

# Ambassador Wu Jianmin's speech on U.S.-China Relations

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Mr. Governor, Mr. President and Mrs. Machtley, Mr. Consul General, ladies and gentlemen, it's a privilege and honor for me to come to this dinner to speak to you about China-U.S. 30 years of diplomatic relations.

Let me first thank President Machtley for inviting me to come here. I received his letter two months ago. To tell you the truth, I was moved by his letter, because through this letter, I see a man with a vision. He understands the importance of U.S.-China relations. He understands how important our relationship for our future. That is why I decided to come to this dinner and to speak to you.

I'd like to share a few thoughts with you. My presentation consists of three parts. First 30 years of diplomatic relations, a success story. Second, what can we learn from this success story. Third, where do we go from here.

Let me start from the first part. 30 years of diplomatic relations, a success story. 30 years, its short for the history but for US- China relations, a succeed change. I can tell you from two levels. First at my humble level.

1971, November, I was told by my boss, "you and your wife, you will go to the United States, go to New York." You know this famous resolution passed by the General Assembly of United Nations, October 25th 1971. I joined this very delegation to go to New York. I told myself, "Maybe I have to call my mother and my father." You know in 1971, to make a telephone call from Beijing to Xi'an, it was a luxury. At my home I have no telephone. My mother, my father, had no telephone. I had to go to the post office and wait in a long line. At last I made a call, I said, "Mom, Yanhua, my wife, and I will go to the United States. We were members of this very first delegation to go to UN." And she said, "That's wonderful. But my son, be careful, the U.S. is our enemy".

1971. I remember we were seen off by late Premier Zhou En'lai. We left Beijing in November 9th, 1971. Premier Zhou En'lai was there, the members of the cabinet were there and 5,000 people were there. And then Zhou En'lai and the chairman of the Chinese delegation went around. We walked around. I saw the background of the airport, huge slogan, "People of the world, unite, and defeat U.S. imperials like running dogs". That was in 1971.

But I come back to your country in 1985. 1986, my daughter was a high school student. One day she called me, said "Daddy, I want to go to the United States to study." 15 years is a short time. 15 years ago, my mom said U.S. was an enemy. 15 years later, U.S. becomes such a place for my daughter.

Today, my nephew, he came to this country in 1984. He's a Harvard professor in medicine. I think that our bilateral relationship grew beyond any possible imagination.

In terms of the bilateral relationships at national level, 1971, trade between U.S. and China: zero. People to people exchange: zero. Student exchange: zero. Today, our trade volume is close to \$400 billion. People to people exchange, 2.5 million. We have roughly 100,000 students in the U.S. You know since the opening, since 1978, we sent altogether 1.2 million students aboard, 1/3 came to this country. Today U.S. is such an attractive place for Chinese students. U.S. is the first destination. Sea change occurred, for the benefit of American People, Chinese people, for the benefit of the rest of the world.

Now I'm coming to the second part of my talk. What can we learn from this success story? I believe we can learn three things.

First, policy matters. You know in 1978 we start a new policy, reform and opening. Why reform? Mr. Deng Xiaoping put it that way, "Reform or die." The old system had no future. We've got to change to reform. Why opening? We Chinese realized we lagged far behind the industrialized countries. The only way to catch up is opening. That policy made a lot of change in China.

1971, I come here, I stay on as permanent mission to the United Nations. On weekend I went to your supermarket, such affluence. I envied America. Before I come here we were told that American imperialism was dying. There is no sign of dying. I told myself, in my lifetime, I won't see in China such affluence. But today you go to China, and you compare China (Chinese) supermarket and yours, there's no difference. Big changes. This policy changed a lot in China.

In terms of international strategy, there are two key elements. First, we have the strategy of the peaceful development. In the past we put peaceful rise. What does it mean? It means China will not follow footsteps of former colonial powers. It means the three NOs.

No hegemony. China will never seek hegemony. I remember Mr. Deng Xiaoping said this on April 1974 at the podium of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He said, "China will never seek hegemony. Should one day, our children and grand children decide to seek hegemony, from this podium, I want people around the world to unite to defeat Chinese hegemony." I was at United Nations for 10 years. I had never heard that kind of statement. This is part of Deng Xiaoping's legacy: China will never seek hegemony.

No expansion. We mean it. Look at China's history, no expansion. We will stay in that way.

The third no, no alliance. We Chinese, we believe that alliance may be something for the past. You know, August 8th last year, broke out Georgia War. Our Russia friends want very much China to take their side. Later on we have the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting. They want also, this organization to take their side. China refrained from doing that. We want peaceful.

