



Outlook

HTML Proof - CSIS Trustee Chair October 2025

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

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To Isabella McCallum <IMcCallum@csis.org>

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October 2025

This month, the Trustee Chair explored changing trends in the global energy and automotive industries. This includes a **new report** on strategies for EV adoption and industrial development, and the role of China in these transitions. This was also followed by the Trustee Chair's **first digital report** and **video explainer**, which provide further insight into this data.

Additionally, Deputy Director Ilaria Mazzocco hosted an **event** unpacking the role of U.S.-China relations in America's energy and automotive sectors. This program featured the Trustee Chair's newest Non-resident Senior Associate, Michael Davidson, and Kate Logan of the Asia Society Policy Institute.

Finally, the China Field Notes podcast released two episodes this month. The **first** features Jessica Teets of Middlebury College, and unpacks challenges and benefits of doing fieldwork in China, the complexities of civil society in an authoritarian context, and the unintended consequences of governance reforms

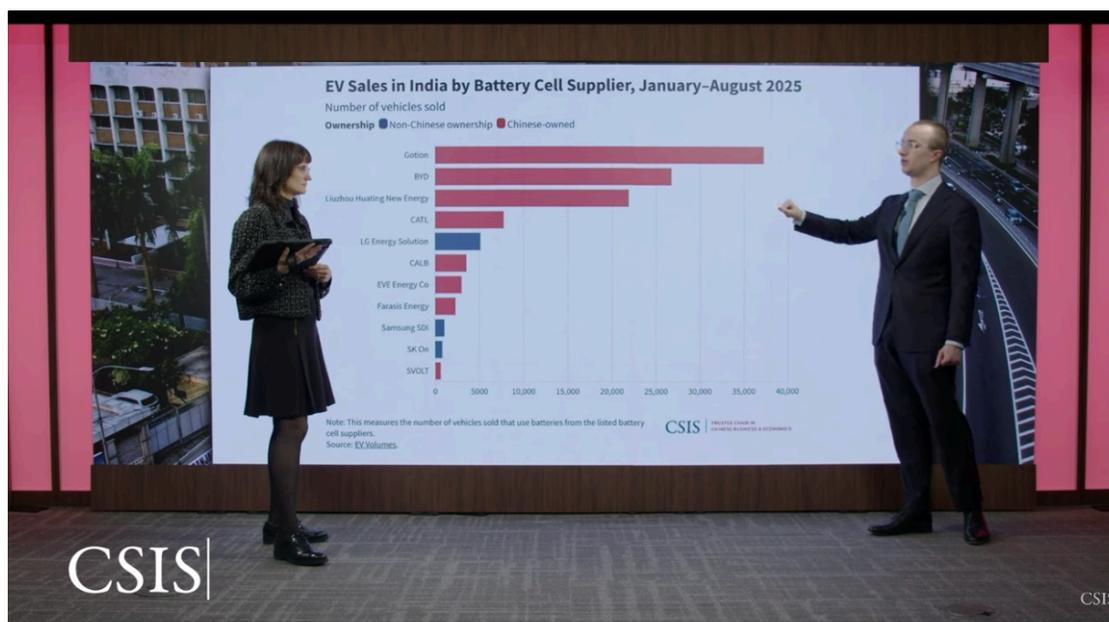
under Xi Jinping. The **second** features Han Shen Lin of The Asia Group, who details his journey from serving in the U.S. Marines to working at Wells Fargo in China and teaching at NYU Shanghai, and reflects on fading hopes of financial openness, waning business optimism among American companies in China, and the case for renewed U.S.-China stability.

Featured Analysis

From Shanghai to São Paulo: How China's EVs Are Conquering New Roads

Video Explainer, October 29, 2025

Watch Here



Ilaria Mazzocco and **Ryan Featherston** break down how Chinese EV makers like BYD are shifting value chains and changing markets in Latin America, Asia, and beyond.

The Global EV Shift: The Role of China and Industrial Policy in Emerging Economies

Report, October 22, 2025

Read Here



Ilaria Mazzocco and **Ryan Featherston** analyze strategies for EV adoption and industrial development in emerging markets to offer lessons for policymakers, exploring how and why China is catalyzing the transition in many emerging markets in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

The Electric Vehicle Playbook for Emerging Markets: A Guide to Navigating the EV Landscape

Digital Report, October 22, 2025

[Read Here](#)



Ilaria Mazzocco and **Ryan Featherston** publish the Trustee Chair's first interactive digital report, allowing viewers to interactively explore how emerging markets are navigating the EV transition and the role of China in the global auto industry.

