



Remarks at National Committee on U.S.-China Relations Dinner

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

New York City
October 24, 2007

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Thank you very, very much, Carla, for that kind introduction. And I want to say at the outset, and I've said this before and it bears repeating, but as you mentioned I was ambassador to Mexico from 1989 to 1993. And so we had the opportunity to work extremely closely together as you negotiated the North -- the historic, I think I should say, North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.

(Applause.)

And I don't have a moment of regret about that agreement. I think it was the right thing to do. I think it's done a tremendous amount of good. And I just hate to think of where our economic relationships, not to mention other relationships, but our economic relationships with Mexico would be if we didn't have that agreement in place today. I think it was a visionary accomplishment on the part of President George Bush, Sr., and of yourself.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence of many good friends here, former Ambassadors to China Stapleton Roy, whom I've had the opportunity to work with recently on a couple of issues at the State Department. I saw Ambassador Sasser back there earlier and I'm delighted to see both of these colleagues. Delighted to see that Governor Pataki has had time to come and join us this evening. I'm delighted to see you, sir, and remember well the time that I was Ambassador to the United Nations right after 9/11. And the leadership that you gave to this state and to this city in coping and dealing with the aftermath of 9/11, so thank you very much for your presence.

(Applause.)

The Governor tells me it's not too bad out there in the private sector. (Laughter.) He doesn't have to set his alarm clock in the morning anymore.

I'd also like to express my appreciation for the presence of China's diplomatic corps, the Chargé d'affaires from Washington, Mr. Zheng Zeguang -- (applause) -- Consul General Liu Biwei, and Mrs. Cong Jun, who's the -- for representing her husband here today, who's the United Nations Ambassador of China here in New York but who is at the People's Congress. And thanks to many of the other Chinese officials who are here with us. (Applause.) I'd also, of course, like to express appreciation for the presence of my colleague Chris Hill, Assistant Secretary Chris Hill, and of course his Deputy, Deputy Assistant Secretary Tom Christensen, who has the lead on China issues in the East Asia and Pacific Bureau and who's of immense help to me as I've carried out our political dialogue with the Chinese government. And I also want to thank the National Committee for letting us borrow Tom, at least for another year before he returns to Princeton University. (Applause.)

I've seen a number of other old-timers like myself here tonight and I want to thank them also for the groundbreaking work that they have done in building the foundation for U.S.-China ties.

Our bilateral relationship has long been of great personal interest to me. My first posting with the Foreign Service was in Hong Kong, providing an important window on China. I served on President Nixon's National Security Council staff. I traveled to what was called Peking at the time, before we established diplomatic ties. This was a year after the National Committee helped create Ping-Pong diplomacy in the spring of 1971.

In the early 1970s, the focus was on rapprochement. After establishing diplomatic relations in 1979, we turned to the business of building bilateral relations. Now the challenge is much more expansive. We are building on U.S.-China cooperation in third areas of the world, from Iran to Western Sudan. The United States-China relationship will be central to our success on nearly all fronts of our foreign policy. And this cannot be a government-only endeavor; we need help, as the Chinese say, "from all walks of life" -- especially from great private organizations like the National Committee on United States-China Relations.

Simply put, China is one of our most important bilateral relationships. I say this in no effort to downplay our strong alliances around the world. In Asia, in particular, our military and political ties with our domestic allies Japan, Korea -- or democratic allies, excuse me -- Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Australia have kept the peace, allowing the entire region to enjoy stability and prosperity -- and no state has benefited more than China.

In terms of diplomatic interaction, we have journeyed a long way since I worked on Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff in the early 1970s. Today, our two presidents see each other several times a year. Secretary Rice participates in regular meetings and telephone calls with her Chinese counterpart, now Foreign Minister Yang. Our Assistant Secretaries in our regional bureaus meet for regular, intensive dialogues with their counterparts at the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Just a few years ago, it would be hard to imagine these people even knowing each other, let alone engaging in a deep collaborative process.

Next year, we will open our new Embassy compound in Beijing. We're also working on opening our new Consulate General in Wuhan in central China to bring our diplomatic presence to more parts of the country. Our Presidents have launched two important diplomatic initiatives to coordinate our bilateral and global cooperation: the senior political dialogue which I lead and the Strategic Economic Dialogue led by Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson.

Tonight, I would like to discuss five of the major global challenges that will require U.S.-China cooperation now and in the generation to come.

