

Broaden China-US Cooperation in the 21st Century

Speech by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi
At the Center for Strategic and International Studies

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Dr. John Hamre,
President John Frisbie,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

I want to thank the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the US-China Business Council (USCBC) for hosting this event. It is a real pleasure to meet friends, both old and new, here. Over the years, the CSIS and the USCBC have stood at the forefront of China-US exchanges and worked hard to promote mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation between people of our two countries. And all of you present have done a great deal to push forward our relations. Let me take this opportunity to pay tribute and express sincere thanks to you for your efforts.

We are now in early spring. There is an old Chinese saying which goes, “A year’s success starts from work in spring.” It means that plowing and sowing in spring is crucial to agricultural production and harvest of the whole year.

The most important purpose of my visit is to make preparations for the meeting between President Hu Jintao and President Barack Obama in London in early April. Yesterday, I had good discussion with both Secretary Clinton and Secretary Geithner. We covered a wide range of issues, including the bilateral agenda and regional and international affairs, and reached much consensus. Both sides agree that solid ground work has already been done by the two sides for the very important London meeting between our two heads of state. Today, I will have the honor of meeting President Obama and Vice President Biden. I’ll also see National Security Adviser General Jones. Let me say that the two sides share the view that the upcoming meeting between our two presidents in London is of great significance for China-US relations in the new era. Both sides are committed to pushing forward this vitally important relationship between our two countries.

Early this year, our two countries held big celebrations of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations. I attended some of these commemorative events with many old and new friends. A review of the past gives me a lot of food for thought. The tremendous progress of China-US relations goes well beyond what those who were most optimistic about this relationship 30 years ago have ever expected. People want to know, in the 21st century when mankind faces major opportunities and challenges, what is the strategic foundation of China-US relations. This is a question that I often ask myself too.

I for one believe the strategic foundation of China-US relations lies in our major and unique responsibility of maintaining world peace and stability. As permanent members of the UN Security Council and as the world’s largest developing country and largest developed one respectively, China and the United States have maintained close

consultation, coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation in many international affairs. We have worked together to manage complicated and tough regional hotpot issues, fight terrorism, proliferation and transnational crimes, meet global challenges such as climate change, energy and the environment and undertake necessary reform in the international system based on justice and equality. One can hardly find an area where China-US cooperation is not needed. Comprehensive cooperation in the global sphere has tied our two countries and people to each other.

I for one believe the strategic foundation of China-US relations lies in our ever expanding common interests in promoting sustainable economic development in the world. We live in a world where countries are more interdependent with their interests more closely interconnected than at any time in history. At a time when the international financial crisis continues to spread and develop, the primary common interest of China and the United States is to weather the storm together like passengers in the same boat and support each other to get through the tough times and emerge from the crisis victorious. We should make due contribution to bringing about a new round of world economic growth. Even when the train of world economy drives into fairly smooth areas one day, there will still be the need for China and the United States, the two big engines, to jointly push it forward on a continuous basis.

I for one believe the strategic foundation of China-US relations lies in the longstanding friendship and mutual-learning between our peoples. They cherish a keen interest in each other's diverse culture and a strong wish to know each other better. Social and cultural exchanges between our two countries are becoming increasingly dynamic and intensive. The geographical distance of 10-plus hours' flight has not stood in the way of interflow between the Chinese and Americans. Each day, over 5,000 people travel across the two sides of the Pacific Ocean. Ever closer exchanges and interaction between people of our two countries contain enormous energy and have far-reaching impact. They will make people better appreciate the fact that the world is a diversified place, human civilizations are colorful and all countries should live in harmony.

In face of the profound changes in the international landscape and mounting global challenges, China and the United States have a new historic opportunity for the development of their relations. Our two countries shoulder greater responsibilities for world peace and stability, have more common interests and enjoy broader prospects for cooperation. Exchanges, cooperation and mutual benefit should be the defining features of the 21st century. Gone should be the days when countries competed at the expense of each other's interests under a zero-sum mentality because those who preach such a competition approach and model are bound to be the biggest losers today. China and the United States should and can set an example in achieving win-win progress and making greater joint efforts for an even better world.

