



## Press Roundtable in China

**John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State**  
Press Section Program Room, U.S. Embassy  
Beijing, China  
January 17, 2008

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here – to have the opportunity to meet with you. I am here for the semi-annual meeting of our senior dialogue with my Chinese counterpart, Executive Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo. We had our last meeting in June of last year and we will be holding our discussions in Guiyang Province starting this afternoon and tomorrow. That happens to be Executive Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo's home province and he extended the invitation for me to visit the region of the country where he grew up. So I accepted that invitation with pleasure, and it is also an opportunity for a foreign visitor like myself to have a little better understanding and appreciation of what is going on in parts of China other than Beijing. So I think it is very useful from that point of view as well. Now you know we have a number of dialogues with the government of China. Most recently, there was this Strategic Economic Dialogue led by Secretary of Treasury Hank Paulson. Our Senior Dialogue deals more with political matters and international relations, the role of China and the United States in the world, the areas where we can cooperate together in both the North East Asia Region as well as farther a field on such issues as Sudan, Iran, and similar matters. I would say that the fact that we are both permanent members of the Security Council is an important consideration in this and the fact that China and the United States are active participants on the international scene so that we want to be sure that we have a thorough understanding of each other's approaches to the many different issues that confront the world and also to try and harmonize and work out common understandings and common approaches wherever that might be possible. So I expect that, in our talks with the Chinese side that we will have very wide-ranging discussions all the way from the situation on the Korean Peninsula, the situation in the Taiwan Strait, the situation in some of the hot spots of the world such as Sudan, the situation with respect to nuclear proliferation – for example the question of Iran – and a number of other issues as well. On the Taiwan Strait, we will certainly be having a discussion of that question as it is one that is always high on the minds of our Chinese interlocutors. I would just like to reiterate here the remarks made by Secretary of State Rice on December 21<sup>st</sup> of last year with respect to the United Nations referendum that is planned to be held by Taiwan on March 22<sup>nd</sup> during the course of their presidential elections and would like to reiterate that the perspective of the U.S. that the conduct of such a referendum is a mistake. We think it is a provocative policy on the part of the Taiwanese authorities and we think that it certainly would have been preferable had not such a referendum been scheduled.

**EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER:** All right, with that we will take your questions.

**QUESTION:** Good morning, I am Ed Lanfranco with United Press International. I have a couple of things I would like to ask if possible.

**EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER:** We ask for just one question each.

**QUESTION:** Ok, sure. I know that Secretary Paulson handles economic matters, but there is a political dimension to trade ties between the U.S. and China. With the trade deficit expected to hit 300 billion dollars, will you be talking with the Chinese about U.S. worries that China is neither a free nor a fair trader?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** The economic and commercial agenda between our two countries, as you said, are issues that are discussed in the Strategic Economic Dialogue, although obviously all of us have to be sensitive to the existence of those issues and they at times take on great political significance in either country. What I would say about our trade deficit, which we of course recognize is very substantial, is that there has also been in recent years – in the past several years – an increase in United States exports to China. We are encouraged by that. There has been a very rapid growth. I think more than 20% growth in our exports last year to the country of China. And China is and has the potential to become one of our most promising export markets and particularly as the Chinese seek to find a way to grow their domestic economy, increase domestic consumption, and as they look to perhaps lower their own savings rates in future years to the benefit of the Chinese citizenry. We would hope that that would provide new opportunities for United States exports to the Chinese market.

**QUESTION:** So it is on the schedule?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** It is not specifically on the agenda, but I am just acknowledging to you that even for those who are more focused on the political and strategic side of the relationship that clearly economic issues loom large.

**QUESTION:** Good morning, I am Jiao Xiaoyang from China Daily Newspaper, and I have a question about Taiwan. The United States has repeatedly warned Taiwan against the referendum and, Mr. Deputy Secretary, do you think that these warnings have any effect on Taiwan?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Well, what we have said is that we think it is a mistake to conduct the referendum. All that we can do is express our view. And we will have to see what affect that might have. But I think that is all we can do.