First, terrorism. Many Chinese nationals died alongside United States citizens from 80 countries -- alongside citizens from 80 countries on Sept. 11th, 2001. Since that day, the United States and the world have focused on the threat posed by violent extremists, which endangers all of our security and prosperity. As we work with China to combat terror, some of our cooperation will be diplomatic, requiring the United Nations Security Council approval. Others will address terrorist financing, an issue that will become more prominent in our bilateral relations as China's banking sector becomes more global.

Our second challenge is weak, poorly governed, and failing states. In the future, the United States will continue to work with the UN Security Council, particularly its permanent members like China, to find solutions to these threats. But Security Council action alone sets the stage for more intensive diplomacy between interested and responsible powers. We see this today regarding Sudan and Burma. In the case of Sudan, China supported Security Council Resolution 1769, which called for the deployment of a robust United Nations-African Union hybrid peacekeeping force under United Nations command. China played a pivotal role in brokering the agreement in support of this plan and has committed 300 engineering troops to the force. We appreciate this sort of engagement in Sudan and have asked Chinese leaders to persuade President Bashir to unequivocally accept the United Nations-African Union force.

But China's interests in Sudan and Burma go beyond that of an interested Security Council member. China purchased more than \$1.9 billion worth of Sudanese oil last year. Beijing remains a major trading partner and provider of arms to Burma. As China's global footprint grows, so will its interests and responsibilities. We believe that China's support for international intervention in Darfur shows a realization in Beijing that a strict policy of non-interference is out of step with the norms and challenges of our globalized world. We will continue to look to Beijing, now and in the future, not only to help the people of Darfur, but to prevent political instability and civil violence in

other parts of the world.

Our third challenge is ensuring continued global economic prosperity. We welcome Chinese participation in the global economy. As President Bush has noted, the United States welcomes a strong and prosperous China. In the years since my time in Hong Kong, more than four decades ago, the Chinese people have performed nothing short of an economic miracle.

This growing economic prosperity brings global responsibility. China must lead and encourage international economic growth. Five years after entry into the World Trade Organization, China and other large developing nations like India and Brazil should be leading the charge in dismantling trade barriers in the Doha Round, not claiming that it has "done enough."

As Chinese products reach ever more markets, the United States will work closely with Chinese regulators to ensure that only safe products reach our homes and businesses on both sides of the Pacific. These types of real concerns of the American people must be addressed -- and we will address them with China in our strategic economic dialogue and in other settings.

While this Administration believes strongly in the benefit of American workers and families that international trade brings, we recognize that some industries will face stiff competition. When we see unfair trade practices we will take action at home or in the WTO. We also will raise our concerns over industrial policies and intellectual property rights directly with the leadership in Beijing. Protectionist trade legislation, on the other hand, is not the answer.

I would just mention one other responsibility that all large economies share in encouraging global growth -- helping those who are being left behind by globalization. On this front, China has a long record of assisting in the economic development of poor countries and we welcome continued Chinese investment in and trade with developing countries that can help to lift millions out of poverty. But one of the areas we'd like to gain better understanding is the Chinese -- is Chinese foreign assistance projects and low-interest loans. Our concern is that without transparency and coordination with other lenders and donors, Chinese programs and projects can undercut multilateral efforts to promote accountability, good governance and sustainable growth. Our experience has taught us that without these considerations, investments and projects cannot only waste money, but destabilize the very country the investor wants to support.

The fourth global challenge that we and China face is the enforcement of nonproliferation norms. Here, Beijing has already come a long way in its approach to curbing the sale of weapons and associated technologies.

One current example is Beijing's leadership in hosting the six-party talks. Following North Korea's provocative missile launches of July 2006 and its subsequent nuclear test last October, China joined other members of the Security Council in unanimously imposing strong measures under UN Security Council Resolutions 1695 and 1718, including Chapter 7 sanctions. This was a major step for a country that Mao Zedong once described as being as close to North Korea as lips to teeth -- as "lips and teeth."

We are committed to working closely with China to implement fully the September 2005 Joint Statement to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. This process has already begun with China's recent announcement of our agreement on second phase actions for implementation of the Joint Statement.

On Iran, Beijing shares our assessment that Tehran must not obtain nuclear weapons capabilities. But we have at times differed over what kinds of actions are necessary.