Another key element of China's foreign policy is we put win-win at center of our international strategy. If you look at the past 30 years you can tell the most important feature of China's modernization is sharing. We did not keep the growth for China alone. We are sharing the growth with the rest of the world. I think the FDI figure tells volume. Today the stock of FDI, foreign direct investment, in China, amounted to 1 trillion U.S. dollars. You compare this figure with FDI in Japan, China's may be 6 times that in Japan. The figure in Korea, China's figure is 10 times. It means what? Means we are in the degree of opening up China deeper. We understand that if China wants to rise, that this is (the) only way, we have to share our growth with the rest of the world. This explains why U.S.-China trade cooperation, economic cooperation grew so fast. This is the first thing we learn from the success story.

The second thing we learned is focus on the common interests. U.S.-China, we have differences, we have common interests. From Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao, they all say, "Yes, we have differences with U.S., we also have common interests with U.S. But our common interests with U.S. outweigh by far our differences." They mean it. So in the past 30 years, two countries, we focused on common interests. So our common interests keep growing steadily in an amazing way. As a result of this strong growth the foundation of the U.S.-China relations is very strong. When this foundation is growing stronger and stronger, we are in a better position to deal with our differences.

The third thing we'll learn from this success story is we have to deal with our differences in the proper way. What do I mean by proper way?

First we have to accept the differences. China and America, we are different, different countries, different political systems, different history, different culture, different stage of economic development. Certainly we are different.

You know in our bilateral relationship, we don't try to transform others. You know a few years ago, American Secretary of State, Ms. Rice, she made a statement about foreign policy. The title of this statement is "Transformational Diplomacy" by which I think she wanted to transform others, for instance of transforming Middle East. Can you transform others? No way. Middle East, can you transform Middle East into American style democracy? I can guarantee you the failure. The differences are there.

The world I think in the nature, the most valuable asset, the most valuable wealth, is the biodiversity. Should when the biodiversity diminish, we all suffer from it. In the human society, the most valuable wealth is cultural diversity. The world is marvelous because of the cultural diversity. I think a large part of our differences are coming from the cultural diversity. You know, the mindset is determined by the culture. The human's behavior is determined by the mindset. The culture matters a lot. So when we deal with our differences in the proper way, we have to accept that we are different. We have differences now and maybe in 100 years, still we have some differences because of the cultural diversity.

To deal with our differences in the proper way, secondly, if we have some big arguments, the best

answer is dialogue, on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Look at the past 30 years, our bilateral relationship survived through quite a few crises. 1989, 1992, you sailed F16 to Taiwan then 1999 bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. Then in 2001. I mean EP3 incidence over Hainan Island. If you look back at how we dealt with these crises, I think we choose the dialogue, not confrontation, to deal with our differences. I think dialogue is the best way. So I think these three things, we learned from this success story.

Now I'm coming to the last part of my talk. Where do we go from here? I'd like to share with you, I mean, several thoughts. First, we have to fully realize the importance of U.S.-China relations. January 30th this year, Hu Jintao and President Obama, they had a telephone conversation. President Obama said this, "For both of us, for U.S. and China, there is no other bilateral relationship which is more important than U.S.-China relationship." He means it. We Chinese, we believe it. U.S.-China relations are very important. You are the only superpower. China is a new emerging power. These two countries, when they continue cooperation, stakes are high. The whole world will benefit from it. Should we decide one day to fight each other, disaster for everybody, no winner. So to make U.S.-China relations grow steadily, first we have to understand the importance of this relationship. Because if we want our children, our grandchildren, our great grand children to live in peace and prosperity, this relationship matters a lot.

Second, we have to focus on the major issues. The world is undergoing such a severe crisis. I just have some exchanges with the Governor. This is a global crisis. A global crisis requires a global solution, no piecemeal. We need international coordination. Facing the crisis, there are two approaches. The first one is cooperation. China stands for it. The second one is confrontation, finger pointing. If we start finger pointing, we will end up in conflict. There will be no winner, only losers. We'll not do it.

Second major issue facing us, is climate change. People say there is a new MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction). During the cold war, say U.S. had large nuclear arsenal, so did Soviet Union. These two countries go to war, there will be a sort of a Mutual Assured Destruction. Today, with the climate change such a tremendous challenge facing the world, we need international cooperation. U.S. and China, we are two largest emitters of CO<sub>2</sub>, we have to cooperate to fix it. We have to give example to the world. When we cooperate I think we can make this issue a new framework for U.S.-China cooperation in the 21st century.

