

Dilemmas and Breakthroughs in China's International Communication in the "America First" 2.0 Era

—Based on Prisoner's Dilemma Model

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Abstract

This paper takes the "America First" 2.0 era as its research context, adopts the analytical framework of the Prisoner's Dilemma, combines case studies with theoretical deduction, reveals the logic of cooperation and confrontation in the international communication game between China and the United States, explores the strategic dilemmas and breakthrough pathways faced by China's international communication, and proposes international communication strategies meeting the needs of global governance. The innovation of this study lies in introducing game theory into international communication research, providing theoretical support for the Chinese narrative, and offering practical reference value for promoting a new international communication order. The research shows that China is faced with threefold dilemmas: the contradiction between cooperation willingness and competition pressure, the differences in discourse systems and cultural identities, and the trust crisis in multilateral cooperation. It is found that the Prisoner's Dilemma model can effectively explain the deep-seated contradictions in the current Sino-US international communication game, and breaking through these dilemmas requires constructing a dialogue framework for Sino-US international communication, building communication platforms for telling Chinese stories well, and actively carrying out multilateral international development cooperation.

Keywords

International Communication, Prisoner's Dilemma, America First

1. Introduction

On January 20, 2025, Donald Trump swore in as the 47th President of the United

States. On his inauguration day, he signed a memorandum entitled America First Trade Policy, aimed at further consolidating U.S. economic security, protecting worker interests, and ensuring trade fairness. To address U.S. trade deficits and unfair trade practices, the memorandum outlined preparations for future trade adjustments with China: if the review process finds China failing to fulfill agreements or engaging in new unfair practices, the U.S. may take further measures, including imposing new tariffs on Chinese exports or other necessary trade actions. This policy shift marked the entry into the “America First” 2.0 era, introducing a new round of uncertainties to Sino-U.S. relations that both pose strategic challenges to China’s development and entail historical opportunities for reconstructing international discourse power. Based on the Prisoner’s Dilemma model in game theory, this paper attempts to deconstruct the logic of cooperation and confrontation in the Sino-U.S. trade game, thereby revealing the deep-seated dilemmas and breakthrough pathways faced by China in the field of international communication.

2. Applicability of the Prisoner’s Dilemma in International Communication

2.1. Core Logic of the Classical Prisoner’s Dilemma

The Prisoner’s Dilemma is a concept in psychology and economics that describes a scenario where two accomplices are isolated for interrogation, facing a choice between “cooperation (silence)” and “defection (confession)”. If both prisoners choose to remain silent, they each receive a light sentence; if one confesses, the confessor is acquitted and released while the other receives a heavy sentence; if both confess, they both receive heavy sentences. Thus, although mutual cooperation yields the optimal solution for both, information isolation and self-interest often trap them in a suboptimal equilibrium of mutual confession. The core logic of the classical Prisoner’s Dilemma therefore lies in the game between individual rational choice and collective interest, whose essence is that rationally self-interested behavior leads to overall welfare loss—embodying the fundamental contradiction between trust deficit and game structure in cooperation dilemmas.

The Prisoner’s Dilemma is widely applied in real-life scenarios, encompassing disciplines such as psychology, economics, politics, and sociology. As scholar Liu Junguo has comprehensively and in-depth explored the use of the concept of Prisoner’s Dilemma Model in international relations and survey methods, etc., to interpret the effective ways to promote Confucianism and Confucian culture to “go global and step into the world”, which is also an attempt to organically combine political science and cultural communication (Liu, 2024). Take the U.S.-Soviet arms race during the Cold War era as an example: both the Soviet Union and the United States faced the choice between disarmament (cooperation) and armament expansion (defection). The analysis results are shown in the following **Table 1**.

Table 1. Analysis of arms race in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union based on the Prisoner’s Dilemma Model.

	Soviet Disarmament (Cooperation)	Soviet Armament Expansion (Defection)
US Disarmament (Cooperation)	Ease Cold War tensions and jointly promote global peace and development.	US: Relatively weakened military strength, facing potential risks from Soviet military growth, and falling into a passive position in international bargaining. Soviet Union: Short-term tilt in military balance in its favor, yet heightened domestic economic burdens.
US military expansion (betray)	US: Gain short-term military dominance, but long-term excessive military expansion triggers domestic economic imbalance and exacerbates Soviet insecurity, prompting its subsequent countermeasures. Soviet Union: Diminished geopolitical influence, falling into a relatively disadvantaged position in international competition.	US: Maintain military parity to avoid absolute Soviet advantage, but massive military spending undermines domestic livelihoods and economic development. Soviet Union: Similarly burdened by high military expenditure, domestic economic development constrained; no absolute military advantage achieved, and US-Soviet relations remain persistently tense.

