talked about this and our ability to attract talent from all over the world, the best and brightest from everywhere is what has made it so. And so we can't take this kind of zero risks attitude toward bringing people into that system if we want to keep the comparative advantages. Thanks very much.

Let me go, please, to you, Vice Chancellor Dirks, for your thoughts on the matter. You're right at the heart of this at Wash U, working with people from all kinds of different countries in leadership programs. I'm sure that you have a really interesting perspective there on this.

MR. DIRKS: Well, thanks, Susan, and thanks to the Brookings Institution for hosting today. It's hard to imagine a more timely topic that we're dealing with. There are a lot of timely topics but this is amongst them.

So at Wash U, we have, like all of the panelists here, a lot of academic commerce, if you will, with China. And I guess the short story is, you know, we think it adds value, not only us, Wash University, but also to the U.S., and frankly to society at large, which I'll talk about in just a minute.

Our engagement with international institutions including China, they really obviously have two sides of the ledger of it, costs and benefits, and a lot of the costs have been mentioned and documented all in the news already.

So when you think about the three big costs or challenges that have been mentioned, one is national security issues; second, they're elated about the loss of intellectual property, particularly the intellectual property funded by U.S. tax dollars, so the NIH; and the third, you hear certainly a lot about immigration, or at least have in the Trump administration and, to some degree, now also.

Those are issues that, as Susan mentioned, issues we have been grappling with. And I think, frankly, we, as at least Wash U, I think most institutions have largely dealt with those, perhaps not completely. They're impossible to completely stamp out, but I think we actually managed those pretty well.

And then you're thinking about, well, let's take a look at that other side of the ledger and there are also three important issues there, most of which have been mentioned and I'll just highlight those.

One is that intellectual capital that we get bringing the best and brightest, as I think Susan mentioned in her opening comments here, to the U.S. is hard to underestimate what, you know, having that brainpower and talent with us that in the U.S. brings to us and what it can do for the economy.

The second asset is just thinking about the research collaboration. So we talked about some of the concerns about IP, intellectual property, but there is a lot. Most of the research that's done, I don't think, faces that challenge.

And so you think about, and in fact is really important to the problems we face in the globe. So I just look at the faculty at Wash U and the type of work they're doing with our colleagues in China, issues around water quality, around air quality, climate change, aging, children's social skills, you know, all of those are really important problems that we face as a society and that experts here in the U.S. and experts in China can deal with better than trying to deal with them alone.

And then the third asset is, it's a longer run and that has been mentioned. And that is this notion of bringing students and faculty together builds relationships and understanding amongst people which is I think when you bring young people together to develop that understanding that is a long run

asset that's going to help us work through conflict to collaborate with interests aligned, all kinds of things.

And so at the McDonnell International Scholars Academy you mentioned what we do is we'll bring students from, not only Beijing, but also Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Tokyo, many other countries, from Korea, as well as South America and Africa. And you really I think then develop that unique understanding.

I don't think you're changing people's values. This is to the questions from the prior panel. That's a harder thing to do, but building understanding relationships is going to pay off I think for us in the long run. So, in any case, so I think that balances the ledger in very clearly ways on the side of these U.S.-China relationships. So I look forward to talking more about that in the discussion.

MS. THORNTON: Yeah, thank you very much. That's really a great laydown of the sort of the challenges that we face and also the, on the other side of the ledger, the advantages and benefits. And I do want to dig into some of those and how universities are balancing those when we get into the discussion.

But let's turn now to Vice Chancellor Jeff Lehman, who not only has been dealing with the struggles that we're having on these exchanges on the U.S. side of the ocean, but also no doubt in China itself and the experiences of this sort of joint venture university which, you know, must be both breathtakingly stimulating and also frustrating.

Jeff, over to you.

MR. LEHMAN: Thank you, Susan. I think your audience is sensing strong consensus among all of the panelists from both sides. And I am not going to disagree with what anyone else has said so far. I'll just probably frame very similar points in slightly different ways.

To me, when I do my balance of the ledger, I focus on four benefits from U.S.-China educational exchanges and balance them against this one risk of espionage. And I'll just talk about them very briefly. On the first benefit, what I frame as talent recruitment, I guess others have spoken about the importance of bringing talent into the U.S.

