

## **CREATING LONG-LASTING PEACE**

By Datuk Dr Pamela Yong

The meeting between Jake Sullivan, the U.S. National Security Advisor, and Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister, in Beijing last week was a significant diplomatic event. As an on-going effort to manage and navigate the complex relationship between the United States and China, the meeting between the key officials from the two of the world's largest and most influential powers is a positive step positive progress towards creating long-lasting peace and avoid direct conflicts.

The meeting indeed underscores the critical importance of diplomatic engagement, which is more crucial now than ever. While the Sullivan-Wang discussions may not have resolved all the contentious issues, it offers a hopeful glimpse into the potential for peaceful resolution in the near future. In an era marked by intense competition and discord, the proactive approach of Mr Sullivan and Minister Wang stands out as a beacon of constructive engagement. Their commitment to direct, face-to-face dialogue reaffirms the value of open communication in addressing and resolving disputes. It is through effective dialogue and communication that there would be 'wen ming' 文明, reconciliation and acceptance, mutual respect hence inclusivity and thence peace.

Undoubtedly, the tensions between the United States and China, primarily driven by economic and geopolitical disputes, have created considerable anxiety in the global economy. These strains have also impacted investment flows and trade policies throughout Southeast Asia, highlighting the region's substantial stake in these global dynamics. Southeast Asia is not merely an observer but is deeply involved in this geopolitical struggle.

At this juncture, the world can ill afford another protracted trade war. The era of unilateral hegemony is behind us, and the global community is transitioning to a multipolar world where no single power dominates. Super powers need to acknowledge that a balanced power among great nations could be mutually beneficial and rewarding. It is by no means reflect any country winning over another. For that reason, the international community looks to the United States and China to take on greater leadership role, and work towards achieving lasting peace, contributing to global economic stability, and tackling a myriad of global challenges instead.

Malaysia, in particular, has long advocated for peaceful resolutions. The prolonged trade and diplomatic conflicts could have severe consequences for Malaysia and the broader Southeast Asian region due to their high interdependence and reliance on multilateralism. Therefore, at INSAP, we cannot emphasize enough the need for a robust multilateral economic system and that Southeast Asia countries need to take proactive steps that will strengthen regional economic resilience while also ensuring effective contribution to maintaining the functionality of the multilateral trading system which has been vital to the region over the past century.

In this multipolar age, the rise of multilateralism highlights the shared interests and common destiny of global superpowers. Returning to a hegemonic global balance is no longer feasible. What is needed now is lasting and meaningful peace, built on mutual respect, shared interests, ethics, and common values.

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