



## NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

### STRATEGIC TRENDS

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#### CHINA

##### **Kissinger called back into play to forge a new phase in U.S. relations with China**

The diplomatic skills of former U.S. secretary of state, Henry Kissinger—who engineered the groundbreaking visit to China in 1972 by then-president Richard Nixon—have been called back into play to forge a new phase in the diplomatic relations between U.S. and China.

Kissinger, 93, met with China’s president Xi Jinping in Beijing in early December amid uncertainties over Trump’s China policy and just a few hours before the U.S. president-elect risked straining relations with Beijing talking on the phone with the president of Taiwan.

President Xi said that the two countries now face a key moment. “We, on the Chinese side, are watching the situation very closely. Now it is in the transition period and overall, we hope to see the China-U.S. relationship moving ahead in a sustained and stable manner” he told Kissinger in front of reporters.

Calling himself “an old friend of the Chinese people”, Kissinger said that the U.S.-China relationship is important for both countries as well as for the rest of the world. The incoming U.S. administration also expects to push forward sustainable and steady bilateral relations, he said.

On November 17, Trump met with Kissinger in New York to discuss “China, Russia, Iran, the EU and other events and issues around the world”, according to a statement from Trump’s team, and they “had a great meeting”.

“I have tremendous respect for Dr Kissinger and appreciate him sharing his thoughts with me,” the statement quoted Trump as saying.

Before meeting with Xi, Kissinger met with Wang Qishan, China’s top anti-corruption official and told him that he would like to contribute to the healthy development of US-China ties, according to Xinhua News Agency.

The relations between the two countries have been anything but idyllic under the Obama administration and it is to feared that they might further deteriorate if recent statements by Trump’s nominee for Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, about blocking China’s access to artificial islands it has built in the South China Sea are a measure of the new Washington attitude towards China.

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