For both the United States and the Soviet Union, regardless of the other’s choice, armament expansion (defection) appeared to be the preferred option for safeguarding their own interests. This dynamic mirrors the Prisoner’s Dilemma: when actors pursue their individual self-interest maximization, they inadvertently fall into a suboptimal equilibrium of mutual defection (analogous to the prisoners’ simultaneous confessions), making the collectively superior outcome of disarmament (cooperation) difficult to achieve. Only through arduous negotiations, the establishment of mutual trust mechanisms, and a reassessment of the global strategic landscape could the two sides potentially break free from this dilemma, move toward cooperation and disarmament, and ultimately realize peaceful and stable development for both parties and the broader global community.

2.2. The Prisoner’s Dilemma Nature of Game Dynamics in International Communication

In a broad sense, international communication refers to the exchange and flow of human information across national boundaries, that is, the dissemination of information transcending national borders. In a narrow sense, it denotes cross-border information dissemination via mass media, excluding transnational interpersonal communication or interpersonal interaction (Li, 2023). Whether in its broad or narrow sense, international communication positions states as primary agents, playing a pivotal role. As a sub-discipline within the disciplinary framework of communication studies, international communication, from a broader social science perspective, essentially shares a symbiotic duality with international relations in political science. As elaborated earlier, the Prisoner’s Dilemma analytical framework, widely applied in political science, is equally applicable to the games in international communication.

In early 2025, as TikTok faced a ban dilemma in the United States, a large num-

ber of American users self-identified as “TikTok refugees” migrated to Rednote (Wu, 2025). Despite facing language barriers and U.S. official warnings about Chinese digital platforms’ possession of American personal data, they resolutely “crossed the digital divide,” emerging as the most notable phenomenon in the field of cross-cultural and international communication in 2025. The analysis results of the game relationship between China and the United States on the TikTok issue based on the Prisoner’s Dilemma model are shown in the following **Table 2**.

Table 2. Analysis of the impact of TikTok being shut down in the United States based on Prisoner Dilemma Model.

	U.S.: Allow TikTok (Cooperation)	U.S.: Ban TikTok (Defection)
China: Normal operation (cooperate)	U.S.: Retain a multicultural communication platform. China: Foster a virtuous cycle in cross-cultural and international communication.	U.S.: Hinder the diversity and fairness of international communication. China: Diminish its influence in the international communication domain.
China: Retaliatory Measures (Defection) *Assumption	No need for retaliatory measures.	U.S.: Hinder the diversity and fairness of international communication. China: Exacerbate media confrontation, detrimental to the development of international communication.

As the table illustrates, when the United States opts to allow TikTok (cooperation), China and the U.S. can jointly foster a virtuous cycle in international communication, achieving a win-win scenario. However, if the U.S. chooses to ban it (defection) in an attempt to unilaterally suppress China’s communicative influence, it will impede the diversity and fairness of international communication. China has consistently upheld the fairness of international communication and has refrained from taking retaliatory measures. Nevertheless, based on the Prisoner’s Dilemma model, if China were to take countermeasures to safeguard its interests, both sides would ultimately fall into a state of communicative confrontation, deteriorating the international communication environment. This would not only undermine the diversity of communication but also exacerbate the situation where “each pursuing their own optimal solution results in a worse outcome for all.” This perfectly exemplifies how cognitive limitations akin to those in “isolated interrogations” in the Prisoner’s Dilemma prevent the achievement of the optimal solution for both parties in the game of international communication. Apart from TikTok, there are numerous cases that can be analyzed through the Prisoner’s Dilemma model, such as the game of divergence in content moderation among the three major U.S. social media platforms—Facebook, Google, and Twitter.

3. Analysis of the Characteristics of the “America First” 2.0 Era

3.1. The Implementation Logic of the “America First” Policy

“America First,” as a political ideology, is not a product of the Trump era; its ori-

gins trace back to the early 20th century, representing a derivative of isolationist thought. Since its inception, it has faced widespread scrutiny and criticism due to its pronounced undertones of populism, unilateralism, and nationalism. Scholars contend that upon assuming office, Trump adopted “America First” as the guiding principle for formulating domestic and foreign policies (Chou, 2020). Under this framework, the Trump administration exhibited transformative shifts deviating from the U.S.’s traditional liberal diplomatic norms across domains including trade, alliances, international law, multilateral institutions, and climate change.

