



Interview With Anthony Yuen of Phoenix TV

Secretary Colin L. Powell
China World Hotel
Beijing, China
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QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, before you leave for China, you accept media interviews saying you are very proud of the US-China relationship because it is based on the mutual respect of each other's needs. After you met with President Hu early this morning, do you still feel this proud sense.

SECRETARY POWELL: Oh, absolutely. I think we have seen such an improvement in the relationship over the last four years. We have resolved some of the areas of disagreement on trade and economic activities. We are working so closely together on regional problems. For example, we are working so closely to try to solve the problem of North Korean nuclear weapons. All of our ministers in the United States meet on such a frequent basis with Chinese ministers. Our two presidents, President Hu and President Bush, have a very close relationship, and so I think that this is a real successful, how we have gone from a confrontation in the early April 2001 when our planes collided, to the point now where we are cooperating in so many areas.

This doesn't mean that they are no disagreements. There are disagreements. We have a disagreement with respect to human rights behavior. But what we decided to do today, for example, is not to ignore that disagreement, but to once again begin the process of resuming a dialogue so we can understand each other's positions better. This is what two mature countries do when they want to be friends and they want to be partners, and that is what we are doing with China.

QUESTION: So this morning when you talked to Mr. Hu, did you talk about the U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan and what was his response?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, they would prefer that we not sell weapons to Taiwan, and they made that clear to me, as they have in the past. And our response is that they should not view this any lack of interest on our part on our One China Policy. In fact, our One China Policy is sound. It has benefited all the parties for so many years. It rests solidly on the Three Communiqués that undergird the One China Policy. But at the same time, we have an obligation under our law to make sure that Taiwan has the means to defend itself, self defense, not attacking anybody, but self-defense. And in order to meet that obligation we have under our law, from time to time arms sales are appropriate to Taiwan.

We encourage the Chinese side to be very careful about the deployments that they make across the Straits, which might raise the concern in Taiwan, thereby generating a requirement for more weapons sales. So both sides should show restraint, not take any unilateral actions, look for ways of improving dialogue across the Straits and move forward toward that day when we will see a peaceful unification.

QUESTION: Recently, one statement from Taiwan make Chinese nervous. [Inaudible] say, if China attack us, attack Shanghai, the Shanghai and Taiwan you need a medium range missile. And the Chinese think this is a hint that the US is going to provide the technology to develop medium range missiles. Is that the case?

SECRETARY POWELL: No. The only technology we are providing to Taiwan, if they choose to buy it, is technology that will allow for their self-defense. We don't want them to have an offensive capability. We also think that this kind of rhetoric is unfortunate; it just raises tensions. And it all relates to the feelings in some parts, or of some in Taiwan, that they should move toward independence. But we have made it very clear to all parties, to the authorities in Taiwan and to the authorities in Beijing, that the United States does not support independence for Taiwan. It would be inconsistent with our One China Policy.

QUESTION: Recently the Chinese a touch bit nervous. Taiwan keep on saying that "we don't need to declare independence because we are already independent country with sovereignty because there are already some twenty six countries that recognize us, so many countries." What does this mean to you?

SECRETARY POWELL: Well, they can make these sorts of statements but our policy is clear. There is only one China. Taiwan is not independent. It does not enjoy sovereignty as a nation, and that remains our policy, our firm policy. And it is a policy that has allowed Taiwan to develop a very vibrant democratic system, a market economic system and provided great benefits to the people of Taiwan. And that is why we think it is policy that should be respected and should remain in force and will remain in force, on the American side, it is our policy that clearly rests on Three Communiqués. To repeat it one more time: we do not support an independence movement in Taiwan.

QUESTION: So you consider this insistence on a kind of ambiguity on the One China Policy or what you want to make more clear?

