Asia Society Policy Institute

The COVID New (Ab)Normal: Israel Navigates a Perilous, Post-COVID U.S.-China Divide

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October 19th, 2020

If indeed the relationship between the United States and China in the years to come will be defined as a new era of great power competition, it creates a range of hard choices for U.S. partners. In the Middle East, the United States has no closer partner than Israel, and it will not be spared these dilemmas.

Even before the onset of COVID-19 and the disputes about its origins and China's management of the early stages of the outbreak, the U.S.-China rivalry, in its ideological, economic, technological, and in time, security dimensions, was taking on a global scale. China's expanding economic relationships, reinforced through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and frequently in regions where U.S. activity is declining, give it significant influence in non-economic matters as well. The tendency of many countries to defer to Chinese leadership in international organizations like the World Health Organization, or even to go so far as to support a resolution at the U.N. Human Rights Council endorsing China's oppression of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province, are evidence of China's ability to gain support for its autocratic model in the global competition of ideas with democratic nations, particularly when the United States chooses not to engage.

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