**QUESTION:** Do you have any countermeasure for if Taiwan goes ahead and . . .

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Well, I think I would leave it at that. As you know there are a number of – if the referendum is conducted there still is the question of whether it would be successful and there are two tests that have to be passed. First of all there has to be more than a certain number of voters. I think more than half of those voting have to vote for the referendum, and secondly the referendum has to pass. And the outcome of such a referendum at this stage as far as I am aware is not clear at all.

**QUESTION:** Bob Saiget with AFP, I wonder if you could give us a little idea if you sense in your discussions, in your negotiations with the Chinese, a sense of quid pro quo going on if the U.S. comes out and makes a statement against the referendum, would China give in in another area like Iran? Is the human rights issue at play at all in this? Will you be raising that issue?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** First of all, on the first part, I think that the question of Taiwan is a core interest to the People's Republic of China. It is not something that where one can talk about trade-offs with other issues. I think it has always been presented to us by the Chinese authorities as a core concern for the Government of China and we certainly take their concerns seriously. I have reaffirmed our One-China Policy and our commitment to the three communiqués pointing out that that is the basis for our policy towards China as well as the Taiwan Relations Act. You asked whether human rights will be raised. We have already raised some aspects of the human rights issue in the discussions that I had yesterday with the Foreign Minister, and I expect that we will be discussing human rights questions further during our dialogue in Guizhou.

**QUESTION:** Has Hu Jia come up?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** It has not come up as yet, but I am aware of the case.

**QUESTION:** Chris Bodeen with AP. Given this upcoming meeting in Berlin on Iran, how do you plan to present the case to the Chinese for more sanctions given the National Security Estimate and rising opposition to the sanctions, including from China?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** The argument we put forward is that the National Intelligence Estimate shows that one aspect, one element of Iran's weapons program was suspended a number of years ago but, as has also been pointed out, two other very important elements have continued, namely the enrichment of uranium on the one hand and the continued development of a missile program on the other so the only part of the Iranian program that was suspended – and that's all we know that was happening was suspending it, we don't even know if it might not have been resumed in very recent times – was the question of warhead design. There are after all three components of any nuclear weapon program, there's the fissile material, there's the warhead and there's the delivery mechanism. Work continues by Iran on two out of those three parts of that program. We think it is important that there be an additional Security Council resolution because Iran is out of compliance with previously passed resolutions and that is the argument that will be presented to the Chinese authorities both in my meetings here in Guizhou but more importantly when Secretary Rice meets with the Chinese Foreign Minister.

**QUESTION:** Wang Chong with China Youth Daily, now it is the fifth round of the SED [sic] but on the Chinese side it is called the Strategic Economic Dialogue but on the U.S. side it is called the 'Senior', we use a different term. Why don't you like the term 'Strategic' with China?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Certainly the relationship with China is very important, technically China is not an ally of the United States and we use the term 'strategic' usually when we're referring to dialogues with countries that have formal alliances with the United States. So that's the technical reason that we refer to it as the Senior Dialogue rather than the Strategic Dialogue. Let me emphasize here that the relationship with China is very, very important. It is as important as any relationship we have with any country. It is a long-term relationship, it is one that I can say from a personal perspective since I have worked on the U.S.-China relations off and on since 1972, has come a long way since 1972, and it is a relationship that I think on both sides which has to be cultivated and nurtured very carefully.

**QUESTION:** Chris Buckley from Reuters, another question about Taiwan. Assuming this referendum is going forward will you be offering any advise to China about how it conducts itself in the coming months? And apart from condemning the referendum will the United States be taking any additional measures in the Taiwan Strait to ensure stability over the coming months?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** I think that first of all one has to look at this step-by-step. At the moment we have articulated our position about the referendum. Of course we continue to advocate that neither side take any unilateral steps to alter the status quo. And we generally want to encourage an attitude on both sides of the strait that this is an issue that must be dealt with by peaceful means. And that to deal with the issue in any other way could have drastic consequences.