During his first term in office, Trump amassed a large base of steadfast supporters, primarily among white blue-collar workers, conservative groups, and voters disillusioned with the traditional political system. His emphasis on “America First,” advocacy for immigration restrictions, and promotion of trade protectionist policies resonated with voters’ demands for economic interests and native cultural preservation (Zhang, 2017). Since assuming his second term in January 2025, the Trump administration has been exceptionally active, particularly in cracking down on illegal immigration, pushing for federal agency reforms, and signing the America First Trade Policy—measures that highlight the high-profile resurgence and intensification of “America First” policies. Compared to the tentative adjustments of his first term, the policy evolution in the second term marks the onset of the “America First 2.0 Era,” whose essence or implementation logic lies in reordering national interest priorities.

Based on the implementation logic of “America First”—which entails the reordering of national interest priorities—Trump prioritized domestic issues (employment, immigration, economy) over international responsibilities during his first term. Through unilateral actions such as tightening immigration controls, imposing tariffs, and withdrawing from international organizations, he sought to safeguard short-term U.S. interests. Analyzing the policy trends in the early days of his second term, it is evident that this unilateralist approach will continue to deepen. While such practices may alleviate domestic contradictions in the short term, they will erode the international cooperation framework and weaken alliances in the long run, ultimately diminishing America’s global influence.

3.2. Staged Characteristics of “America First” 2.0

“America First 2.0” refers to a series of policies implemented after Donald Trump’s re-election, which are designed to strengthen the national interests of the United States, focusing on issues such as cracking down on illegal immigration, combating high inflation, revitalizing the automobile manufacturing industry, and exploiting oil (Min, 2024). The essence or implementation logic of the “America First” policy lies in the prioritization of national interests. Generally speaking, the legitimate interests of a state typically encompass four dimensions: political, economic, security, and cultural interests. Within this interest system, economic interests occupy a core position due to their fundamental supporting role in national development. Scholarly analyses of the causes of the China-U.S. trade war have

yielded substantial research findings, with the trade deficit factor being widely cited. It should be noted, however, that as the world's two largest economies, the root causes of Sino-U.S. trade frictions clearly extend beyond the scope of mere trade imbalances and should be examined from the perspective of reforms in the global economic governance system.

From a historical evolutionary perspective, the First Industrial Revolution, which originated in the mid-18th century, propelled mechanized production, vastly improved transportation accessibility, and facilitated the formation of the Western colonial governance system. During the same period, China was in the mid-late Qing Dynasty, a feudal dynasty. Despite the superficial prosperity of the Kangxi-Qianlong era, it was apparently powerful but actually weak. The East Asian governance model centered on the tributary system fundamentally conflicted with the global colonial system, leading China to miss the opportunities of the Industrial Revolution. By the Second Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th century, China was in the late Qing Dynasty, with feudal rule further declining and national crises intensifying. During the Third Industrial Revolution in the mid-20th century, the newly founded People's Republic of China, a nation rebuilding from ruins, was historically constrained from promptly integrating into the global scientific and technological revolution. For hundreds of years before the 21st century, China lagged behind Western countries and endured hardships, deeply internalizing the lesson that backwardness leads to subjugation.

Currently, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterized by intelligence, is reshaping the global competitive landscape. China has proposed development plans such as the Belt and Road Initiative and Made in China 2025, which align with national strategic needs, gradually narrowing the gap with developed nations. Notably, the key development areas of these initiatives—information and communication technology, aerospace, robotics, pharmaceuticals, machinery, etc.—highly overlap with the first-round tariff lists imposed by the U.S. in the 2018 China-U.S. trade war. This perspective suggests that the U.S. strategic containment of China's high-tech industries and unilateral trade protectionism based on the "America First" principle constitute the root causes of the trade war.

