

## The First International Conference on Chinese Studies

**University of Tehran**  
**Faculty of World Studies**  
**8-9 June, 2019**



Faculty of World Studies



Iranian World Studies Association



Confucius Institute

## US Foreign Policy and US-China Relations in a Changing World Order: the Assessment of American Think Tanks

Alireza Salehi-Nejad\*

### Abstract

From the animosity of the Cold War era, the rapprochement in 1972, normalization of relations in 1979, to rising China and the current trade war, the US-China relationship has emerged and been regarded as an important relationship in global politics, and distinctively significant in the shaping of world order. The United States, a fount of modern think tanks, is home to approximately 30% of the total in the world. These think tanks were gradually embedded into American politics and exercise undoubtedly significant influence in the policymaking process, particularly foreign affairs. Hence, as an emerging global power, China has been the subject of US think tanks debate from different perspectives, such as economy, military, and foreign affairs. This study reviews the post-World War II US-China relations, addresses China's economic and military rise, its territorial claims and provides policy options for balancing cooperation and conflict in each of these matters. Given that the assimilation of perspectives of American think tanks can foster comprehending the perception of the US regarding China's rise and Washington-Beijing relations, this internet-mediated research based on foreign policy analysis with the principal focus on agency at institutional level takes a systematic approach to discuss China policy debates among the US think tanks. The objective is to offer an overall review of the China policy debate in the US over the past two decades, whereas the chief focus is dedicated to the perceptions of China in American think tanks about the concepts of "China collapse", "China threat" and "China responsibilities"; furthermore, providing an assessment of the impact of think tanks on China's most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment, the legislature on permanent normal trade relations (PNTR), and contemporary trade relations between the two countries.

**Keywords:** US-China relations, foreign policy analysis, American think tanks, American foreign policy

---

\* Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran, salehinejad@ut.ac.ir