Yes, China joined the United States and other Permanent Five members in approving United Nations Security Council resolutions 1737 and 1747, which impose Chapter 7 sanctions on Iran for its failure to comply with its international obligations. Still, there are other steps that China could take, including reconsidering investments -- I couldn't make it through the whole speech -- (laughter) without a drink -- still, there are other steps that China could take, including reconsidering investments in Iran's oil and gas sector. We have made clear to Beijing that these types of investments, along with continued arms sales, send the wrong signal to the Iranian regime and raise serious concerns. Given Iran's intransigence on its nuclear program and its active support of terrorism, now is not the time for normal relations and business as usual with Iran. We are reaching a critical juncture with respect to Iran's nuclear development, which will require a new United Nations Security Council resolution.

Fifth and finally, we must tackle together the multifaceted challenge of energy security, economic activity and climate change. To address this major challenge, it is imperative that Beijing have a seat at the global table. China now is the world's number three importer of oil across the globe and by one recent estimate, China has surpassed the United States as the world's leading emitter of carbon dioxide. Any solution to these global challenges will require Beijing's buy-in. That is why President Bush invited Chinese representatives -- along with representatives from over a dozen other major economies -- to a meeting last month to forge a post-Kyoto consensus to address climate change. This must include developing nations exempted from earlier targets. At the same time, we must address climate change in a way that does not stunt global economic growth.

The five challenges that I have addressed represent an opportunity to work consistently with China to solve major global problems that affect us all. At the same time, though, we must be mindful of a few serious differences and bumps along the road that we will have to manage carefully. One of those areas is China's treatment of its own citizens. China's people are overall more prosperous, better educated and better informed than at any time in their history. Yet, we remain concerned by China's still weak record on guaranteeing fundamental freedoms and equal justice for all its citizens. We are concerned with the treatment of minority communities in nominally autonomous areas. And we continue to encourage direct dialogue between the Chinese Government and the Dalai Lama.

We hope to rapidly resume our bilateral human rights dialogue to further discuss these issues. In our discussions, we point out that freedom is a source of national strength, not weakness and that religious groups play an important and stabilizing role throughout the world through their charitable and social work. Because China's overall human rights record remains weak, it is difficult to secure sustained support from the American people for the kind of deep and close relationship with Beijing that we believe will serve the interests of both countries and the entire world.

Another issue that will require careful management is the relationship across the Taiwan Strait. The United States believes that a strong, moderate Taiwan is a force for stability, prosperity and democracy in the region. We have also made it clear, however, that we do not support Taiwan independence and that the United States opposes unilateral acts by either side that attempt to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. We believe that it is up to the people on both sides of the Strait to resolve their differences peacefully. The policy of the United States on cross-Strait relations is firmly rooted in the Three Joint Communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act. Our policy has been durable and consistent over the course of more than three decades and seven administrations. It will not change now.

Even as we express our opposition to certain political initiatives by Taiwan, we remain concerned about the growing arsenal of missiles and other Chinese military systems arrayed against Taiwan. We are also concerned about Beijing's refusal to renounce the use of force against Taiwan. We have communicated to the Chinese that their build-up of coercive capability across from Taiwan runs counter to their stated commitment to peaceful settlement of cross-Strait differences. It is a destabilizing factor in cross-Strait relations. It is also unhelpful when Beijing attempts to place conditions on and limit Taiwan participation in international organizations where statehood is not a requirement.

Beijing's deployments opposite Taiwan and its fast-paced military modernization raise broader concerns about Beijing's opaque military objectives. The January 11th test of a direct ascent anti-satellite weapon exemplifies these concerns and it raised concerns in capitals around the world. Increased openness about its military budget, doctrine and intentions would do much to allay our concerns and the concerns of China's neighbors. Defense Secretary Robert Gates will travel to Beijing next month and we hope these sorts of exchanges will be the norm, not the exception, in the coming years so that we can increase understanding and reduce suspicion.

On the subject of visits, the coming year will see China hosting athletes from approximately 200 participating teams at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. This represents the proud culmination of years of effort by China's leaders, athletes and citizens. The United States wants successful games, and President Bush has announced his

intention to attend the opening ceremonies in Beijing. The President has also noted the opportunity the games provide for China to show a commitment to greater openness and tolerance. We urge China to seize the chance to put its best face forward and abide by the spirit of the games so that China can enjoy a truly successful Olympics.