**QUESTION:** Jason Dean from the Wall Street Journal. Just to follow up on that, do you have any, and if I imagine (inaudible), opportunity just to add Taiwan and one upcoming (inaudible) do you have any opinion on the outcome of the legislative election or on the prospects of the presidential election aside from that-

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** No I really don't. And we certainly think the matter of whom the Taiwanese authorities elect or have the Taiwanese people elect is something for the Taiwanese people, the people on Taiwan themselves to decide. Although we are certainly interested in the results and we have asked our Chinese interlocutors what they think the significance of the election outcome is. But certainly we have no official opinion on that.

**QUESTION:** Yang Xiao from Beijing Youth Daily. You think that Chinese and United States relationship is very important and that the relationship will come forward. How about now (inaudible)

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Well I think what Mr. Zoellick was trying to convey was the notion that we are partners in the international system and that the international system will benefit if both of us work together on the international stage. I think we can point to areas where our two countries have worked very closely together in recent years. I would cite, for example, the Six Party Talks with regard to the Korean Peninsula. I think that has been a very important, in fact a vital area of collaboration between our two countries. The question of Sudan and Darfur. Even though we do not have absolutely identical views I think there is a good understanding between us of each other's respective positions. We have noted for example that China has taken a much more active interest in the situation in the Sudan and has even sent some engineering forces to assist in the peace-keeping efforts in Sudan. So if you look around the world you can see areas where our two countries are cooperating and that I think is part of this important partnership.

**QUESTION:** (inaudible) Talking about Six Party Talks, are you satisfied with the process up to now? The North Korean (inaudible)

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Right. Well certainly the Six Party Talks have taken some very important steps forward. The nuclear reactor in Yongbyon and the related facilities are being dismantled. In fact yesterday coming on the airplane, I was with an American nuclear scientist who was going to Yongbyon who was going to participate in the observation of the dismantlement so that is moving forward and that is an important development. The declaration that is the next step that the North Koreans need to make is not yet complete. So we went past the January 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. But I think there is still forward movement on this issue. I think we need to be a bit patient as Ambassador Hill said the other day. We can expect, we can hope for progress on this issue over the next couple of months. We've had experience already in the Six Party Talks where agreed measures were not implemented exactly on the timetable that had been stipulated but they were in the end carried out. Such as the Banco Delta Asia situation. It was complicated but it did in the end get worked out. So I think that is the situation we are in now. This forward movement, not moving quite as fast as we might like but we are going to keep working at it with the expectation that these talks will bear fruit and will be successful. (21:23)

**COMMENT:** We have time for one more question.

**QUESTION:** Admiral Keating was in town as you know and raised the issue of transparency many times. I was wondering if you could tell us what are the Chinese channels that are used for getting requests, successful requests, for a port visit? Is it through the Chinese military, the PLA, is it through the Foreign Ministry, or is through the authorities in the Hong Kong SAR? Can you tell us, is this part of the transparency issue?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** Look, I'm not going to add to whatever uncertainty may be on your mind on this subject by trying to answer that specific question. But let me say- you prompt me to want to go look in to it after this press conference- but let me say on the issue of transparency generally, it is very important that there be transparency on military matters and particularly between two countries that are, have as large and as important military capabilities as the United States and China. It's important for the conduct of relations, it's important for, to avoid misunderstandings and this is an issue that we have stressed in our dialogue with our counterparts. And I think that slowly but surely various channels are being developed both at the uniformed military level as well as through the Department of Defense and in diplomatic channels as well. But it's something we're going to keep working on. There will be a defense department representatives from both countries at our dialogue in Guizhou today and tomorrow and this is something we want to encourage. It's important.

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible)...will you be touring while you're there?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY NEGROPONTE:** A little bit, but not enough. I wish I had more time, but that will be for another opportunity. Well, thank you very, very much I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you.

Released on January 23, 2008



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