The third thing, I think we have to overcome some misperceptions, misperceptions we have on both sides. You know, in China, the conspiracy theories are very, very popular. As some people say, look, this crisis is U.S. manipulation. I told them, if U.S. can manipulate crisis, why can't U.S. resolve this crisis very quickly? No! No way! You see, that kind of theory is very dangerous for both of us. Talking about misperceptions, very often people ask me, you Chinese are doing very well in economic area. What about political reform? What about democracy? What about human rights? I told them this, look, China's objective in the new century, we have four. We'd like to make China (a) prosperous, democratic, civilized, and a harmonious country.

Prosperous, we'd like to catch up by 2050, the midlife level of the industrialized countries.

Democratic, means we want the Chinese people's will to find its full expression in all sphere of the Chinese life. Civilized, we want China's civilization to be open to take good elements from other civilizations and to have a new development. Harmonious, in this world, there are too many conflicts. We hope that with international cooperation we can find a solution. Let's make the world more harmonious. And China's part, we'd like to above all, make China a harmonious country.

Democracy is part of China's objective. But from time to time, our American friends tend to look at China with American eyes. But you have to remember that you are where you are after more than two centuries of evolution. How can you expect the Chinese to behave exactly like you? It's impossible. You achieved independence in 1776. In 1789, you elect your first president. How many people did vote? If my memory serves me right, only 4% of American people voted. When American women got the right to vote, it was very late in 1920. And the black people, they got civil rights, later in 1960s. I'm saying that not to embarrass you. I have no intention whatsoever to embarrass you. It's a factual statement. Democracy is evolving in each and every country at a pace dictated not by outside forces, by the condition of this or that country.

China abolish feudal regime in 1949. You see, this year, 2009, People's Republic will mark the 60th anniversary. We have a long way to go. But our aim is quite clear. We'd like to make China a democratic country. No doubt about it. We are moving along this way. But don't expect China to exactly behave like you. That's impossible.

Another misperception, people tend to compare China with the former Soviet Union. They say, look, Soviet Union was led by the Communist Party. You China also led by the Communist Party. But they are Communist Party and Communist Parties. Soviet Union and China are quite different. Above all, we have different policies. We do not seek hegemony. That was not the case of the Soviet Union. We do not seek expansion. That was not the case of the Soviet Union. Taking U.S.-China relations and comparing it with the U.S.-Soviet relations, you can see the cooperation between the Soviet Union and the US was very limited. In 1991, the year of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the trade volume between the U.S. and Soviet Union amounted only to 4.3 billion USD. Today, the trade volume between China and US amounts to almost 400 billion USD. People to people exchange, students exchange and cooperation in many other areas, there is no comparison between Soviet-U.S. relations with China-American relations.

I'm admiring what you are doing here. You people give a lot of importance to U.S.-China relationship. This relationship is so important. U.S.-China cooperation is a huge undertaking. We need the present generation, next generation, and the generation after to work together to make our relationship most successful, most fruitful, not only for our two countries' benefit, and also for the benefit for the whole world. Thank you very much

## Q & A

**Question 1:** It's a question about Taiwan relations. In the recent year or so, things have been getting much more positive on both sides of the Strait. Could you sort of lay out a path for the next three or

four years of where this relationship will go?

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** You know, last year in May, Taiwan got a new president. Since then, the cross-strait relationship has been growing steadily. We decide to open three communications, direct flight, direct shipping and also direct mail. These measures are welcome by the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. I believe, as you said, that in three or four years, that kind of cooperation will keep growing.

Already, in the economic field, two sides across strait are so deeply interdependent. And we have large trade deficit, with our competitors in Taiwan, more than 80 billion USD. They enjoyed a large trade surplus. This is opposite in terms of US-China relations. And people to people exchange, I mean tourists. I think it's a lot. Especially, the current crisis, I believe will give a strong push to the cooperation across the Strait. I believe cooperation will be growing in all fields that will pave the way for one day a reunification. There is a Chinese saying which goes like this "When water comes in, it makes a canal". So what we need today is to pour a lot of water in to develop and to expand our cooperation across the Strait. Over time we will come together. Thank you.