Notably, in U.S. international political economy competition, there has long existed the so-called "60% Rule"—when another country's total economic output reaches 60% of U.S. GDP and shows a sustained growth trend, the U.S. designates it as a primary strategic competitor and implements containment measures. In 1975, the Soviet Union's GDP reached approximately 66.7% of the U.S. figure, considered the year when the Soviet economy was closest to that of the U.S., while Japan even reached 70% of U.S. GDP in 1995. After the Soviet Union and Japan successively triggered the "60% Rule," they faced political and financial blows, respectively. It is worth emphasizing that even for military allies like Japan, the U.S. did not abandon safeguarding its economic hegemony. In the same year, the Trump administration clearly wrote "America First" into the "2017 National Security Strategy Report", and defined "economic security" as the core national in-

terests and defined China as a “strategic competitor”. The following year, the Sino-US trade war broke out, confirming the priority of economic interests in the national interests of the United States.

In the current international system, since 2010, China’s total GDP has exceeded that of Japan, establishing its G2 status, rising from 40.54% in 2010 to 61.65% (China’s GDP in 2017 divided by the GDP of the United States in 2017) in 2017 (United Nations Global Center for Big Data in Statistics and Data Science, 2025)—formally entering the sensitive range of the U.S. “60% Rule.” In the same year, the Trump administration explicitly inscribed “America First” in the 2017 National Security Strategy Report, defined “economic security” as a core national interest, and designated China as a “strategic competitor.” The following year, the China-U.S. trade war broke out, confirming the prioritization of economic interests in U.S. national strategy.

On January 20, 2025, Trump’s signing of the America First Trade Policy memorandum marked the entry of the “America First” strategy into its 2.0 phase during his second term. This phase will continue to form a systematic policy framework with economic interests at its core, integrating political, security, and cultural interests.

4. On the Realistic Dilemmas Faced by China’s International Communication

Against the backdrop of “America First 2.0,” this paper constructs an analytical framework for the realistic dilemmas of China’s international communication based on the Prisoner’s Dilemma model as follows. The analysis results are shown in the following **Table 3**.

Table 3. China’s international communication dilemmas under America First 2.0: A Prisoner’s Dilemma analysis.

	Promote “America First 2.0” (Defection)	Suspend “America First 2.0” (Cooperation)
China: Strategic Response (Defection)	$(-\infty, -\infty)$ (Contradiction between cooperative willingness and competitive pressure) International communication enters a cycle of confrontation. China is forced to counter U.S. competitive pressure, suppressing bilateral cooperative willingness. Escalating competition undermines the foundation of multilateral cooperation.	$(4, 1)$ (Gaps between discursive systems and cultural identities) China gains short-term discursive space, yet conflicts between Sino-U.S. discursive systems persist. Cultural identity gaps hinder the construction of cooperative consensus.
China: Adaptive Strategy (Cooperation)	$(1, 4)$ (Trust crisis in multilateral cooperation) The U.S. leverages “America First” to squeeze China’s interests, destroying the trust mechanism in multilateral cooperation. China faces dual dilemmas: interest losses and imbalances in the international trust system.	$(5, 5)$ (Contradiction between cooperative willingness and competitive pressure) China and the U.S. demonstrate cooperative willingness. Discursive differences are reconciled within a multilateral framework, reflecting win-win potential under the vision of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.

4.1. The Contradiction between Cooperative Willingness and Competitive Pressure

Based on the aforementioned model, in Trump's second presidential term, if both sides opt for defection—with the U.S. continuing to advance the “America First 2.0” policy and China adopting a strategic response—international communication between the two will plunge into a vicious confrontation cycle. In this scenario, China will be forced to counter U.S. competitive pressure, cooperative willingness on both sides will be suppressed, and intensified competition will further undermine the foundation of multilateral cooperation, ultimately resulting in a mutually devastating outcome.

Conversely, if both sides choose cooperation—where the U.S. suspends the “America First 2.0” policy and China implements adaptive strategies in light of the international situation—China and the U.S. can demonstrate cooperative willingness. By reconciling discursive differences within a multilateral framework, they embody the win-win potential envisioned under the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.

The game equilibrium problem reflected by the Prisoner's Dilemma is further accentuated under the “America First” policy. Taking the Korean War and the Russia-Ukraine Conflict as examples, the two share remarkable commonalities: both ostensibly began with blitzkriegs, aiming to achieve objectives swiftly, yet ultimately devolved into protracted wars of attrition. While their superficial causes involve territorial issues, the underlying driver stems from analogous international contexts—specifically, the U.S. strategic space compression against the former Soviet Union and Russia. For instance, the “Three Island Chains” deployed by the U.S. in the Pacific are inherently designed to contain China's maritime expansion and squeeze its strategic living space.

