WHY DO I THINK THAT CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENTS ARE VITAL, DESPITE POLITICAL DIFFERENCES?

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Areas of Teaching & Research
➢ Knowledge management in organizations
➢ Social networks
➢ Technology use in organizations
➢ Intercultural communication and collaboration
What you heard from the news is concerning, but what you heard may be an incomplete story

- Both Chinese news and Western news are biased, but Western news can be more deceiving because when you listen to them, you are less likely to have your guards on.

The truth may lie somewhere in between
When I voted yes to the joint program

Please do not assume that I care more about making money for Cornell and/or for myself than freedom of speech
I may be ......

- as frustrated as you are AND
- as eager to see changes to happen as you are

but......please allow me to achieve the same goal through a different means from yours

because .......
REASON# 1: My personal experiences showed me that democracy is a culture that one can only know how it works through experiential learning
I was admitted into PKU in 1990, one year after the 89 Movement. As a first-year student of the MOST liberal university in China, we had to receive one-year mandatory military training. It was a worthwhile price to pay for attending PKU!!

After living in the U.S. for 25 years, I found that we were incredibly naïve back then in thinking that democracy could be achieved through political movements.
In the case of higher education, I think that classes and training programs are the best means to teach people from different cultural backgrounds how democracy operates.

- They need opportunities to observe democracy in action through in-class discussions and activities.

- Classes and programs are also vital for broaden the influence because focusing on professor-to-professor collaborations only is essentially preaching to the choir.
REASON #2: I found it hard to understand why isolation or taking a stance can make a difference/an impact
Has taking a stance ever worked for you in changing someone?

➤ Can you think of an example of how you have successfully changed your spouse/partner, your children, your colleagues, or your students because you have taken a stance?

➤ Ever since my son became a teenager, I failed almost every single time to change my son simply because I had taken a stance, even when he knew all the time that he is 100% financially dependent on his parents.

➤ Then here comes my question: When China and Chinese universities are 100% financially independent from the U.S. and Cornell, why would they want to change because the U.S. and Cornell have taken a stance?
What really worked for me is to present an alternative,


➤ and then let my son decide whether indeed it is a better alternative and see if he wants to change himself.

I seriously question the assumption that a lasting change can happen because of external forces.

This is the case with any individual person, and even more so when we are talking about our relationships with different cultures or countries.
The Metal Rules:
Three Reciprocity Heuristics

The Golden Rule  
*Do* unto others as you’d have them *do* unto you

The Silver Rule  
*Don’t* do unto others what you’d have them *not do* unto you.

The Platinum Rule  
*Do* unto others as they’d have you *do* to unto them

https://triangulations.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/platinum-is-better-than-gold/
Can China take a different route from the West?

Understanding the rise of China | Martin Jacques

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imhUmLtlZpw

[Book check] Zhang Weiwei - The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational State, summarized by Carlos Martinez

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imhUmLtlZpw
REASON #3: For Chinese-Americans, the US-China relationship is personal
I understand that not everyone has the same level of emotional connection and/or motivation to face the messiness of the situation....

Yes, China needs more freedom of speech.

Yes, the U.S. has systematic racism.

But I am not giving up on either because

➢ they both have qualities that I truly admire
➢ And I have inseparable roots at both places

The two countries are like my two beloved parents. It pains me to see them going through so many fights or even a divorce.
I believe that people-to-people connections can be built above politics
Attending a puja at the largest monastery of Tibetan Buddhism in the world, Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy, which is located in Sichuan Province, China in 2015.

Founder of Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy, who welcomed Han Chinese to the Tibetan Buddhist Academy he founded, and who advocated strongly the importance of building connections across ethnic lines.

A Tibetan nun and I in January 2020
Khenpo Sodargye, who played a key role bringing Tibetans and Han Chinese together.

My Master and I in 2017: This is one of my happiest moments in life. I grew up an atheist Han Chinese. Now I am a devoted practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism.
Khenpo Sodargye, the Organizer and President of the Seventh World Youth Buddhist Symposium (2017)

Most attendants were Han Chinese, living in different countries around the world.
My second main master Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro. It was an honor to volunteer alongside his other Han Chinese disciples, during his visit to the U.S. in 2017.
In my mind, a dream university that can make a powerful global impact should be

*a platform where people can explore connections and commonalities beyond their respective upbringings*

*a place where students, faculty, and staff can rise above conflicts caused by differences in race, ethnicity, culture, country of origin, religion, and politics, among others*

*a place to dream and explore solutions that are not bounded by politics nor corporate interests*

In a nutshell, I believe that engagement is a much more powerful way than isolation to create possibilities for change.
The “truth” about What is happening to Uighurs in Xinjiang may lie somewhere in between what is portrayed in the Western and the Chinese media

- China has 55 ethnic minority groups and more than six of them practice Islam. So why did the Chinese government decide to target the Uighurs Muslims?
- Tensions in that region among Han Chinese, Hui Muslims, Tibetans, and Uighurs have lasted for hundreds of years, and have been intensified because of the growth and influx of practitioners of extremist Islam, funded by practitioners of extremist Islam.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkistan_Islamic_Party
• The Uighur’ extremists posted open calls on social media during these riots to kill the Hui Muslims, along with the Han Chinese.


➤ (search the word “2009” and you will see that both Han Chinese and Hui Muslims were the targets of extremist Uighur Muslims)

• There were a series of VERY BLOODY riots killing several hundreds of innocent non-Uighurs across China - from Kunming to Tiananmen Square - since 2009 before the establishment of the current re-education/internment camps.

Check out the book by a French journalist, Maxime Vivas, “The End of Uyghur Fake News” He spent 4 years to write the book after visited Xinjiang twice in 2016 and 2018.