We are happy to see that in the past 50 days since the new US administration took office, our two countries have worked together and ensured a smooth transition of our relations. The two sides have established good working relations at the top level and between various government departments. President Hu Jintao and President Obama talked by phone and reached important agreement on advancing China-US relations in the new era. Secretary Clinton paid a successful visit to China last month, which contributed in a big

way to our mutual understanding and cooperation. The two countries have maintained close consultation and coordination in bilateral and multilateral areas. "A good beginning is half the success." This good start has laid the groundwork for the further growth of China-US relations.

We should now set our sight on the longer term and draw up a good blueprint for China-US relations in the coming years. We should make concerted efforts and promote sound and steady growth of our relations.

To advance China-US relations in the new era, we should adopt a strategic and long-term perspective and keep the relations on the right track.

During his telephone conversation with President Hu Jintao at the end of last January, President Obama stated the U.S. commitment to more positive and constructive relationship with China. Secretary Clinton said to me during her visit to China that US-China relations are embracing a new era of positive cooperation. We welcome such statements from the U.S. side. We believe that China and the United States now have more common interests and a broader foundation of cooperation on a series of major and pressing issues facing today's world. The strategic significance and global influence of China-US relations have further increased. Our relations in the new era should be broader and deeper, and we should work in an all-round way to raise China-US relations to a new and much higher level of cooperation in the 21st century on the basis of mutual respect, seeking common ground while shelving differences and cooperation for win-win results.

Mutual respect means that we should respect international law and norms governing international relations, view each other's choice of development path and core interests, and refrain from doing anything that may harm each other's sovereignty, security, or development interests. *Seeking common ground while shelving differences* means that we should preserve and highlight the positive aspects of our relations. We should work hard to resolve differences and put aside those that cannot be resolved for the time being, so that they will not stand in the way of the overall development of our relations. *Cooperation for win-win results* means that we should expand practical cooperation and converging interests, actively respond to the opportunities as well as challenges brought by globalization, pursue common development and progress and make contributions to world peace and development.

To advance China-US relations in the new era, we should maintain close dialogue and exchanges at the top and other levels and cement the political foundation of the relations.

Over the years, leaders of our two countries have maintained close communication on major issues concerning China-US relations through mutual visits, meetings, telephone calls and correspondence. These exchanges have given a strong boost to the sustained, sound and steady growth of our relations. The legislatures, militaries and government departments of the two countries have also engaged in productive exchanges and cooperation on issues of mutual interest. And the two countries have put in place diverse mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation in a wide range of area. All these are effective ways to promote our relations and should therefore be maintained.

In two weeks time, President Hu Jintao and President Obama will meet in London. It will be the first meeting between our heads of state since the new US administration came into office. Both sides attach great importance to this meeting and are making intensive preparations for it. I am confident that with joint efforts of the two sides, the meeting will be a great success and chart the course for the future growth of China-US relations. President Hu Jintao has invited President Obama to visit China at a mutually convenient time and we look forward to his early visit.

Through consultation, the two sides have agreed in principle to establish the “China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogues” mechanism and decided upon the relevant arrangements for the mechanism. We hope the two sides will work together and launch this mechanism at an early date so that through continued discussions on strategic, overarching and long-term issues of mutual interest, we will further enhance mutual trust and cooperation.

To advance China-US relations in the new era, we should expand mutually-beneficial cooperation and inject fresh impetus into the relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The priority for China and the United States at the moment is to tackle the international financial crisis through intensified cooperation and work together to maintain and promote world financial and economic stability. Let me in this connection say a few words about what China will do to counter the financial crisis this year. The Chinese Government will focus on the implementation of a four trillion RMB investment program, including 1.18 trillion yuan that will come from the central budget. This program will kick-start growth by boosting domestic demand, reinvigorating industries, developing science and technology, and improving the social safety net. Some of these measures have already produced initial results, as evidenced by the recent signs of economic recovery. We will issue more than five trillion yuan of new loans to help enhance financial regulation and support economic growth with adequate money and credit supply. We are confident that we will maintain steady and relatively fast economic growth this year.

We have been following closely measures taken by the US Government to stabilize financial markets and stimulate economic recovery. We sincerely hope these measures will achieve the desired results and restore the US economy to growth soon. This is in the interest of the United States, China and the rest of the World.