I would just also flag the fact that not only are we bringing talent into the U.S. and exposing them to American values, we are dramatically increasing the likelihood the talent will move to America.

On the last panel, we had Julia and we had Cheng, who are both examples. Between 1980 and 2020, the total number of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. grew from about 350,000 to about 2.5 million, more than half have become U.S. citizens with higher than average educational achievement and employment status.

Second, others have talked about this point about talent development and Lee Bollinger really stressed how uninformed America is about the most important foreign country in the world right now, which is China. We need Americans who know more about China in all its complexity than the rather one-dimensional stories that one can get just from reading the Times.

U.S.-China educational exchanges help American students acquire that knowledge. I don't think we have talked enough about this word "exchange." We have talked about 370,000 Chinese students coming to America. We have not talked about how few Americans come to China and study here. And NYU Shanghai, of course, was designed to do that but the total number is only about 10,000 Americans who come each year. And that, as Lee stressed, is a terrible underdevelopment of American intellectual capital.

The third point is discovery. We really do need innovative responses to global challenges and opportunities. And without question, today's best scientific research whether you're talking about COVID vaccines, or COVID diagnostic tests often, probably usually, engage transnational teams. And these educational exchanges help students learn how to participate effectively as members of transnational teams like that.

The fourth benefit, others in the last panel, especially, talked a lot about soft power. Until very recently, China's most influential citizens invariably had the highest regard for America largely because of our universities, whether they studied at them, or their children did, the truth is that today those very same people are asking what on earth has happened to America, the COVID problems, gun violence, anti-Asian racism, coup d'état, all of these things are have led to this shift towards the U.K.

It's critical that we restore educational exchanges that we reopen our borders so that more Chinese students can actually come and get an on-the-ground experience of America to protect our image as a competent honest nation that aspires to live up to our ideals.

On this point that others have mentioned, this warning from the Justice Department, in

2018, the universities must not be gullible, that China is conducting economic espionage using so-called non-traditional collectors, like, professors and students.

It's been two-and-a-half years now, the prosecutions that have come forward do not to my mind in any way suggest that America should be foregoing the benefits of academic exchange with China. There have been a handful of charges. They have mostly involved professors who eventually failed to properly disclose research affiliations with Chinese universities.

Obviously, those affiliations should always be properly disclosed but they're not. These charges have not suggested that American universities are a significant vector for theft of state secrets.

I would just conclude with just one important point here which is that American universities, the research that we conduct on our campuses, very little of it is proprietary. We publish our research in journals for the whole world to read. And even among the small amount of research that we keep secret, only a tiny fraction involves national security.

So it's really important that we not allow distorted portraits of what goes on in American universities, what students, visiting students do, what visiting researchers do to prevent us from initiating or maintaining these exchange programs that do provide huge benefits to America.

So, in conclusion, I just have absolutely no doubt that the operation of NYU Shanghai over the past eight years and comparable programs at other universities have actually been enormously beneficial to the United States. Thank you.

MS. THORNTON: Thanks so much, Jeff. And thanks for digging into a couple of these areas that have been raised by people as potentially problematic and sort of talking about what are the strategies for dealing with them and how serious are these problems.

I'm so glad you mentioned anti-Asian racism. And I think that, you know, we have to, you know, take a sober look at how this is impacting not just the applications of Chinese students coming to the U.S., but we all know that broader Asian communities have been targeted in this as part of the fallout from the deterioration in U.S.-China relations.

And this is something I think, too, that policymakers have to think about more deeply and be more responsible about, frankly. But you also mentioned -- and thank you for bringing this up -- the distinction between basic research and applied research which I have found that is, you know, is very

hard.

You know, there is a lot of to unpack there and there is a lot of nuance. But this is one of the most misunderstood distinctions about what's going on at universities. And you also mentioned that a lot of the prosecutions are about failure to disclose not about the various problems that were raised earlier by Vice Chancellor Dirks. So, you know, espionage, and theft, and these kinds of things, they're about much more mundane matters, in fact.

One other thing we haven't talked about that does come up a lot is academic freedom. So I would like in the question and answer period, if we don't get to it before then, to talk about that. Because that's come up in the context of Confucius Institutes, etc.