**Question 2:** A lot of analysts that are looking at longer term concerns beyond the economic crisis or even some of the issues in the Middle East. Think of Africa as potentially the most destabilizing area in the world because of its economic instability. Do you see that as one of the places there the United States and China can have a common interest in dealing with that longer term threat and can you talk about China's thoughts about Africa?

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** You know, Africa during quite a few years after the cold war was marginalized in the globalization process. It was very bad for everybody. China and Africa in the past we enjoyed a mutual sympathy, mutual support, and solidarity. And when China started modernization, we need a lot of commodities and Africa they have. So we start cooperation with Africa in large scale. Last year, in 2008 the trade volume between China and Africa exceeded for the first time 100 Billion USD, big increase, because in 2007, (it was) nearly 70 billion USD. In one year, 30 billion more, big increase. You know, the development of cooperation between China and Africa is mutually beneficial. It's not exclusive, but inclusive. You know, when I was a Chinese ambassador to France from 1998 to 2003, already I got instructions from my government: Let's explore possibility of the trilateral cooperation in Africa. It means Africa, France, (and) China. China alone is not able to lift Africa out of poverty. We need international community to work together to help Africa, to move out of poverty. In that process I believe, US., China, we can cooperate. For the mutual benefit and also for the benefit of African people. Thank you.

**Question 3:** Mr. Ambassador, since both of us, China and America are right now in the dumps. I ask you the impossible question, do you see any way out of it, and which way would we go? If your country called up our debts, Americans will be worse off. I hope it would not happen. But how could we cooperate to get out of it?

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** It's a very good question because everyone is worried about this crisis.

This crisis, China will do her part. As I said, we need international cooperation to move out of this crisis.

First, we have to keep China's economy growing. My Prime Minister says these in Davos. The target of China this year, 2008, is 8% growth. 8% growth compared to 13% is slower. But 8% is very difficult. My Prime Minister said it is very difficult. But we'll do whatever we can to achieve this target because China needs it, the international community needs it. I believe we can make it, for three reasons.

First, China is in the process of industrialization and urbanization. There is large room for growth. In 1978 urbanization rate in China was 17%, today is 43%. The world average level is more than 50%. So for China we have large room for growth.

Second, this crisis occurred at a time when China has to change her development model. In the past 30 years, no doubt, it was a success story. But for any success, you need to pay a price. China paid dearly for this success in terms of the environment, in terms of commodities. The Chinese leadership realized that that kind of model development is not sustainable. We consume too much energy. So in this area, China and U.S., we can cooperate. China's energy efficiency is quite low. Yours is 4 times that of China. So we need your equipment, we need your technology. So in that way we can change our model of development. This is my second reason for 8%.

Third reason, in terms of infrastructure we have a lot of room for growth. I can give you an example. In 1997 when Asian financial crisis occurred, China's total number of the highway, only nearly 2,000 kilometers. Now we have nearly 54,000 kilometers of highway. A highway network was put in place in the past 11 years. This highway system, highway network, helped a lot China's economic growth. Today we like invest in the high speed train. That will make a difference. You know Beijing and Tianjin, 160 kilometers. If you drive, it takes you an hour and a half. With the high speed train, it's already in place, half an hour from Beijing to Tianjin, (which is) a big city of 12 or 13 million people. Now, Beijing-Shanghai high speed train is under construction. I hope it will be over before Shanghai Expo. We have big exposition, a universal exposition in Shanghai in May 2010 and the high speed train will be ready before that time. We would like to take advantage of our need to invest heavily in this area. You know we have a huge saving. The Chinese save too much. The savings rate in China is more than 40%. I believe total savings in addition to Chinese foreign exchange reserve, the total Chinese savings amounted to 7 trillion USD, a lot. So we have the money to invest, so at this level keep China's economy growing. We do our part. At the international level, how to restore the confidence. It's crucial. You know the confidence matters a lot for the economy. China also likes to do her part. Certainly, in the international framework (China) will behave in the responsible way because it is in our common interest to move out from this crisis. Thank you.

**Question 4:** You were just speaking about confidence. Your GDP grew by 9% every year up until the economic downturn. You now have a glut of students graduating from premier universities and it seems according to the economists that you're moving them out into rural areas to assist in the mechanization and the growth in these areas. Please speak to me, or speak to us, about what is going

on with these students with their dreams deferred and what China is doing to address that need. And also, speak to us about what we can do better in saving.

