
HTML Proof - CSIS Trustee Chair September 2025

From CSIS Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics <cbe@csis.org>

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September 2025

This month, the Trustee Chair examined China's domestic economy, exploring the concept of **involution** and how it relates to earlier calls for "industry self-discipline" and attempts to establish price cartels. This builds on an earlier **event on China's economy**, where leading experts considered whether China's current challenges are cyclical or structural, and the risks of a broader economic crisis.

The China Field Notes podcast also debuted a new format this month, releasing **two episodes** featuring Scott Kennedy (interviewed by guest host Ilaria Mazzocco) and CNBC's Evelyn Cheng. Moving forward, new episodes will be published bi-weekly, on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

The Trustee Chair team is pleased to welcome **our new Non-resident Affiliate, Michael Davidson**. He brings extensive knowledge in the engineering implications, institutional conflicts, and global value chains inherent

in deploying low-carbon energy at scale, and he has over fifteen years of experience analyzing China's energy system.

Lastly, we invite you to join us for our **upcoming virtual event**, “Big Deal, Small Deal, or No Deal? Possible Outcomes of a Trump-Xi Summit” on October 6 from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm.

Featured Analysis

U.S.-China Trade Deal | The Capital Cable #121

The Capital Cable, September 26, 2025

Watch Here



Mark Lippert hosts **Scott Kennedy** and **Victor Cha** of CSIS, alongside **Peter Harrell** of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to discuss recent developments in U.S.–China relations and the prospects for future trade negotiations.

Involution and Industry Self-Discipline: Echoes from the Past

Trustee China Hand, September 17, 2025

Listen Here



Scott Kennedy discusses the current conversation around "involution" in China and how it relates to earlier calls for "industry self-discipline" and attempts to establish price cartels.

Byte-Sized Dragon: China's Approach to Tech Supremacy

Cache Me if You Can Podcast, September 17, 2025

[Listen Here](#)



In this first episode of *Cache Me if You Can*, CSIS's **Matt Pearl** sits down with **Scott Kennedy** to explore how Beijing's massive investments in sectors like semiconductors, AI, and electric vehicles are reshaping global competition, what lessons the U.S. can draw from allies, and the pivotal choices Washington faces to stay ahead in the tech race.

Events

Big Deal, Small Deal, or No Deal? Possible Outcomes of a Trump-Xi Summit

October 6, 2025

[Register Here](#)



Scott Kennedy will moderate a discussion with four other CSIS China experts: **Tom Christensen, Henrietta Levin, Bonny Lin, and Ilaria Mazzocco** on critical issues related to U.S.-China relations and the overall trajectory of the bilateral relationship.

China's Economy: How Bad Is It?

September 9, 2025

[Watch Here](#)



Scott Kennedy hosted a virtual roundtable discussion on the state of China's economy featuring a panel of top experts, including **Arthur Kroeber** (Gavekal Dragonomics), **Kiyoyuki Seguchi** (Canon Institute for Global Studies), **Jahangir Aziz** (J.P. Morgan), and **Tianlei Huang** (Peterson Institute of International Economics).

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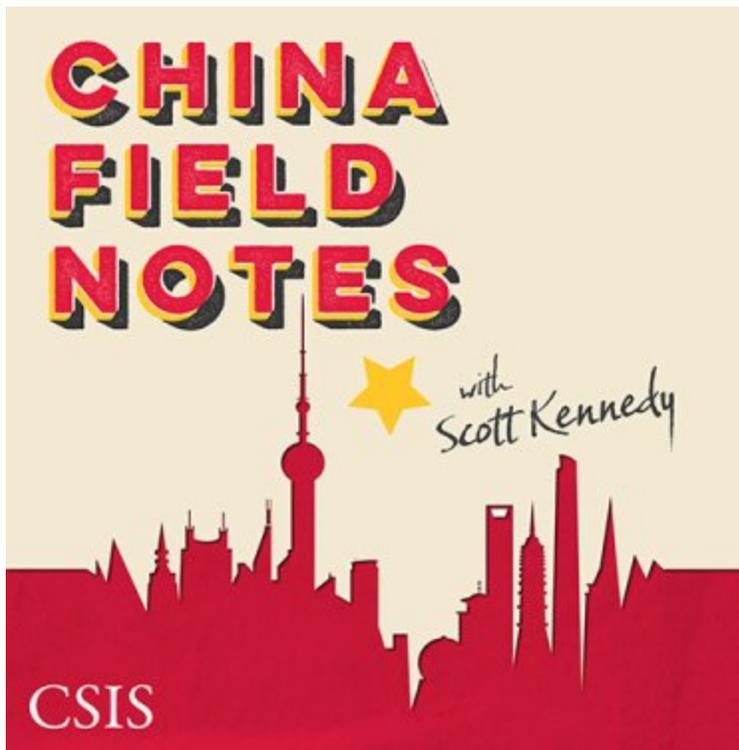
Big Data China bridges the gap between cutting-edge quantitative academic research and the Washington policy community. Interactive features and analysis from Big Data China on topics such as significant shifts in popular sentiment in China regarding the causes of economic inequality, China's post-Reform Era trajectory, and the expansion of Chinese state sector influence over private firms are all available on our microsite [here](#).

