

China's Ambassador to US Reviews An "Extraordinary" Year (12/31/01)



On the afternoon of December 28, Chinese Ambassador Yang Jiechi to the United State accepted People's Daily correspondents' exclusive interview in Washington and answered the correspondents' questions concerning the cooperation and development of Sino-US relations in the political, economic and other fields.

Question: I would like to ask how do you, as Chinese ambassador to the United States, appraise Sino-US relations this year?

Answer: China-US relations are full of twists and turns and ups and downs this year, traversing an extraordinary course, the "plane collision event" and the "September 11" incident have exerted important influence on the relations between the two countries. Thanks to the joint efforts made by both sides, particularly by leaders of the two countries, Sino-US relations were largely improved in the second half of this year. On October 19, President Jiang Zemin and President George W. Bush held a successful meeting during the 9th Informal APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and gained many important achievements. Both sides reached the important consensus on devoting efforts to the development of Sino-US constructive cooperative relationship, this charted the direction for the future development of relations between the two countries. Currently, both China and the United States are implementing the consensus reached between heads of State of the two countries, and expanding exchange and cooperation. The development trend of Sino-US relations is good as a whole.

The course of Sino-US relationship this year indicates that although contingencies have important impact on the relations between the two countries, in the final analysis, it is the fundamental interests of the two countries that decide the development direction of Sino-US ties. Facts prove that the common interests of China and the United States outweigh differences. As two large influential countries in the world and permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, China and the United States shoulder common responsibilities for the future and destiny of humankind, they have extensive and important

common interests in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large, in promoting regional and global economic growth and prosperity, as well as in attacking international crimes. A satisfactory Sino-US relationship is the common wish of the two peoples, as well as their vital interest. The developments after the "September 11" incident show more clearly that the international community, including China and the United States, has important common interests in the aspects of launching anti-terrorist cooperation and safeguarding world security.

Sino-US ties this year also show that strengthening contacts and exchanges between ranking officials of the two countries is extremely important. President Jiang Zemin and President Bush maintain regular ties by means of telephone and letters, exchanging opinions repeatedly on China-American relations and international issues; the face-to-face contact between heads of State of the two countries in Shanghai has deepened mutual understanding and played a great promotional role in improving and developing Sino-US relations. President Jiang Zemin, NPC Chairman Li Peng, Premier Zhu Rongji and other Chinese leaders have also exchanged views with important personages of the US government, Congress, entrepreneurs and media, during which the Chinese leaders explained China's principles and propositions on developing Sino-US relations and have achieved positive results. The visits by Vice-Premier Qian Qichen and Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to the United States respectively in March and September, and US Secretary of State Colin Powell's China tour in July were all carried out at the important moments of Sino-US relations, making major preparations for the successful meeting of heads of State of the two countries in Shanghai.

Q: How do you look upon the consensus reached by heads of State of China and the United States on making joint efforts for developing constructive cooperative relationship? What will be the prospect for the development of China-US relations next year?

A: The consensus reached by President Jiang Zemin and President Bush on both China and the United States devoting efforts to developing constructive cooperative relationship embodies the strategic eyes and the common interests objectively existing between the two countries, it is of profound guidance significance to the development of Sino-American relations in the new century. As I understand it, "constructive" refers to recognizing that there are both commonness and differences between China and the United States. But it stresses that both sides should handle China-US relationship in the spirit of seeking common grounds and laying aside differences and with a constructive and forward-looking attitude; "cooperative" emphasizes that in handling mutual relations, both sides should adhere to a cooperative attitude and strive to maintain and expand the cooperative field. Fixing China-US ties as developing constructive, cooperative relations is a correct choice made by China and the United States under the tendency of the day in seeking peace and stability and promoting

development at the present time, it is conducive to boosting the healthy and stable development of Sino-US relationship and is beneficial to world peace and stability. As we look forward to next year, we find there are both challenge and opportunity existing in China-US relationship, but opportunity outweighs challenge. February 28 will mark the 30th anniversary of the publication of the Sino-US Shanghai Communique, an important day worth commemoration. The publication of the Shanghai Communique is an epoch-making milestone in the history of Sino-US relations. The Shanghai Communique and its subsequent publication of the Sino-US communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States and the "August 17" communique laid down important principles guiding China-US relations. The course traversed by China-US relationship over the past 30 years indicates that so long as both sides can treat bilateral relations with a strategic perspective and from a long-term angle, firmly grasp the common interests between the two countries, abide by the three China-US joint communiqués, enhance mutual understanding, expand common views, seek common grounds and reserve differences and develop cooperation, then Sino-US relations can definitely continue to achieve major improvement and development.