Ladies and Gentlemen, never in our shared history have the United States and China been so deeply engaged together, working together on a wider scope of global issues. We seek to use this historic level of engagement to help shape China's choices. We want to encourage China to act as a responsible and stabilizing influence in international affairs -- not just in the East Asia region, but around the world. We do not approach United States-China relations as a zero-sum game. To the contrary, we actively invite China to play a larger role on the international stage to ensure stability and prosperity long into the future by confronting global challenges together.

The course of United States-China relations over the past three and a half decades has certainly outstripped the expectations we held back in that fateful year of 1972. In this common effort, I am proud to have had the opportunity to play a part and I want to thank the United States-China National Committee for the exceptional role it continues to play in nurturing one of the most important relationships in our world today.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

AMBASSADOR HILLS: John, thank you so much for those direct, candid and thoughtful remarks. The Deputy Secretary has stated that he will take a few questions. The lights are in our eyes, so we'll do our best if we see a hand.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: There's one over there.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: Do you see one?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Yeah, one to the right there.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: To the right?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: The gentleman at that table over there.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: Okay, at the far table. Is that Jerry Coehn.

STAFF: Yes, Jerry.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: Jerry Cohen.

QUESTION: Yes. Mr. Secretary, that was indeed an excellent, comprehensive comment on our relations with China. I'd only like to supplement it by asking you to consider something especially dear to the heart of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. While all attention is being focused on the 17th Party Congress, on the forthcoming Olympics, there have been some negative developments with respect to China in the field of intellectual professional academic exchanges.

Many conferences, some on sensitive matters, some not, including Fulbright conference among recipients in the law field, both from China and the United States, have not been approved. We've had obstacles to visas being granted to people who write articles about subjects such as the situation in Xinjiang Province. We shouldn't have obstacles to our intellectual and professional intercourse at this point. And it would be good if the Department of State would weigh in with the Chinese Government to note the many obstacles that we have encountered in recent months and years.

As we have a new Administration now in China or a renewed Administration, it would be good if having gone through the Party Congress they now would permit and approve a number of activities and exchanges, including some exchanges with this national committee that have run into difficulty, it'd be good to have a comment from you, sir.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: A couple of comments. First of all, thank you. I take your remarks to be more of a comment than a question. But in any case, they're well taken and well received. I think first of all, putting this into perspective, the extent of exchanges between us and China today, as compared to decades ago, two, three decades ago, I would submit is substantial, indeed, impressive compared to what it used to be, so I think we ought to look at it from that angle as well, not to mention the large number of students from China that are over here.

But where there are particular instances and certainly we have, as I've tried to suggest in my remarks, a multifaceted relationship and the aspect of the relationship to which you refer is also very important. I think where there are issues that you wish us to follow up with respect to trying to ensure that these kinds of exchanges take place, I think we're more than willing to lend our facilitative assistance. I can't assure 100 percent success. But yes, this kind of issue is a matter of interest to us and yes, I agree with you, it is important that these kinds of exchanges be allowed to take place. And lastly, I would submit that the Government of China, the authorities in China have nothing to fear from these kinds of exchanges.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: One more question.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Mainly because we can't see. There's a gentleman out there, straight in front of you.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: All right.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Yeah.

QUESTION: Dan Rosen from the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Mr. Deputy Secretary, thank you for your remarks. Pete Peterson noted a mirror image between China and the United States in global unbalances on the economic side. Several speakers have made reference to the global climate change challenge. Is there a grand bargain between China and the United States to work together on a cooperative agenda with regard to the climate economic connection?

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Well, I -- Dan, I don't know about the grand bargain, but it just seems to me that any issue so important and so global as the issue of climate change that in order for it to be dealt with in a meaningful fashion is going to have to involve both the United States and China and a number of other countries for that matter. But I think that one of the concerns the President had with respect to the climate change, energy security, global warming issue as represented by the Kyoto agreement was that some of the major economies like China and India were basically given a complete -- a free pass, if you will. And if you're looking -- if you're thinking about arrangements post-2012 for Kyoto in dealing with this issue, you've got to involve players as important as China. So I guess my main point would be that -- and it was a theme of my remarks and on all of these issues I think that China and the United States need to forge better understandings and a better partnership, whether it has to do with dealing with climate change issues or dealing with the imbalances in the global economy.

AMBASSADOR HILLS: Join me in thanking Deputy Secretary Negroponte for sharing his evening. Thank you.

DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE: Thank you. Merciful. You are very merciful. Only two questions. Thank you.

2007/940

Released on October 26, 2007

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.