Since the outbreak of the financial crisis, China and the United States have engaged in close and effective communication and coordination, and played an important part in the international efforts to tackle the crisis. China is ready to strengthen macroeconomic policy dialogue with the United States, work with you to oppose protectionism, and make fresh contributions to the stability of international financial markets and growth of the world economy. We also want to work with the United States and other countries for positive outcomes at the London G20 Summit on the basis of the achievements of the Washington Summit. In times of hardships, it is all the more important for China and the United States

to broaden and deepen bilateral trade and economic cooperation, properly handle possible frictions and differences, and forge a stronger bond to weather the crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

China and the United States share important common interest with respect to climate change, energy and the environment. Energy security, clean energy, energy conservation and pollution reduction feature prominently in our respective national development strategies. China stands ready to strengthen dialogue and consultation with the United States, pursue practical cooperation in energy conservation, new energy and renewable energy, and work with other parties under the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” to ensure the success of the Copenhagen conference scheduled for the end of the year.

Our two countries should broaden bilateral cooperation in such fields as counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, military-military relations, science and technology, culture and health. We should also strengthen coordination and cooperation on the Korean nuclear issue, the Iranian nuclear issue and other regional and international issues.

China-US coordination and cooperation on the Korean nuclear issue has become a highlight in our bilateral relations. The Six-Party Talks are now at a critical juncture. China will work with the relevant parties to maintain patience, demonstrate flexibility and overcome difficulties. We will move the process forward by building on past progress, and strive for early denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and enduring peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To advance China-US relations in the new era, we should respect and accommodate each other’s core interests and make every effort to minimize potential disruption and damage to the relations.

The question of Taiwan concerns China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and represents China’s core interests. Relations across the Taiwan Strait have been improving and have embarked on the track of peaceful development. There have been frequent people-to-people contacts, close economic links and dynamic cultural exchanges between the two sides of the Strait. We will continue to promote cross-Strait dialogue and exchanges under the principles of establishing mutual trust, laying aside disputes, seeking consensus while shelving differences, and jointly creating a win-win situation, and bring about new progress in the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

Here I want to stress that no matter how the situation across the Taiwan Strait may evolve, we will never waiver in our commitment to the one China principle and will never compromise our opposition to “Taiwan independence”, “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan”. We hope that the US side will honor its commitments, prudently and properly handle Taiwan-related issues, and take concrete actions to support the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

Of equal sensitivity are issues related to Tibet. Tibet is an inalienable part of China's territory and Tibetan affairs are exclusively China's internal affairs. Since the launch of democratic reform 50 years ago, Tibet has made remarkable progress. Its economy has registered rapid growth, various undertakings have advanced by leaps and bounds, average life expectancy has almost doubled and people's Living standards have improved steadily. The fine traditional culture of Tibet has been well preserved, and the people there enjoy all rights prescribed by law. I hope that people from various sectors in the United States will appreciate these facts, and understand and respect the Chinese people's position of upholding state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Dear Friends,

To advance China-US relations in the new era, we should promote dialogue and exchanges between people of the two countries and build stronger public support for the relations.

We will not forget that the ice in China-US relations began to thaw with the mutual visits of our ping pong teams. And the tremendous progress made in our relations over the last 30 years would not have been possible without the active involvement and support of people from all walks of life in both countries.

We should think creatively and continue to promote dialogue and exchanges between our legislatures, academic and business communities and media organizations. We should also step up exchanges at the local level. Through such efforts, we will mobilize more people to support and contribute to the growth of China-US relations. It is of particular importance to look ahead to the future and vigorously promote and support exchanges and cooperation between the young people, so that the cause of China-US friendship will endure and prosper further.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends,

China and the United States should build sustained, sound and stable relations, as this not only serves the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples, but also contributes to the world peace, stability and development. The development of China-US relations has proven time and again that China and the United States are partners for cooperation, not adversaries or enemies. Cooperation brings benefits to both countries, while confrontation hurts both sides. Some Americans often say, "It is through cooperation, rather than conflict, that your greatest successes will be derived." So let us join hands and work together for a splendid future of China-US relations.

Thank you.