Q: Would you please say something about the Taiwan issue in Sino-US relationship?

A: The Taiwan question has always been a most important and sensitive core issue in China-US relationship. The three China-US joint communiqués have laid down guiding principles for correctly handling the Taiwan question. Abiding by the three Sino-US joint communiqués and handling the Taiwan issue prudently and properly are the key to guaranteeing the stable and sound development of Sino-US relationship.

On the issue of Taiwan, all previous US governments have made clear-cut promises to the Chinese government and people, and that is, upholding the one-China policy, observing the three Sino-US joint communiqués and refraining from supporting the "independence" of Taiwan. We pay great attention to the above-mentioned promises made by the US side, but we attach even more importance to its actual deeds.

The Chinese government will continue to follow the basic principles of "peaceful reunification, and one country, two systems" and the eight-point proposal put forward by President Jiang Zemin for solving the Taiwan issue. We have the greatest sincerity in trying all we can for peaceful reunification, at the same time, we will absolutely not allow anybody and any force to separate Taiwan from China. It must be noted that opposing "Taiwan independence", seeking stability and development is the mainstream popular will of the Taiwanese society, and more and more Americans have come to understand and realize this point. The US government should go with the trend of history, and support China's peaceful reunification. An early solution of the Taiwan issue not only conforms to China's interest, but

also facilitates peace, stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region, it is also beneficial to the United States.

Q: Economic and trade ties are an important component of the Sino-US relationship, how do you appraise the cooperation between the two countries this year in this field? What influence will China's accession to the WTO produce on Sino-US relations?

A: Although there is an obvious slowdown in the world economic growth and US gradual entry into economic recession this year, the development momentum of Chinese-US economic and trade relations remains good. In the trading realm, Chinese customs statistics show that between January and October this year, the total volume of Sino-US trade reached US\$66.8 billion, an 8.9 percent increase over last year's same period. Of which China's exports to the United States were valued at US\$45.2 billion, and its imports were US\$21.6 billion. Although the Chinese side had a trade surplus, its imports from the United States grew by 21.2 percent, far higher than the growth rate of export to the United States. China's export of good and cheap daily-use articles to the United States greatly benefits US common people, and objectively helps reduce the United States' worries about inflation as it adopts measures to stimulate the domestic economy. With regard to investment, in the first three quarters of this year, the United States newly added 1,872 invested projects in China, with actual investment amounting to US\$3.183 billion, a 37.76 percent year-on-year increase. The above-mentioned achievements in China-US economic and trade exchange and cooperation were gained under the difficulties emerged in the US economy and the world economy. This precisely shows that the two countries have strong mutual complementarity and tremendous cooperative potential.

China's entry into the WTO is beneficial to both China and the United States. On December 27, President Bush formally announced that the United States granted China permanent normal trade relation (PNTR) status, clearing away a big artificial political interference factor, this will enhance stability in bilateral economic and trade ties. China's accession to the WTO will make the Chinese market more attractive and will facilitate expansion of trade with the United States and attraction of more US investment and technologies; the further improvement of China's domestic commercial environment and the further opening of its market to the outside world will provide US enterprises with more business opportunities. What is more, China still has great development potential in the realm of information and communication technology and has broad market space. In addition, China and the United States will have more opportunity to develop multilateral trading cooperation within the WTO framework. In short, China's entry into the WTO not only should, but also can, become a strong driving force for the further development of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, the key to this is to make a good beginning. I want to point out here that

under the current new situation, it is of more important strategic significance for China and the United States to conduct dialog and cooperation in a series of problems including economy, finance and trade.

In addition, the exchange and cooperation between China and the United States this year in the fields of culture, education, science and technology, public health and sports continue to maintain a good development momentum and there are closer ties between the two peoples. I believe that the exchange and contact in various fields between China and the United States will have new development next year, advancing bilateral ties in a more positive direction.

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