In international communication, while China seeks cooperation with the U.S., the analogous “America First” policy reinforces the logic of competition, directly giving rise to the contradiction between cooperative willingness and competitive pressure. When this contradiction is projected onto international communication, competitive pressure further intensifies discursive confrontation, trapping bilateral exchanges in an adversarial cycle. Conversely, breaking this impasse with cooperative willingness can create a space for benign interaction, fostering a more inclusive international communication consensus and enabling the vision of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind to take root in a more harmonious communication ecosystem.

4.2. The Gaps between Discursive Systems and Cultural Identities

Based on the aforementioned model, in Trump's second term, if the U.S. suspends the “America First” policy and China chooses a strategic response, the U.S. would gain minimal benefits under this scenario, naturally making it difficult to accept such an outcome. Returning to reality, even if China secures short-term discursive space thereby, the inherent conflicts between Sino-U.S. discursive systems and

gaps in cultural identities will continue to hinder the construction of cooperative consensus. Over time, the hidden risks of contradictory outbreaks still persist.

The root cause lies in the long-standing ideological prejudice against China held by Western media represented by the United States. Take TikTok's "national security review" and even operational ban in the U.S. as an example—this essentially represents an extension of the "China threat theory," intertwined with the cultural discount effect, i.e., Western misinterpretations of Chinese cultural content that continuously exacerbate cognitive barriers. Such prejudice also reflects deeper cultural issues. While the U.S. outwardly demonstrates strong national pride, this is undercut by national inferiority complex. As a nation with a short history and a large immigrant population, the U.S. has absorbed mostly modern civilizations, lacking the profound historical heritage of ancient civilizations—it is a country without a "history." (Zhang, 2021) Furthermore, in the current process of global integration, the expansion of ideological integration often outpaces political and economic integration. Under the collision of three major cultural circles—Chinese culture centered on Confucianism, Christian culture centered on Biblical thought, and Islamic culture centered on Quranic thought—gaps in discursive systems continue to widen, and cultural identity crises intensify. This not only plunges international communication into opposition but also means that even if China and the U.S. gain short-term discursive space, the construction of cooperative consensus remains hindered by discursive system conflicts and cultural identity gaps.

4.3. Trust Crisis in Multilateral Cooperation

Based on the above model, in Trump's second term, if China chooses cooperation with adaptive strategies while the U.S. opts for defection by advancing the "America First" policy, China would gain minimal benefits, compromising its national interests. The U.S. leveraging the "America First" policy to squeeze China's interests disrupts the trust mechanism of multilateral cooperation, plunging China into a dual dilemma of interest losses and imbalances in the international trust system.

From a communicative perspective, the concept of broadly defined international communication is akin to global communication. Global communication emphasizes subject pluralism, striving for "depoliticization" and "de-ideologization" in content, with a relatively generalized audience orientation. It aims to transcend national stances and focus on global common concerns, enabling different communities and ethnic groups worldwide to achieve sharing of meanings and values.

However, constrained by the realities of the international landscape and national geographic boundaries, the governance system proposed for global communication currently remains dominated by multilateral cooperation among sovereign states. Inter-state cooperation relies on multilateral mechanisms framed by international organizations such as the United Nations and the WTO (Tian, 2024). For instance, the "America First" policy reinforces control over third-party

nations through U.S.-dominated international bodies like the G7 and NATO. As major powers with global influence, if China and the U.S. refuse cooperation in international communication, they will fall into a Prisoner's Dilemma-style game, with other nations consequently drawn in, ultimately forcing countries to actively or passively take sides.

In this game process, distrust arises between opposing parties, triggering trust crises not only between the two players but also among third-party nations in their respective camps toward the other camp. The deeper game of "taking sides" is reflected in the struggle for dominance over international organizations. When international organizations devolve into arenas for great power games or tools of major power rivalry, their global public functions become alienated—power politics replaces rule-based governance, and nations must both protect their own interests and cope with great power pressure, eventually forming a vicious cycle of institutional inefficiency. If this contradiction continues to intensify, it will further erode the trust mechanism of multilateral cooperation.

