

Firmly Promote the China-U.S. Cooperative Partnership — Commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué

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Forty years ago, the Shanghai Communiqué was published in Shanghai. A milestone in the history of China-U.S. relations, it opened a new chapter of exchanges and cooperation between China and the United States. Looking back at the past four decades, we find that, despite the many ups and downs, the bilateral relationship has maintained the right track and thus achieved substantial developments.

Widespread and profound changes have taken place in the relationship between China and the United States during the 40 years: leaders of both countries now meet several times a year while they met only once in several years four decades ago; bilateral trade grew from less than US\$2.5 billion to the record-setting 440 billion last year; their cooperation has extended from the land, sea, air and space to the virtual world. The seed that the Shanghai Communiqué sowed for China-U.S. relations

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The historic handshake between U.S. President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in February 1972.

has already grown into a tall tree and borne rich fruits, which nobody could possibly expect four decades ago.

Today, standing on the new historical starting point, China and the United States are working together to build a cooperative partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit along the direction mapped out by leaders of both countries.

The great Chinese thinker Confucius said that Man should no longer suffer from perplexities in his 40's. Forty years after the Shanghai Communiqué and at a time when the China-U.S. relationship enters the years of "no perplexities", people in both

countries have gotten a more profound understanding of its importance, deeper feeling of the fruits it has produced, and higher expectation for its future.

Meanwhile, at this moment of “no perplexities”, China-U.S. relationship is still facing some “perplexities”, which keeps urging on us to take more efforts to promote the sustained development of this relationship along a healthy and stable course.

The first perplexity is whether enough mutual trust can be built between both countries.

It is obvious that mutual trust is needed between both countries. China and the United States must maintain a healthy, stable and sustainable relationship in order to manage their ever closer bilateral ties, deal with the common challenges on both global and regional levels, meet the needs of long-term development of their bilateral relations, and respond to the common expectations of the international community. The foundation of such relationship is mutual trust.

It should be recognized that both China and the United States have made great efforts to build and strengthen their mutual trust. Now there are more than 60 dialogue and consultation mechanisms between the two countries, which engage all governmental levels from top leaders to working-level officials and cover such broad areas as politics, security, defense, economy, trade, science and technology, culture, energy and environment. During President Hu Jintao’s state visit to the United States in January 2011 at the invitation of President Obama, a joint statement was issued in which both leaders “agreed to further develop and deepen mutual strategic trust in order to enhance the bilateral relationship.”

In the meantime, there are indeed mutual trust “deficits” between the two countries. Whenever the bilateral relationship encounters problems, voices questioning the fundamental value of the relationship would always emerge; and from time

to time there would be people advocating starting China-U.S. relationship all over again despite the fact that such relationship is indeed “too broad and deep to tumble.” Therefore, to nurture and deepen mutual trust remains a major issue that requires substantial attention and careful actions of both countries.

Two points are of crucial significance in this regard. First, both countries should truly respect and not harm each other’s core interests. With regard to issues concerning national sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity, both countries should not only show such respect in words, but in actions. This is the basic premise of building mutual trust. Only because of such spirit demonstrated in the Three Joint Communiqués starting from the Shanghai Communiqué as well as other important political documents between the two countries have China-U.S. relations achieved such great progress so far. Second, both countries should develop a comprehensive, objective and realistic understanding of each other’s strategic intention. As both are major powers, even trivial misjudgment of each other’s strategic intention may bring about severe consequences, for which, both sides must stay on constant alert.

At present, many people in the United States and around the world are closely watching China’s steps on the road of peaceful development, which is quite understandable. In fact, whether China takes the road of peaceful development and whether it can succeed in doing so concerns the fundamental interests of the Chinese people in the first place. The road of peaceful development is a choice based on China’s fundamental interests, its history and realistic conditions as well as the trends of the world. It is precisely because of firmly taking the road of peaceful development that China has achieved success in its reform and opening-up as well as economic and social development in the past more than 30 years. There is no reason for China to change course, and neither will it. In this sense,

the reason for China to raise its national power and strengthen national defense is to reduce the interferences and hindrances on its road of peaceful development, so that it can take bigger and more solid steps on this road.

It must be pointed out that for China to take the road of peaceful development not only depends on its own efforts, but also needs the understanding and support from the outside world. On this, the choice made by the United States is of crucial importance.

In short, the Chinese side hopes that China and the United States will deepen mutual trust on these major issues to produce richer fruits in their cooperation, which, in turn, will further promote their mutual trust. China expects such kind of virtuous cycle.

The second perplexity is whether China-U.S. cooperation is mutually beneficial.

This, as a matter of fact, should not have been a question. Over the past 40 years since the Shanghai Communiqué was issued, with the normalization, and then the tremendous development of Sino-U.S. relations, both China and the United States have benefited greatly from their ever-deepening partnership. Both share a better international environment and growing opportunities for their respective economic prosperity; both enjoy more favorable conditions in tackling global and regional issues; and both peoples are able to enjoy tangible benefits from this relationship. Such are all indisputable facts.