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** You know China's universities witness strong expansion in last eight years. China's university student population passed from 1.5 million to 6 million. So every year we have 6 million university graduates. How to provide them with job? It's a big issue. One of the top priorities of my government is to create jobs, not only for migrant workers, but also for the universities graduates. It's not an easy job. We are encouraging SMEs to grow because SMEs create, as your country, more than 70% of the jobs in China. It's not up to me to tell Americans how to increase your savings. You are Americans, you are very clever people. Certainly I think you'll find that this crisis, believe me, will change a lot of things. I hope in the aftermath of this crisis, you will save more!

**Question 5:** Well obviously I am Chinese. I need to ask you a very practical question. I have been traveling in this country for more than 22 years and I was always trying to communicate with my American friends that because no matter how polite they are they always have the idea of trying to separate the government, the political system, with our economy, with our people. They say that you Chinese are good, the economy is good, but you are a very suppressive government led by the communists. So my answer to them is that if you separate the economy and the development so far so long and people in 1989 trying to say China is going to crumble. It didn't happen. See, I was trying to convey to my friends in the United States that, I'm not a spokesman for the government, but if you try to blame the government, saying that that's just a bunch of corrupts there, then the society is not going to prosper for that long. So could you please teach me or help me to try to convey, you know, in a more effective way that if you try to hide from the situation, there is human rights, abuses, how could I talk to them that it's a harmonious society with all of the elements working together. American friends try to vote for a President twice and try to complain that that is the worst President in their whole time, but then, they voted. So what is the matter? What is happening there? Please, thank you.

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** I believe for American people, the best way to understand China is to go to China to see the country for themselves. I've spent 9 years in Europe as the Chinese Ambassador in Netherlands, in Geneva, in France. I notice a major difference between those who have never been to China and those who have been to China. You have to be there, to see the change, to talk to the people. Then you understand better (about) this country. I think your President and your Confucius Institute, you are doing very well. A lot of professors from Bryant University go to China as well as students. It's very important.

Secondly, I believe that, we have to accept the differences. You know these differences is a fact of life. You American people sometimes, you give the outside world the impression you have a mission to change the world, to transform the world. Maybe your intention is excellent, but can you really do it? You will have many difficulties. So I think this is why I explain in my talk that the differences are there, we have to accept it. Many of the differences are coming from the cultural diversity.

The third thing, I believe you and other Chinese-American or Chinese students, they are here, they can tell their personal experience, their life story, to American people. These are concrete examples tells

volume. You can do that. On the other hand, we Chinese, we have to improve the communication. To be frank with you, I wrote the first book on communication in China. I introduce this communication into the university. I believe we are not very good at it. We need to improve it, with your help. Thank you.

**Question 6:** You mentioned earlier that China is not interested in hegemony, it's interested in democracy. Do you think that in this context the people of Tibet will be able to participate in this process?

**Ambassador Wu Jianmin:** You know, I don't know whether you have been to Tibet. Tibet has become a part of China since the 13th century. Tibet, when Tibet was ruled by Dalai Lama, I don't know what kind of regime he practiced there. I don't know whether you know it, what kind of regime he practiced there. The regime he practiced there is serfdom, it's worse than slavery, it's very cruel. If for a certain ceremony, they need a human heart, they just take the slave and kill him and take his heart to the ceremony. Some musical instruments were made with human parts. It's terrible. In 1959, Dalai Lama started rebelling and why he started rebelling? Because when Tibet was liberated peacefully in 1950 we had an agreement with the Dalai Lama. We say, look, we respect your current regime. When you want reform, we can negotiate with you. You know, after the founding of the People's Republic, we made so many reforms. We abolish feudalism, and they felt threatened. With the support, to be frank with you, with the CIA and with some other people, they start rebelling and they failed. Then we start reforming Tibet.

You said, human rights. You know, before 1959, under serfdom regime, serfs were not considered as human beings. They were considered as animals with a speaking ability, that's it. So after 1959 we abolished serfdom. In terms of human rights, we made a big leap forward. I can give you a very concrete example. Life expectancy before 1959 in Tibet (was) 35. Now, (it is) 68. The population of Tibet doubled. Education went very fast. In the past, most children did not go to school. Now almost all children go to school. A big step forward. As you said, democracy, you know, as I explained earlier to you, democracy is evolving in every country at the pace is decided by the condition of this country. China is moving forward. In Tibet we have the autonomy, a lot of things, freedom of religion, there are much more temples than that were under Dalai Lama. People live much better. So I think, as I said earlier, the best way to understand China is to go there, to see the country for yourself. I hope one day, you'll go to Tibet to see this part of China for yourself. I thank you very much.