

CHINA CROSSROADS

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China's Auto and Mobility Pathways: How East and West are Solving the Same Problem in Different Ways

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Chair of the Automotive Committee

American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai

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Building on prior talks at China Crossroads — China’s Auto Industry: The Race to a Sustainable Future (2023) and Cars & Chips: Outlook for Mobility Innovation in China (2024) — this session steps back from individual technologies to examine the deeper system logic shaping China’s mobility transition. China and the West share common objectives — decarbonization, safety, affordability, and smarter transportation — but are pursuing them through fundamentally different pathways. China’s approach emphasizes infrastructure-first investment, scale as a learning mechanism, and ecosystem-level integration, while Western models prioritize governance, risk management, and incremental deployment. These differences reflect institutional structures and time horizons rather than gaps in technological capability. As a result, global mobility systems are diverging structurally even as supply chains and standards remain deeply interconnected. Using mobility as a lens, this talk examines what these contrasting pathways reveal about broader industrial systems—and why understanding divergence, rather than assuming convergence or decoupling, is essential to navigating the next phase of China–West engagement.

[Bill Russo](#) is Founder and CEO of Automobility Limited, a strategy and investment advisory firm helping its clients to create the future of mobility. His 40 years of experience includes 15 years as automotive executive with Chrysler, where he was Regional Head for North Asia, and 19 years in China and Asia. He has also worked 12 years in the electronics and information technology industries with IBM and Harman. He currently serves as Chair of the Automotive Committee at the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai.

[China Crossroads](#) hosts talks on all topics related to China, including business, foreign policy, and other areas as they relate to China, the idea being that China is both already a “crossroads” of the world and itself at a “crossroads” in terms of its future global influence. For more information, contact Frank Tsai at editor@shanghai-review.org.