But, first, let's go to President Mitchell. You know, you have come at this from sort of a different perspective than running a university. And I know that you have been working on the overall issue of U.S.-China education exchanges and dealing with government policies in this area. So we look forward to hearing from you your perspective on it.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, thank you, Susan. And thanks to Brookings for setting this up. It's a terrific set of panels. And, you know, I will agree with everyone who has come before me in articulating the importance of U.S.-China educational exchanges.

I think that those exchanges are probably more important now than they have ever been. And I want to talk about the two domains that we have talked about so far: one, research; and the other student enrollment and student exchanges. And I think we have gotten to a very good point in talking about the research issues.

There is certainly a wide difference between basic research and applied research. The differences across disciplines are extraordinary. But the fundamental part -- and maybe I can tie in the academic freedom part, Susan, is that the growth of intellectual activity is not limited by national boundaries.

It's not limited by political ideology. It really is worldwide and there is global. It's inevitable and it's desirable. And so as we think about research engagement between the U.S. and China, the trick isn't to ask the binary question of whether it's good or not, or whether there are some dangers or not.

The question is: how can we best encourage free intellectual activity, exchange of ideas, international collaboration? Vice Chancellor Dirks, I thought that your point about water quality, for example, is a really good one. The COVID virus itself is another extraordinary example of how international research collaboration is not just desirable but it's essential.

And so what are the stipulations? What are the guardrails? What are the ways we can strategize about that that protect against the downside and maximize the upside? And we have been working at ACE with institutions and with security agencies to develop guardrails around research collaborations, around joint institutes, around joint research degrees that seek to limit the potential for espionage, which I agree with Jeff, are likely overwrought. But we need to protect intellectual property.

And I think that we are developing with institution's leadership really strong ways of thinking about memoranda of understanding contracts. And you mentioned transparency, transparency is absolutely essential in these relationships. So I think we can get to the point where we are developing strong, positive research relationships with our colleagues in China that will benefit everyone.

Second domain is student engagement. And I think that we certainly understand that America for a very long time was the destination of choice for Chinese students, the very best Chinese students and the very best students from around the world.

I share the concern that's been expressed on both panels that we are losing our edge in that competition and want very much for us all, as institutions, and as a government, to reach back out to those students, to those families, those countries, to once again say that we're not only open for business but we are hospitable, engaged stewards of the very best undergraduate and graduate education that's possible.

You mentioned, a moment ago, the anti-Asian bias on our campuses, anti-Asian violence. Let's be clear. In addition to reopening America for higher education that's in addition to processing visas in a timely way, we need to pay attention to the quality of life on our campus for our international students.

And until we do that, we will be facing a headwind around what it really means to come to an American university. Are we really as open as a society as we claim to be? And I think if we need, at this point, to recommit to the very highest standards not only of education quality but of democratic

inclusion that our students from around the world are looking for.

So in both domains, in research and in student engagement, we have a tremendous record of progress and achievement to build upon but we need to get busy to reestablish those to create guardrails and to move forward to engage the world in ways that we have avoided for the last several years.

MS. THORNTON: Well, thank you very much for those comments. And I think we have really had just a very rich panoply of comments here and hitting on almost all of the essential issues. I would like to, kind of, we have a few minutes left, not too many. But I would like to dig into a couple of issues.

This issue of academic freedom, you know, I suppose that some people might say, with the disproportionate numbers of students from Mainland, China, in our universities, or particularly in some of the universities, or in some classes may be weighting so heavily on the student body might impinge a little bit on academic freedom, or political correctness.

I mean these are issues that are so red hot right now in our society-at-large and on our campuses. But there is also the issue of Confucius Institutes which, you know, policymakers have determined have some potential nefarious impact on curriculum and academic freedom.

I just wonder maybe, President Bollinger, if you wouldn't mind maybe commenting on this, and also maybe President Mitchell, how do you view this issue of academic freedom in the context of so many Chinese students being involved in our higher education in the U.S.?

I mean what is the risk/benefit and what should we be doing about this, if anything?

