



## Introduction to China Insight Foundation

China has an impact upon all our lives. A working relationship with China is essential if the problems common to humanity are to be addressed and a precondition of that is mutual understanding. It is to improve this understanding that China Insight Foundation has been set up now.

As the first charitable, standalone, non-partisan think tank on China, **CIF (China Insight Foundation)** is dedicated to fostering an understanding of China and Chinese people for the benefit of the UK and British people.

China's resurgence, already the source of anxiety to some, has gone further during the COVID pandemic. In the West, there is a sense of threat. Denigration of China by commentators and leaders reinforces those in China who see the West as an enemy. As a result, West and East become ever more polarised.

Countries with different systems and philosophies must learn how to work together, to keep a just and sustainable peace, and to collaborate over existential challenges, such as climate change, weapons proliferation, disease prevention, food security, technology and governance. By bringing together global expertise in four key fields, **China Insight Foundation** brings reason and evidence, and fresh insight into discussions about China, in the service of policy makers and business leaders, journalists and educators, forging a deeper understanding of China that will shape international relations in the decades ahead.

"A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP." LAO TZU

## The Need

The first step was to commission market analysis, examining existing repositories of information about China today, including think tanks. Leading figures from politics, the private sector, academia and civil society were interviewed. There were many reasons given for the need to create an independent, UK based think tank focused exclusively on China, of which the overarching reasons were:

- Lay people have difficulty in interpreting and utilising much of the academic information;
- Many organisations conduct research, but very few make actionable proposals for decision-makers.
- Of the existing think tanks, all are either tied to academia or have China as just a minor section of their output.
- The lack of knowledge of China throughout the UK is leading to serious misunderstandings;

*“The Global balance of power is tilting from West to East. Making sense of that shift is the greatest strategic challenge of the next quarter century... A ratcheting up of tensions between China and other powers in Asia goes directly against the UK’s core grand-strategic interests – more so, an intensification of great power rivalry between Washington and Beijing.”*

*Prof John Bew, Head of Policy Exchange’s ‘Britain in the World’ project and Adviser at the Number 10 Policy Unit, on UK Strategy in Asia*

The conclusion is that there is an urgent need for a specialist centre for in-depth understanding on China, where essential information on, and practical interpretations of, China’s politics, economy, governance and international relations can be accessed and trusted.

## The solution

The China Insight Foundation will aggregate existing research, commission work to fill gaps, and will stay on top of all current issues in order to provide rapid analysis and advice. The Founders have four, broad overarching aims for CIF:

1. We will be a next generation think tank, initiating projects in areas in which cooperation between China and the UK is not controversial, such as humanitarian intervention, education, biodiversity and the oceanic environment. We will bring together professionals from both countries and create an environment of perpetual learning from each other.
2. CIF will draw upon a network of China specialists and institutions around the world to inform policymakers, decision-takers and opinion-formers on China: How it is governed, how it is developing economically, its health, education and welfare services, its advances in R&D, and its cultural and social transformation.
3. Knowledge aggregator China Insight Foundation will source and appraise information and expertise. The work of academics and organisations will be analysed, abstracted and reproduced in forms usable by politicians, civil servants, journalists, business analysts and companies.
4. In the longer term, CIF will facilitate projects that tackle complex challenges that all countries face, by initiating and incubating approaches that seek to resolve these. For example, we will start by building relationships with specialists in the following fields: Humanitarian Intervention, Education, Biodiversity and the Oceanic environment. In support of this, we have initiated a small group focussed specifically on secondary education in the UK, to create the scholarly environment for the introduction of an A level in either Mandarin or Chinese Civilisation.

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## Join Us

We live in a rapidly changing world. China is fast becoming the world's largest single economy. This leads to new opportunities, but also shifting strategic priorities.

Strong strategic partnerships – based on trust, mutual respect and understanding of cultural differences – must become our highest priority. For many individuals and organisations, the differences in policies, habits and culture between the West and China can be extremely difficult to bridge without expert advice. China Insight Foundation can provide that expertise will become an essential resource for anyone with an interest in understanding China. But don't take our word for it:

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*The best way to deal with a new challenger is to understand the nature of the challenge, and work out a comprehensive, long term strategy.*" Kishore Mahbubani, recent Singapore Ambassador to the UN and author of *Has China Won?* (2020)

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*We've got one planet two systems now, we're going to have to find forms of coexistence that allow us to address global issues, such as climate change, pandemic disease, antimicrobial resistance. We must find ways of having that conversation, the problems won't go away."*

Sir Alex Younger, recent Head of the Secret Intelligence

We are entirely self-funded. To grow our expertise and our reach, including our planned events programme, we invite visionary philanthropists and organisations to join us as founding financial supporters, to enable us to develop to the point where we become financially self-sufficient. We anticipate that this will take five years to come to fruition.

All donors will receive regular progress reports, invitations to special events, and will be acknowledged and thanked as founding contributors. Please contact Sarah Slavin at [slavin@china-insight.org.uk](mailto:slavin@china-insight.org.uk) for more information.

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