



30th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations With China

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Press Conference at U.S. Embassy

Beijing, China

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DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Thank you.

Good morning. I appreciate your welcoming me back to Beijing. It is indeed an honor to be here on this special occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

I first visited China in June of 1972 on a delegation led by Dr. Henry Kissinger at a time when our two countries had lived in political, economic and diplomatic isolation from each other for more than two decades. The changes in our relationship since that time have been truly dramatic. Our two countries have interactions and exchanges across the entire spectrum of human activity on a scale and a depth that simply could not have been imagined when we first established diplomatic ties in 1979.

Today instead of living in isolation from each other we are interdependent. Our combined economic strength makes it essential that we work closely to meet the many international challenges that we face together in the 21st Century.

As President Bush's administration ends, we believe we are leaving in place a strong record of accomplishment in United States-China bilateral ties and robust dialogue mechanisms for dealing with issues of concern to our two countries, whether in the international economic sphere or in the realm of regional and global peace and security.

Building on this record of diplomatic accomplishment going back three decades and spanning both Democratic and Republican administrations. We believe the basis exists for continued and even expanded contributions by China and the United States to global peace and prosperity in the years ahead.

That concludes my opening remarks. I'd be pleased to try and answer any questions that you might have.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask you going forward what you think will be the major challenges for the Obama administration as they come in in terms of U.S. policy towards China.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I don't have my crystal ball with me today so I'd be reluctant to try to make any very precise predictions, but clearly, and as my introductory remarks suggest, there are sort of two main areas of focus in the United States-China relationship. One is the issue of regional and global peace and security on the one hand; and the other is the international economic situation. So I think those are going to be the two areas of focus.

With regard to the regional peace and security, I think one of the issues that will obviously be of continuing interest will be the question of the 6-Party talks and the desire of both of our countries, China and the United States, to see progress towards denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. So I think I would want to highlight that issue.

Then as far as the economic situation is concerned, I think both of us will want to work hard in the year ahead to uphold our mutual commitment to promoting an open international trading and financial system. I think the statement that was made at the recent G20 meeting about the commitment of the participating countries to open and free markets remains extremely important at a time of economic challenge such as the one we are living through.

QUESTION: Mr. Negroponte, if you look at the past eight years of handling relations with China, do you have any regrets about it? If you have, what is your expectation for the next government to make up these regrets?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I don't have any particular regrets. In fact I would venture to predict that when historians look at the record of the Bush administration that surely one of the highlights will be the progress that has been achieved in the United States-China bilateral relationship. Whether through the increased level of economic activity, which has been very significant. China is now our third most important trading partner. To issues such as cooperation between us on regional and global security issues.

I think one issue I'd particularly like to highlight is the fact that our two Presidents established very close personal relationships. They met quite frequently. Just to cite an example, they met twice in the month of November alone. They've had extensive telephone contact and communication. And then below the level of Presidents we have established very solid mechanisms for dialogue both in the economic and in the political areas. I think I'd particularly highlight the Strategic Economic Dialogue led on our side by Secretary of Treasury Hank Paulsen and on the Chinese side by the Vice Premier as the kind of mechanism that we would hope, as the Bush administration comes to an end, would continue in the next administration. We certainly commend to the next administration the dialogue mechanisms, bilateral dialogue mechanisms between the United States and China that we have established and commend them to the attention of the incoming administration.

QUESTION: Chinese capital has been instrumental in financing U.S. deficits. U.S. deficits are going to grow, as we all know. Will China continue to provide the capital that we need for that financing? Do you have any reason to doubt it?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Clearly this is a question that primarily needs to be addressed to the Chinese themselves, but one of the points that I would make would say, in reply to your question, is that in the discussions that I had my Chinese interlocutors pointed out that they have been very responsible in dealing with the question of the American debt that they do hold. I think they want to be viewed as a reliable partner in that regard.

QUESTION: Three questions. The first one is, do you believe that [some would count] your visit at this time as the goodbye trip of the Bush government? My second question is, why have you not lots of [inaudible] between our two countries as predicted eight years ago when Bush was elected as President of the United States? My last question --

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Could you repeat that second question again?

QUESTION: Why there are not lots of [inaudible] as predicted eight years ago between the two countries. And my last question, just now when I came into this room, in front of the door I saw ice on the water. The waters are running and the ice are still on the water. Do you think this has something common with the relationship between our two countries? We are just, these eight years are even in three decades, [inaudible] business. We are stakeholders, not the problems [inaudible]. Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: On the first question, my principal purpose in coming was to participate in activities commemorating the 30th Anniversary of diplomatic relations. So that was the principal purpose. It happens to coincide, the timing, January of 2009 happens to coincide with the end of the Bush administration, so that is simply a coincidence. But it, of course, presented an opportunity on my part to pay my respects to the various counterparts with whom I have dealt during the



time that I have been Deputy Secretary of State. So this was a good opportunity for me to meet with the State Councilor, Mr. Dai Bingguo, Foreign Minister Yang and others. I'll be seeing the Vice President of China this afternoon before I leave.