Episode 38: Scott Kennedy

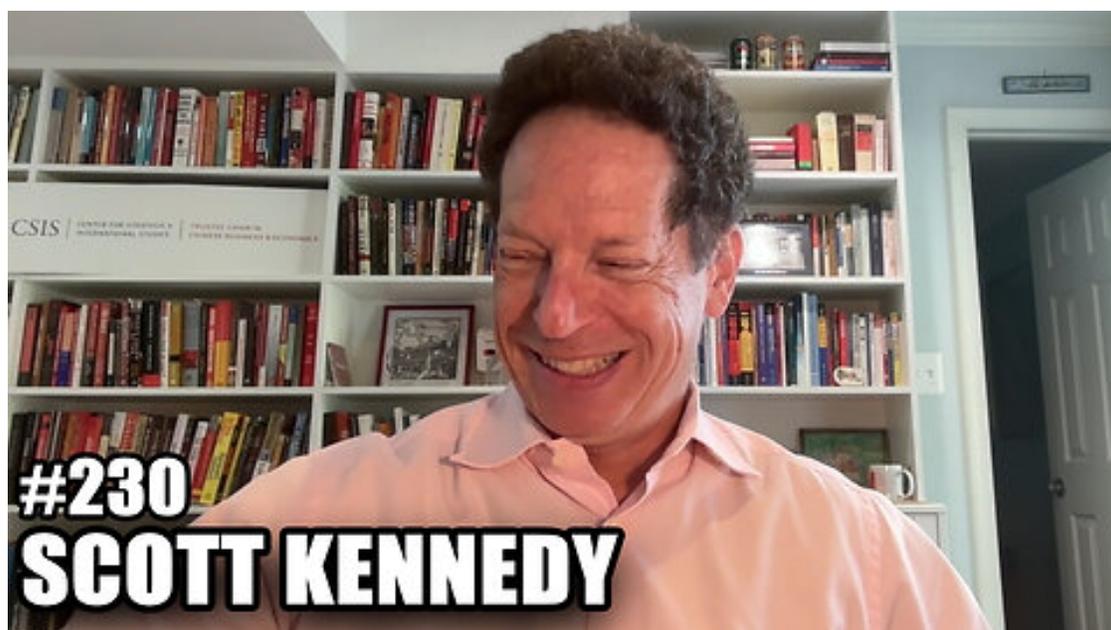
Clearer Than Truth Podcast, October 17, 2025

[Listen Here](#)

Scott Kennedy joined the podcast Clearer than Truth to talk about the direction of China's economy; how its approach to trade, international policy, and critical minerals is shaping the global system; and what to expect from the upcoming 15th Five-Year Plan. Also discussed is how Beijing's thinking might influence the next phase of international economic governance.

U.S.-China Tensions: Trade, Power, and Global Futures with Scott Kennedy

Growing Pains with Nicholas Flores Podcast, October 13, 2025

[Listen Here](#)