MR. BOLLINGER: So, I mean, I think any time one talks about academic freedom you have to acknowledge it's very, very complex. So let's unpack it just a bit. I can say, I have never found it a problem that Chinese students come to American universities, at least not Columbia or Michigan, which I also know, (audio skip) the academic freedom on the campus.

Because they come from a more authoritarian or an authoritarian country and so quite the opposite. I mean I find Chinese students incredibly invigorated by the presence of openness on the campus. So that's one.

I think it's really important to recognize the tension that is present in deciding how much

we should do in China and how much we should do with China. So there is obviously a serious denial of academic freedom and human rights happening in China. There is just no doubt about that.

The next question is: What should be our response, as academic institutions in the United States in engaging with China, students, faculty, other partners that we have because of that? It's not irrelevant. But does that mean we should have no engagement with part of China because China is engaging in violations of human rights?

Some people would take that position, I do not. I think of universities as having an incredibly important role to play in discovering truth, educating people, just like I think the New York Times has an incredible important role in helping us understand what's going on day-to-day and they have, or would like to have bureaus all over the world and the bureaus help them achieve their purposes.

So my sense is, you have to be prepared to make complex judgements. Are we, in fact, aiding and abetting being complicit in the denial of academic freedom which is, I think, unacceptable?

Or, on the other hand, are we being so pure about any kind of engagement with the world as it is that we simply cannot effectively do what we are supposed to be doing which to understand the world and to help educate the world?

So that's a tension. I am balanced more towards the engagement than the withdrawal or retreat. The last thing I want to say is that, I have a very strict tool. We will not at Columbia -- and I know other presidents, deans, feel the same way all across the United States, compromise our academic freedom to do things. So, you know, that's a redline for us. So we're not going to change our values in this.

The last thing I say very quickly because I want to make this point, there is this idea, which Jeff has mentioned, and Ted has mentioned, people somehow talk, or have been talking as if Chinese students and faculty in exchange programs come and steal our ideas.

The point is, we are completely open. We don't have state secrets that people come and, you know, practice espionage. We take foreign students; we take domestic students; we take faculty; and we go right up to the boundaries of what we know and we tell the world what we know.

And that means the international students and faculty can take what we have discovered, go back to their countries and do what they can with it. That's the system we have developed and it's

incredibly powerful and good.

We do have intellectual property, you know, that's something that universities have that's a small part of the overall problem and we monitor violations of intellectual property. But on the base admission of universities, we have to be careful not to compromise what we're doing by some kind of misperceived notion that people are coming and stealing our ideas.

MS. THORNTON: Thank you very much. And you remind me of a comment I heard from a policymaker in the former administration who wanted to sharply diminish this kind of educational exchange and raised the specter of people coming and learning things in the United States and then taking them back to strengthen their own countries --

MR. BOLLINGER: That's exactly right.

MS. THORNTON: -- as competitors to the United States. And I think this is the real, you know, tension, I guess, in some of what you refer to. But I think it has been mentioned by numerous people that if we are going to change our open model and our quest for education and truth, then we won't have this wonderful innovation platform that is our university complexes and gives us a comparative advantage and brings in all of the talent.

MR. BOLLINGER: Indeed.

MS. THORNTON: So I think it's pretty fundamental and I am really glad that you have brought it up because I was going to and I now don't have to. But, please, you know, President Mitchell, I'd love to get your thoughts on this also.

And, I mean, with respect to the Confucius Institutes, there is a lot of policy coming out of Congress still on all of this. There is, of course, the FBI's China Initiative which we don't know what the fate of that will be. But, you know, in educational institutions, we say, you know, anything worth doing is worth doing well.

But, in Washington, we say, anything worth doing is worth overdoing. And I'd just like to get a little bit more granularity, if we could, on what's the balance here, and how far have we tipped in the, you know, too far direction?

Can we bring it back, and what are the practical kinds of things that universities need to be doing, and what is the role of Congress, and the government, and the FBI in all of this in looking at

these issue?

MR. MITCHELL: Great, we have got three minutes to do that.

MS. THORNTON: Yes. (Laughter)

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Susan. So I want to start where Lee was, which is that there is and needs to be a bright line around academic freedom; that it really is why American higher education is different. It is why our research productivity is so extraordinary. It's why we are an engine of innovation across the world and so we cannot compromise that.