On the second question, if I understood it correctly, I think you're asking me why there hasn't been more friction in the relationship between the United States and China, and I think the answer to that is that the relationship has matured. I think the range and depth of interests and exchanges and activities between our two countries has grown dramatically. I think that as a result on both sides, both the United States and Chinese, there is a view and a consensus that we are increasingly interdependent. That requires that we conduct the relationship on a very mature basis. That is what we have sought to do. That is what we believe to be in the mutual interest of the United States and China.

The last question I'm not sure I entirely seized the meaning of it, but I would emphasize the point that I think the relationship has expanded in scope and depth and I think that it's a vital relationship for the United States, speaking for my country, in the years ahead. I think the next 35 years are going to witness even more dramatic growth in United States-China relations than the past 30.

QUESTION: When you talk about parities for the U.S.-China relationship in the years ahead you didn't mention human rights, even though it's been high on the agenda for the Bush administration since meeting with House Christians in the White House and things like that. It's also been one of President-elect Obama's [inaudible] as well.

Is this a sign that worries about the economic relationship have pushed the importance of making sure that stays on track have pushed other concerns particularly human rights off track? Also, related to that, 2009 is going to be a sensitive year for human rights. There are a couple of difficult anniversaries coming up for China and its diplomatic partners and how they handle them including the anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989. I just wondered if you could comment on how the U.S. should handle these issues. Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I think my principal point would be that we take human rights violations very seriously and when we have concerns we continue to raise them at all levels of the Chinese government. Both here in Beijing and with the Chinese embassy in Washington. So human rights, as far as we're concerned, continues to be very much part of the United States-China bilateral agenda.

We also have an actual dialogue on human rights with China that takes place under the auspices of the senior dialogue that I have with my counterpart Mr. Dai Bingguo.

But as you suggest, there are also many many other issues in the U.S.-China relationship. We're not trying to downplay human rights, but I'm also trying to point out that this is a very broad relationship and covering the full spectrum of human activities in the political, economic, social, educational and other fields.

So I think it's just, it was not an intent on my part to overlook any particular one of these fields. It's simply to say that this is a very very vast and complex relationship.

QUESTION: [Inaudible] this difficult year [inaudible].

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: I'm reluctant to try and predict how the next -- This is the next to last full work week for this administration so I'd be reluctant to predict how the next administration will handle specific issues in the relationship, although since human rights and concern for human rights is a fundamental tenant of American foreign policy, I would expect to see the human rights concerns to continue in the next administration.

QUESTION: I wonder, is it clear that the SED will be continued or not?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: The Strategic Economic Dialogue. I can only carry the answer to that question so far. As I mentioned to you, I think the Strategic Economic Dialogue and the Senior Dialogue are both, have been very useful mechanisms. I think they're part of the record of the U.S.-China relationship during the Bush administration. We think they've been extremely valuable. Exactly how the next administration chooses to pursue the relationship with the government of China, they're certainly going to need mechanisms of this kind. We would recommend that they adopt these mechanisms, but this is obviously, in the last analysis, something that the new administration working in concert with the government of the Peoples Republic of China will have to decide.

QUESTION: It's not clear yet?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: No, it's not clear because the administration, as you may have noticed, the President-elect and his administration have avoided commenting on these kinds of questions before they actually take office, so I think we just have to wait until they take office. But I think you will learn soon enough.

QUESTION: I would like to know how was the Taiwan question addressed in your talks since there are so many interactions with the new government in Taiwan now. And secondly, since you are the last high-ranking visitor from the United States here, did you get any sort of message for the inauguration of Obama or anything of what the Chinese want?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: The question about Taiwan and how that issue was handled, I think the first thing I'd say on that was that we certainly recognize the sensitivity of the Taiwan issue and the fact that it's an issue that needs to be dealt with with caution.

Secondly, and we did discuss the Taiwan question.

Secondly, I emphasized that the United States remains committed to its One China Policy and to the proposition that the situation across the Taiwan Strait should be dealt with peacefully.

I also made the point, and I think both sides agreed, that the cross-strait situation, there has been an improvement in that situation, particularly since the election of the new authorities in Taiwan last year, and I expressed welcome for what seems to have been a diminution of cross-strait tensions since that election and since various initiatives that have been undertaken by the government of the Peoples Republic of China and the Taiwan authorities. So I would say there's been an improvement in that situation in the past eight or nine months.

As far as a message, I think there was no specific message although obviously one message that I take away from this visit is that the government of the Peoples Republic of China certainly looks forward to working closely with the next administration and I believe, my sense is it is eager to undertake dialogue with our new government as soon as possible.

QUESTION: Good morning, Mr. Negroponte. My question is how will the USA strengthen cooperation with China in intellectual property field? Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: That is certainly an issue of great interest to us and to both our business community and to our government. We have officials from our foreign commercial service stationed here in China. It's our largest presence of our Department of Commerce abroad and they follow this issue very closely.

We have law enforcement concerns about intellectual property. Our law enforcement representatives here at the embassy work closely with their counterparts in the Chinese government in trying to enforce intellectual property. So I think there have been some positive developments in this area and I think there's an increased awareness between our two governments about the intellectual property issues that we confront. But there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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