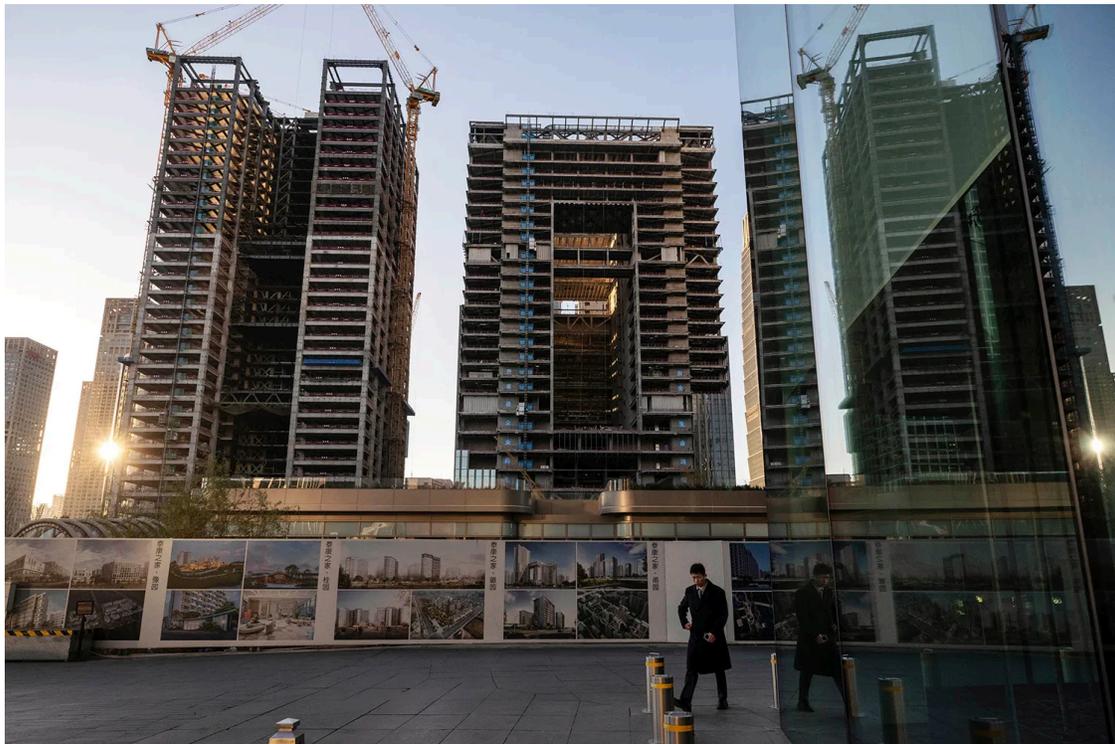
In Episode 230 of Growing Pains with **Nicholas Flores**, **Scott Kennedy**, Senior Adviser and Trustee Chair in Chinese Business and Economics at the

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), breaks down U.S.-China relations as a "cautious ceasefire" amid deep economic ties and mutual distrust. He contrasts China's vision under Xi Jinping with U.S. internal debates, the rise of China's technology sector, Hong Kong, and global futures.

China's Tech Obsession Is Weighing Down Its Economy

Foreign Policy, October 10, 2025

[Read Here](#)



Scott Kennedy and **Scott Rozelle** suggest that China should seek reforms to address structural weaknesses in its economy that could make its growth trajectory less threatening to other countries' tech sectors. These reforms include industrial policy that will better allow China's high-tech advancement to translate into macroeconomic growth, and improved institutions for China's rural population in social safety, education, and mobility.

Experts React: U.S.-China Relations Heading into a Likely Summit

Commentary, October 6, 2025

[Read Here](#)



This collection of brief comments by several CSIS China experts, including **Thomas J. Christensen**, **Jeannette Chu**, **Brian Hart**, **Scott Kennedy**, **Henrietta Levin**, and **Iliara Mazzocco**, reflects substantial anxieties about the state of U.S.-China relations and the potential downsides to possible agreements reached during a potential Trump-Xi meeting on the sidelines of APEC.

Assessing China's New Climate Commitments

Critical Questions, October 2, 2025

[Read Here](#)



Iliara Mazzocco and **Deborah Seligsohn** unpack China's newly announced 2035 climate goals, including emission cuts and renewable energy expansion, and implications for the United States and the rest of the world.

Events

U.S.-China Relations and the Future of America's Energy and Automotive Sectors

October 24, 2025

[Watch Here](#)

Trustee Chair Deputy Director and Senior Fellow **Ilaria Mazzocco** moderated a conversation with the Trustee Chair's newest Non-resident Senior Associate, **Michael Davidson**, and **Kate Logan** of the Asia Society Policy Institute. They discussed what stabilization in the U.S.-China relationship, or even a deal, might mean for the U.S. battery, automotive, solar, and other energy industries, as well as how renewed frictions, and escalating export controls on technologies including batteries, could affect global energy technology deployment and energy policy.

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

October 6, 2025

[Watch Here](#)

Scott Kennedy moderated 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.