I think that in its search for guardrails -- I have called them earlier. In our search for guardrails there is an attempt, I think, and it's a Washington dilemma. I know that I certainly felt it when I was undersecretary in the Education Department to overregulate to solve problems with sledge hammers rather than scalpels.

And I worry that we're there in our deliberations about China policy. And I hope that as the discussions go forward, I know that even today there are discussions in the Senate on several different funding bills, one of which I think is critically important to create hundreds of billions more in research funding for the National Science Foundation. And that effort really does seek to invigorate science in domestic science in the U.S.

But you mentioned Confucius Institutes. I think the Confucius Institutes are a good example of ways in which we can overreach and we can try to over solve problems. Confucius Institutes have played different roles on different campuses. We worked with the security agencies. We worked with Congress to develop guidelines for Confucius Institutes, published those about a year ago.

And as a result of that, institutions have either decided to stop their Confucius Institutes or to rewrite their MOUs to make them sturdier, to make them more transparent, and to really address this issue of how to preserve academic freedom while, at the same time, engaging China in important cross-cultural exchanges.

MS. THORNTON: Tanks so much. I want to go to also Vice Chancellor Dirks, and also Vice Chancellor Lehman, for your thoughts on any of these issues. And also I just want to mention before closing, there was a question that we got in from I think, yeah, the program director at Boston Latin, Thomas Kennelly, talking about high school exchanges.

I don't think a lot of people realize how many high school students from China there are in the United States. I live in New England. There are all of these private schools that are no longer populated at full capacity by American students. And so they brought over a lot of foreign students and Chineses are among, you know, the highest attendance rates at these places and they are wondering what the connection is.

And there is a wonderful show, since I'm in Maine, I'll just advertise it, called, it's a documentary called, "Maineland," with an e-, about Chinese students at a high school in Maine. If you are interested in U.S.-China educational exchange, it's a fascinating portrait on this cultural exchange that happens.

But, Jeff and Kurt, if you wouldn't mind making a couple of quick comments, we have about one minute left. So, Kurt, first to you.

MR. DIRKS: So, in terms of thinking about the future and the role of high school students, to go to an undergraduate program, Chinese students start preparing, you know, many years ahead.

So what I think we have to be concerned about now is those students who are making plans today in the context of a very tense relationship between U.S. and China. And I know hearing from our students, our faculty, this is a big issue.

And so I hope the U.S. government is able to address those challenges. If not, we, as universities, have to make it very clear about how welcoming we are for Chinese students along with all of the issues of bias, and things like that. So I think that will be on our plate to fix, to make sure that we continue these exchanges.

MS. THORNTON: Great, thank you. Jeff, last word?

MR. LEHMAN: Yeah, just a point on academic freedom. It's one of the questions we often get at NYU Shanghai, since we're based in Shanghai. And, you know, we're now finishing our eighth year of teaching. We were promised and, as Lee said, it's a redline for universities like ours.

We have to be able to talk about anything and not worry about political incorrectness, or being silenced. And that promise was made very explicitly by the government and that promise has been fully kept for eight years now going strong.

Everybody understands that we can't operate. We can't be the kind of university that our Chinese students want and our international students want without academic freedom. And so I do think it's absolutely critical for these educational exchanges to be valuable for everyone that that core principle be honored.

MS. THORNTON: Great. No, thank you so much for that. And it's really interesting to follow this, you know, NYU University in Shanghai and to look at this issue of what's able to be taught on that campus is really stunning.

And I really want to thank all of our panelists today. This has been a really thoughtful, illuminating exchange for me, and I hope for all of our audience. We didn't get to all of their questions, unfortunately, but I think we did touch on a lot of different issues that were raised in some of those questions.

So I appreciate very much everyone being with us. I think we will have a lot of work to do still going forward, but this is the quintessential, as the Chinese call it, win-win kind of policy and issue that we can work on. And I hope that we can get everything that we need to do done so that we can continue this really important area of cooperation.

Thank you very much to everyone, to my colleagues at Brookings, Cheng Li, John Allen, and all of the other panelists that were here before, and to our audience, thanks for joining us very much for this important conversation.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

MS. THORNTON: Bye all.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative

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