SECRETARY POWELL: It's often conveyed as ambiguous, but I think it's pretty clear. Everyone has understood what it meant for the last thirty years. And it has allowed Taiwan to be successful. And it certainly created conditions of stability and security throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It has allowed China, instead of concerning itself about whether there's going to be a conflict with Taiwan, but for China to develop itself and to join the international community, economically and politically. And it has also provided stability for other nations in the Asia-Pacific region so that they could pursue their development. So our One China Policy is not going to change. The president has reaffirmed this on many occasions. Independence movements or those who speak out for independence movements in Taiwan will find no support from the United States.

QUESTION: You mentioned earlier that you told the Chinese leaders be very careful to deploy their missiles or whatever in the other side of Taiwan. I think the former President Mr. Jiang when he visited George Bush last year, he also mentioned that if we reduce our missiles aiming at Taiwan, is the United States going to cancel or at least consider twice selling weapons to Taiwan?

SECRETARY POWELL: All of our weapons sales are in the context of what's needed for self-defense. And that's the position of the United States government. Now hypothetical offers or ideas that come out are interesting, but we have to look at the reality on the ground. And what we try to do is to ensure that Taiwan is able to defend itself, and that's the basis of our arms sales policy to them.

But what we have seen on the Chinese side is that there has been a steady build-up across the Taiwan Straits on the Mainland. The Chinese leaders who I spoke to today said that that's an internal matter for us to determine, us to decide, and I appreciate their position, but nevertheless, that build-up creates a degree of tension and instability across the Straits and puts pressure on the Taiwanese side to seek additional weaponry. And under our law, we have an obligation to see to their self-defense needs. And that's why we continue to point out to the Chinese side, that their deployments and military steps they might be taking on the Mainland that are causing an imbalance requires that the imbalance be adjusted in some way and that leads then to additional arms sales.

QUESTION: Mr. Hu just took over the Chairman of the Military Commission and you are the first U.S. high official to meet with him. Do you feel comfortable? What kind of person do you feel he is?

SECRETARY POWELL: Very comfortable. We have known him for a while. I met with him on a number of occasions. I have been very impressed at the smoothness with which the transfer of authority of leadership has taken place in China over the last several years. It shows a degree of political maturity. And I think it speaks well for the Chinese leadership and the Chinese people. We look forward to working with President Hu in his new expanded role and capacity.

QUESTION: Before you arrived in Tokyo, you rejected the three point suggestions from North Korea. Now when you talk to President Hu, what kind of role do you want China to play in the Six-Party peace talks?

SECRETARY POWELL: China has played a very important role in helping to create the Six-Party framework. They have been the host of the meetings, they have been the convener of the meetings and increasingly they have become an active participant in the meetings. That's what we want China to continue to do. We want active participants; all of us should be active participants. China has an important role to play. It is a neighbor of North Korea. It has considerable influence with North Korea. It provides a great deal of assistance to North Korea. And frankly when you look at North Korea's nuclear weapons program, who is most immediately threatened by such weapons? Who can those weapons reach? South Korea, Japan, China, Russia- more easily than they can reach the United States. And so we believe that all of North Korea's neighbors have a role to play in persuading the North Koreans to return to the Six-Party framework and to find a solution to the goal that all six parties have, and that is the de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And benefits will flow to North Korea from the de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

QUESTION: One last question I want to ask you is in this year in the presidential election, is the first year that both parties' candidates did not use the Chinese issue as a major issue. They did not attack each other on the Chinese point of view. Why?

SECRETARY POWELL: Because both sides - President Bush or Mr. Kerry - should prevail, but candidate Kerry, Senator Kerry, they both understand that we have a good relationship with the Chinese. It is not a matter of contention. Everybody agrees that we have a good relationship with China. That we are working so well in so many areas. Not to say there are not disagreements, but when you hear disagreements from the political parties in my country now, it has to do with trade imbalances. It no longer has to do with matters of war and peace. It has to do with matters of trade. This is good. This is an improvement. However difficult these trade issues become, these are far better issues to be debating than matters of war and peace of the kind that we might have been debating twenty years ago. And I think this is all to the good for the United States and for China.

QUESTION: Thank you very much Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you.
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