Big Data China

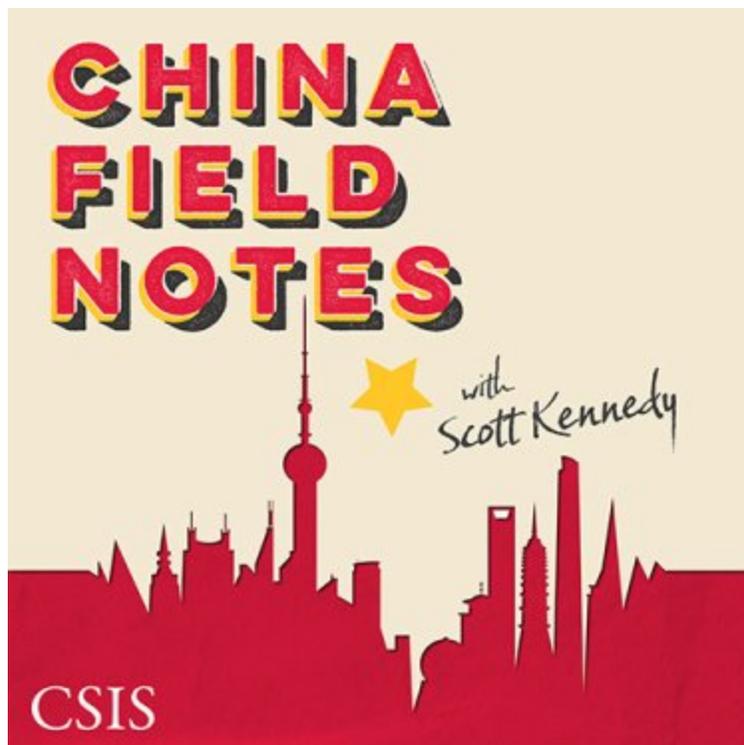
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Big Data China bridges the gap between cutting-edge quantitative academic

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](#).

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.

Crossing Worlds: Han Shen Lin on Leadership, Finance, and U.S.-China Relations

October 22, 2025

Listen Here

On this episode of China Field Notes, host **Scott Kennedy** speaks with **Han Shen Lin**, China Managing Director for the Asia Group and Associate Professor of Practice in Finance at NYU Shanghai. Lin details his journey from serving in the U.S. Marines to working at Wells Fargo in China to teaching at NYU Shanghai. He explains why the original hopes of financial openness were not borne out and what this means for China's economy and foreign banks. He also unpacks data from AmCham China's 2025 Business Climate Survey, offering insight into why business optimism among American companies has waned. Finally, Lin and Kennedy discuss the outlook for a potential Trump-Xi meeting, the need for clear guardrails to stabilize U.S.-China relations, and why continued engagement in China remains vital for business competitiveness and mutual understanding.

Field Research and Governance in Xi's China: Reflections from Middlebury's Jessica Teets

October 8, 2025

Listen Here

On this episode of China Field Notes, **Scott Kennedy** talks with **Jessica Teets** of Middlebury College about the challenges and benefits of doing fieldwork in China, and what she and her research partners have learned about the complexities of civil society in an authoritarian context and the unintended consequences of governance reforms under Xi Jinping.

In The News

Trump-Xi Truce Buys Time as Both Seek Leverage in Bigger Fight

Bloomberg, October 30, 2025

"China gave some ground, but the clear dynamic is how Chinese threats have gotten the US to back off a series of proposed restrictions," said **Scott Kennedy**, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "Xi has created more safe space for China's economic system and its efforts to achieve greater global leadership." [Read here.](#)

US and China agree one-year trade truce after Donald Trump-Xi Jinping talks

Financial Times, October 29, 2025

But other China experts said Beijing had gained the upper hand in the negotiations. “Xi stared down Trump and Trump blinked,” said **Scott Kennedy**, a China expert at CSIS, a think-tank. “Xi has mastered managing Trump. Meeting US threats with larger threats... has gotten Washington to back down.” [Read here.](#)

China Expert Who Warned of ‘Messy’ US-China Trade War Sees New Escalation Risk

Bloomberg, October 28, 2025

In the run-up to Trump’s first in-person sit-down in his second term with President Xi Jinping Thursday, **Scott Kennedy** cautions that the emerging truce between the two nations — advertised by Bessent on Sunday — may rest on a shaky foundation. “We may get a few months of stability in the relationship,” Kennedy said. But the apparent deal “doesn’t address the two countries’ fundamental disagreements” about economic fairness and sense of economic security, he said on Bloomberg TV. [Read here.](#)

US-China Trade Truce Leaves Fundamental Issues Unresolved

Bloomberg, October 27, 2025

Scott Kennedy, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, noted Beijing’s industrial policy seemingly wasn’t up for discussion. “They’ve kicked the can to the side and are focusing on very concrete, narrow issues, putting aside broader questions about China’s economic system and economic security,” he added. “It’s highly unlikely they’ll ever address those broader issues head on.” [Read here.](#)

