

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

**Remarks With President Hu Jintao of China During a Roundtable Discussion
With American and Chinese Business Leaders**

January 19, 2011

President Obama. Well, first of all, thanks to all of you for joining, both American and Chinese business leaders.

President Hu and I have had some excellent discussions, both last night in a smaller dinner and then this morning with our respective teams. But we very much believe that in order for the U.S.-China relationship to deepen and to grow, that it can't just be a matter of government-to-government contacts.

And there has been no sector of our societies that have been stronger proponents of U.S.-China relations than the business sector. And so I'm very pleased that we have some of America's top businesses here. Many of them have a longstanding relationship with China, have been selling American goods, promoting American services in China. And they, I think, can testify to the benefits that the United States obtains from strong relations with China.

We've got some Chinese business leaders here who I know are already doing business in the United States, making investments in the United States, engaging in joint ventures in the United States, and helping grow the economy here in the United States. I know they're interested in finding ways that they can expand their activities in the United States.

And so I think our goal here today was to make sure that we break out of the old stereotypes that somehow China is simply taking manufacturing jobs and taking advantage of low wages; the U.S. is importing cheap goods and thereby having cheaper products, but also putting strains on our employment base. The relationship is much more complex than that, and it has much more potential than that.

China is one of the top markets for American exports. We're now exporting more than \$100 billion a year in goods and services to China, and that supports about half a million American jobs, from manufacturing to agriculture. And in fact, our exports to China are growing nearly twice as fast as our exports to the rest of the world.

Of course, here in the United States, we've got one of the most open economies in the world, and that makes us a top destination for Chinese exports, but also Chinese investment.

It is important, I think, to note that even with China's enormous population, the United States still does more trade with Europe than it does with China. That, I think, gives an indication of the amount of progress that can be made if we are consulting with each other, if we are hearing specifically from businesses in terms of how we can ease some of the frictions that exist in our trading relationship.

And so my hope is that today, in the brief time that we have, we'll be able to hear some concrete ideas about how we make sure that fair—that trade is fair, that there's a level playing field; how can we protect intellectual property; how can we promote innovation; how can both of our governments remove barriers to trade and barriers to job creation.

And with China's growing middle class, I believe that, over the coming years, we can more than double our exports to China and create more jobs here in the United States. And I'm sure that Chinese business leaders see enormous opportunities here as well.

So with that, I'd like to just turn it over briefly to President Hu, and then maybe we can hear from some of the leaders around the table.

President Hu. Business leaders, today it gives me a great pleasure to be here with President Obama and meet with you business leaders.

All of you around this table and your companies are leading performers of the two countries. You have not only made positive contribution to the economic growth of your respective countries, but also to China-U.S. relations.

So I wish to offer you my sincere appreciation. All business leaders around this table have seized the opportunities presented by the deepening economic globalization. You have been working vigorously to expand market in each other's countries. You have grown your business, but also promoted mutual beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

I will cite a set of statistics to show how far we have come.

In 1979, when we formally established diplomatic ties, our two-way trade was less than 2.5 billion U.S. dollars. But the figure for last year was 380 billion U.S. dollars, which is more than 150-fold increase. Our mutual investment also started from virtually nothing to an accumulation of 70 billion U.S. dollars.

The trade and investment cooperation between our two countries have indeed brought real benefits to the people of our countries and important business communities—opportunities for our business communities.

According to figures, our two-way trade has brought about 60 billion U.S. dollars of benefits to U.S. consumers.

If we look ahead to the future, our trade cooperation enjoys a promising future. Here, I have a message to all of you. That is, China is speeding up this transformation of economic growth pattern and economic restructuring. We are focusing our efforts to boosting domestic demand, especially consumer spending.

In recent years, China's domestic spending has been growing at a double-digit rate every year. In 2010, our domestic market has surpassed a scale of 2 trillion U.S. dollars. And here in the United States, you are also working all-out to stimulate your economy.

President Obama has launched a program to double your exports. Both in the dinner last night and in my meeting with President Obama just now, we discussed how to advance economic cooperation between our two countries across the board.

We agreed to strengthen our cooperation in the financial, economic, trade, energy, the environment, science and technology, agriculture, infrastructure, and many other fields.

So indeed, there is a promising future for trade and investment cooperation between our two countries. I do hope that companies from both countries can seize the opportunities, take active options, and achieve great things.

I also have a message to American entrepreneurs. That is, we welcome you as companies to China. China follows reform and opening up. We will, as always, try to follow—provide a transparent, just, fair, highly efficient investment climate to U.S. companies and other foreign companies.

I also wish to tell you that all companies registered in China are given national treatment. In terms of innovation products, accreditation, government procurement, IPR protection, the Chinese Government will give them equal treatment.

Here, I also have a message to Chinese entrepreneurs. That is, the Chinese Government will, as it has always done, support you in making investments and doing business here in the United States. I hope that you can continue to be enterprising and creative and, at the same time, don't forget to give back to the local communities.

I do believe that President Obama and the U.S. administration will provide a level playing field for Chinese companies doing—making investments here in the United States.

To conclude, I wish the companies you represent even greater growth in the new year. And I also expect that you can make even greater contribution to promoting trade and investment cooperation between our two countries.

And now I'm ready to listen to your views. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. in Room 430 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Address and remarks : U.S. and Chinese business leaders, meeting with Presidents Obama and Hu; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : China, President Hu.

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