5. Strategic Recommendations for China to Address Dilemmas in International Communication

5.1. Constructing a Dialogue Framework for Sino-U.S. International Communication

The construction of international communication relations is characterized by co-existing cooperation and conflict, and the establishment of strategic cooperative relations is also a process of co-creation of meaning. The complex international relations and order require the establishment of constructible, sustainable, and developable relationships to mitigate conflicts, strengthen cooperation, and promote the reconstruction of international order and the common development of humankind (Chen & Zhang, 2024). On September 23, 2024, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the UN Future Summit in New York and delivered a speech titled *Seizing Our Common Destiny and Creating a Better Future*, noting that "strengthening solidarity and cooperation in the international community is not an optional question but a must-answer question. Countries should uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security concept, resolve disputes through dialogue, defuse differences through consultation, and promote security through cooperation." (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2025)

In the era of "America First 2.0," the U.S. tends to withhold cooperation, placing China in a dilemma in international communication: cooperation leads to disadvantage, while non-cooperation results in deadlock. As the world's two largest economies, the "first button" for Sino-U.S. relations is to explore the right way to get along, with the primary prerequisite being mutual strategic cognition and positioning. Seeking effective governance solutions for global security issues such as climate change and infectious disease prevention constitutes a common task for the international community in the 21st century. The global governance system,

by virtue of its “common interest” attribute, represents one of the few “neutral spaces” in international communication. Therefore, from the perspective of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, a Sino-U.S. international communication dialogue framework should be constructed under the vision of “global governance partnership,” achieving sustainable development of bilateral relations through a dynamic balance of “cooperation in fair competition and competition in sound cooperation.”

5.2. Constructing a Communication Platform for Effectively Telling China's Stories

A civilization that has stood for thousands of years despite vicissitudes owes its endurance fundamentally to the vitality embedded in its cultural genes. Countries within the Chinese cultural sphere centered on Confucianism have maintained social solidarity and harmony in the modernization process precisely by inheriting traditional virtues such as respecting the elderly, loving the young, and valuing family—cultural traits that provide deep-seated value support for social operation (Lan, 2025). The discursive expression of China's stories plays a significant role in shaping China's image: it not only touches people with profound sentiment and convinces them with objective facts but also enables the international community to understand the real China through storytelling.

The core of effectively telling China's stories in international communication lies in constructing a robust communication platform. TikTok has already formed a massive commercial ecosystem in the U.S. Far more than a simple social media platform, it serves as an e-commerce hub injecting strong impetus into U.S. economic development. Creating a communication platform analogous to TikTok in international communication can not only enhance overseas audiences' understanding of Chinese culture and narrow emotional distances between Chinese and foreign peoples but also reduce the cultural discount phenomenon. This will ultimately achieve a two-way communication pattern where “China's stories carry global significance, and global issues incorporate Chinese solutions.”

5.3. Actively Engaging in Multilateral International Development Cooperation

In the field of international development cooperation, whether it is the traditional OECD DAC aid country represented by the United States or the emerging development partners represented by China, its core goals are always consistent, that is, guided by the 2015 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and committed to the common development of all mankind. Among them, the signing of the Busan Declaration in 2011 is a milestone, which clearly points out that the methods and obligations of South-South cooperation should be different from those of North-South cooperation, and proposes to build a new type of cooperative relationship between the main entities of international development cooperation (developed countries and emerging aid countries), which affirms the

actions of international development cooperation among emerging aid countries like China.

Having transitioned from an aid recipient to an aid provider, China has a profound understanding of the challenges and needs faced by recipient countries. In international development cooperation, China can more effectively adopt the perspective of aid recipients, empathize with their practical dilemmas, and promote shared prosperity. International development cooperation has become a vital carrier of international communication. OECD DAC countries and emerging aid providers should establish collaborative mechanisms to complement each other's experiences, convey the concept that "development effectiveness outweighs ideological differences" globally, and form a joint force to advance the SDGs.

6. Conclusion

In the era of "America First 2.0", the essence of Sino-U.S. international communication games represents a contest for dominance in global governance. Through the Prisoner's Dilemma model, it becomes evident that in the "America First 2.0" era, China faces dilemmas in international communication, including the contradiction between cooperative willingness and competitive pressure, gaps between discursive systems and cultural identities, and trust crises in multilateral cooperation. These dilemmas make it easier for both China and the U.S. to fall into a "non-cooperative" deadlock. Although the Prisoner's Dilemma model has limitations, as it is based on the assumption of completely rational actors, while international communication in reality is more of a long-term repeated game process, in terms of the game between China and the United States, the key to breaking this impasse lies in constructing an international communication dialogue framework of "cooperation in fair competition and competition in sound cooperation," establishing a communication platform to effectively tell China's stories and enhance the two-way communication pattern where "China's stories carry global significance, and global issues incorporate Chinese solutions," and actively engaging in multilateral international development cooperation to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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