Securing U.S. Clean Energy: Managing Risks in Partnerships with China

Third Way, October 22, 2025

This research paper, by Professor **Michael Davidson** of UC San Diego, a leading China scholar and CSIS senior associate, and Allyson DiLorenzo, Energy Analyst for the California Public Utilities Commission, analyzes the structure of US-China clean energy engagements and proposes a new framework for identifying, measuring, and mitigating risks associated with these types of partnerships.” [Read here.](#)

China Officials Try to Ease Global Concern Over Rare Earth Curbs

Bloomberg, October 18, 2025

“China is trying to define this action as defensive in nature, but in reality, it’s creating additional supply chain vulnerabilities for virtually any country with the manufacturing dependence upon rare earths,” said **Logan Wright**, director of

China markets research at Rhodium Group. "The key decision to weaponize elements of the supply chain is more concerning." [Read here.](#)

Xi Rare Earth Shock Gives Trump Chance to Win Back US Allies

Bloomberg, October 16, 2025

If Washington and Beijing continue weaponizing their economic advantages, they may both end up alienating the world, said **Scott Kennedy**, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. [Read here.](#)

These Chinese Consumers Are Splurging. Little Luxuries Are Big Business.

Barron's, October 14, 2025

As analyst **Logan Wright** of Rhodium Group suggests, the incremental growth in China is shifting inland—away from Beijing and Shanghai—toward cities where households are just now reaching a level of disposable income that can support premium spending. [Read here.](#)

Trump ratchets up US-China trade war, promising new tariffs

Reuters, October 11, 2025

"Things are going to get interesting," said **Scott Kennedy**, a China business and economics expert at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank. "[Washington and Beijing] are hoping that amping up pressure will lead the other to make concessions in advance of APEC, or they are now re-escalating assuming a deal at APEC is impossible and are gaining leverage for the next round of the fight." [Read here.](#)

China's New Weapon in US Trade Talks: Batteries

Bloomberg, October 11, 2025

"I think they've been very explicit about not wanting to give away core technologies," said **Ilaria Mazzocco**, senior fellow focused on the Chinese clean energy industry at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "I think they really are angling to become the leading power in this industry for decades to come." [Read here.](#)

The 'profound' global impact of China's rise as an electrostate

Financial Times, October 10, 2025

Ilaria Mazzocco, an expert on industrial policy with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think-tank, points to long-term geopolitical implications as Chinese cleantech companies are becoming more embedded in markets that US companies are retrenching from. [Read here.](#)

The government isn't releasing economic data. Private firms are stepping in.

The Washington Post, October 9, 2025

"In any case, the strategy is to identify measures that are either inherently difficult to fudge (such as trade data, because one can compare Chinese data against other sources) or are seemingly innocuous enough that authorities have not paid them much attention," **Scott Kennedy** and Qin Mei of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington said in a 2023 analysis. [Read here.](#)

How China's Power Grid Really Works

Shift Key Podcast with Robinson Meyer and Jesse Jenkins, October 8, 2025

On this episode of Shift Key, Rob and Jesse talk to **Michael Davidson**, an expert on Chinese electricity and climate policy and senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, about China's new pledge to cut its emissions by 2035 and what an 'ambitious' 2035 electricity target looks like for China. [Listen here.](#)

Snubbed by China: Trump team presses unlikely buyers to snap up US soybeans

South China Morning Post, October 7, 2025

Scott Kennedy of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank in Washington, on Monday, said during a public event that China "has a real incentive to buy soybeans from around the world. There's no reason why they shouldn't consume American ones". Calling the tariff truce between the US and China a "ceasefire", he added that "it's not particularly good for the US economy to have 55 per cent tariffs on China, so I can see ways to need to reduce the tariff levels again". [Read here.](#)

Beyond the Great Wall with Logan Wright

Global Rewire Podcast, Andersen Institute, October 7, 2025

In this episode of the Global Rewire Podcast, **Logan Wright**, a partner at Rhodium Group, explores the intricate dynamics of the US-China economic relationship, including the structural changes affecting trade negotiations, the impact of China's economic imbalances, and the geopolitical implications of these shifts. [Listen here.](#)

Trustee Chair in Chinese Business & Economics

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