Welcome, Michael!



Please join us in welcoming our newest Non-resident Affiliate, Michael Davidson! Michael is an Associate Professor jointly with the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Department and the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California, San Diego, where he leads the Power Transformation Lab. His teaching and research focus on the engineering implications, institutional conflicts, and global value chains inherent in deploying low-carbon energy at scale, and he has over fifteen years of experience analyzing China's energy system. Read his full profile [here](#).

China Field Notes Podcast



[Subscribe](#)

Catch up on the current episodes of our podcast *China Field Notes with Scott Kennedy*. Understanding China has become more difficult than ever, yet also more important than ever. Hardening geopolitics has made travel to China more difficult, but not impossible. In this podcast, Scott Kennedy offers an on-the-ground look at China, featuring insights from those shaping the country and scholars studying it firsthand.

Innovation and Involution: A Conversation with CSIS's Scott Kennedy

September 24, 2025

[Listen Here](#)

On this special episode of *China Field Notes*, guest host **Ilaria Mazzocco** interviews the program's usual host, CSIS Trustee Chair **Scott Kennedy**, about his latest trip to China. Scott shares insights on the split-screen picture of China's booming tech sector, including his visit to BYD, and signs of a slowing economy. The conversation concludes with a discussion of the state of U.S.-China relations and shifting dynamics in Hong Kong.

Reporting on China's Age of Uncertainty: A Conversation with CNBC's Evelyn Cheng

September 9, 2025

[Listen Here](#)

On this episode of China Field Notes, host **Scott Kennedy** speaks with CNBC's **Evelyn Cheng**, who has been reporting on China's economy in Beijing since 2018. She discusses the challenges of being a Western reporter in China, the take-off of China's EV sector and other tech industries, changing consumer behavior, and the implications of worsening U.S.-China relations for businesses, families, and individuals.

In The News

Instant View: Analysts react to call between Trump and Xi over trade, TikTok

Reuters, September 19, 2025

Scott Kennedy, head of the Chinese Business and Economics Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies: "Neither readout identified any element of the negotiations where they concluded a deal. It could be that they still need the companies' sign off on whatever they agreed to, or that there's still negotiations that are yet concluded, or that they don't want to announce anything until they have more progress on everything." [Read here.](#)

Sale of TikTok's US assets may get boost after Trump-Xi call

Reuters, September 19, 2025

Scott Kennedy, head of the Chinese Business and Economics program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said, "the contours of the conversation today and over the last few months better align with China's interests than U.S. interests." [Read here.](#)

The Multinationals On Both Sides of Trump's China Tariffs

The Wire China, September 7, 2025

"Companies will stay as long as they can and adjust as much as they can until they are shown the door. If the China market loses its luster in terms of profits, you're going to see more multinationals look for opportunities elsewhere." -

Scott Kennedy, trustee chair in Chinese business and economics at the Center for Strategic and International Studies [Read here.](#)

How Xi, With Putin's Help, Could Use A Massive Military Parade To Rewrite World War II

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 2, 2025

"China is trying to use the parade to promote its version of history and how that aligns with the type of world it wants to create today where it's a leading power,"

Scott Kennedy, a longtime China expert who is a senior adviser and trustee chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) think tank in Washington, told RFE/RL. [Read here.](#)

Decoding the summit: A conversation with Scott Kennedy

AmCham HK e-Magazine, September/October 2025

In this interview for the *AmCham Hong Kong e-Magazine*, **Scott Kennedy** discusses prospects for a summit between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump and the implications for Taiwan and other global stakeholders. [Read here.](#)

India-China Renewable Energy Trade: Setting a Research and Policy Agenda

UC San Diego School of Global Policy and Strategy, August 28, 2025

Teevrat Garg and **Michael Davidson**, along with Dean **Caroline Freund**, present key findings from their 2025 white paper, "The India-China Clean Energy Trade." **Ilaria Mazzocco** also offers her thoughts on the publication and the state of clean energy trade in China. [Watch here.](#)

Trustee Chair in Chinese Business & Economics

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