At present, much discussion centers on China-U.S. economic relationship. Some think that in that relationship one is taking advantage over the other, which is definitely not true. China needs capital, technologies and advanced management experience from the outside in its development, and at the same time it needs to enter the international market and more deeply engage itself with the international economic, trade and

financial systems. China fully acknowledges the positive role the United States has played in this regard. In the meanwhile, it should be noted that China's opening-up has brought many precious investment opportunities and bigger markets for the United States, contributing to the global competitiveness of U.S. enterprises and benefiting U.S. consumers as well. With China's participation, the international economic, trade and financial systems have grown to be more extensive and efficient. Given its status in those systems, the United States should have stronger feeling than others about the benefits from this.

As to the imbalance of China-U.S. trade, fair observation and sober actions are extremely important for both sides.

First, such imbalance is rooted in different phases of development of China and the United States and their different economic structures. It is also a function of the global distribution of resources of transnational enterprises. In general, China's economy remains at the lower end of the global industrial division of labor, with the majority of its labor force working in labor-intensive industries. Despite their hard work, the surplus value they create has not always stayed with them, but turned to strengthen the global competitiveness of their products, support the well-paid jobs in high-end economies and help maintain the high living standard of consumers in developed countries. Indeed, the whole world should appreciate the hard work of diligent Chinese workers.

Second, China and the United States have been taking strenuous efforts to address the trade imbalance issue so as to make their trade relationship more sustainable. China is expanding its import from the United States. Since the global financial crisis broke out, the growth of the United States' export to China is more than to any other country. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the export to China by 47 American states over the past decade has increased at a percentage

of more than 3 digits, while over 60% of U.S. enterprises in China enjoy a higher profit margin than their average profit margin worldwide. Certainly, if the United States is willing to substantially relax the restrictions on the export of high-tech products, its export to China will increase tremendously, making their trade rebalancing ostensibly faster.

Moreover, China's economy will not linger at the stage of high energy consumption, high emission and high pollution. China is taking measures to transform the old pattern of economic development and upgrade its economic structure to reach the higher end of global industrial chain. In fact, many countries are taking similar steps. With this healthy and positive competition, the world economy will land on a higher platform. China's climbing to the higher end by no means implies that the United States will fall back to the lower end. On the contrary, the United States will climb onto an even higher end than today. The Chinese side wishes that such confidence were shared by the American side that "all boats float higher when the river rises," and that such competition will generate mutually complementary, mutually beneficial, and all-win results.

The third perplexity is whether China and the United States can interact positively in the Asia-Pacific region.

Both China and the United States are Asia-Pacific countries, and this region witnesses the most intensive convergence of their interests. Peace, stability and prosperity of the region are in the common interest of both countries as well as all other countries in the region. Both having important influence over the region, China and the United States can and must pay more efforts to meet this common goal.

So far, China and the United States have conducted close coordination on the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, the nuclear crisis in South Asia and the triple disasters in Japan, among other issues related to the security and development

of the Asia-Pacific. They are also making active contributions to regional economic integration with their comprehensive cooperation within such regional cooperation frameworks as the APEC. Besides, the officials of the two foreign affairs departments have conducted two rounds of consultation on Asia-Pacific affairs.

With the ever-changing situations, China-U.S. interaction in the region will undoubtedly face new challenges, which requires both countries to work out new approaches and make new progress with new thoughts.

At present, many ideas exist as to how China and the United States should interact with each other in the region, and new developments in the situation keep occurring on which both sides have been talking with each other. In this regard, it is necessary to make three points.

First, China has maintained a constructive attitude toward China-U.S. interaction in the region. As pointed out in last year's China-U.S. Joint Statement, China welcomes the United States as an Asia-Pacific nation that contributes to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Second, most of the recent major changes happened in the West Pacific region, and in the Chinese neighboring areas. That means it is not that China took all the way to bring troubles to others, but trouble came to find China.

Third, positive interaction between China and the United States in the Asia-Pacific serves the interests of both and meets the expectation of all other countries in the region. What is most needed by people of these countries? What are the most important public goods that China and the United States can provide for others? The answer is obvious, which is, a peaceful and stable regional environment, a bright future of regional development and prosperity as well as a mutually-beneficial and cooperative partnership. China hopes that such can remain as

the basis for the regional policies of both countries and their interaction.

As the Chinese saying goes, “Broad-minded and all-embracing like seas means strength and future.” The Asia-Pacific is big enough to hold both China and the United States. Now both share lots of common interests and great opportunities for more cooperation, yet the key is whether they have enough political will. The Cold War mentality and zero-sum game sentiments should be abandoned and closer cooperation be fostered with more mutual understanding and tolerance. Both should take care of each other’s interest and seek a win-win outcome with mutual trust and respect, but not force others to choose sides.

It is pointed out in the China-U.S. Joint Statement issued in January 2011 that “working together, both leaders support efforts to build a more stable, peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific region for the 21st century.” Both sides should take their due responsibility and join hands in striving for that goal.

Forty years ago, China and the United States shared little but their geopolitical needs; even then they could come together. The Shanghai Communiqué listed quite many differences between the two sides, but by and large it reflected their more important consensus. This is a creation in the history of international relations for seeking common grounds while reserving differences. The wisdom and foresights it unfolds is of great significance even today.

Many changes have taken place in the past 40 years. The relationship between China and the United States has never been short of obstacles and the progress achieved has never come easily. While applauding for the rapid development of the China-U.S. relationship, we should face squarely with the problems confronting that relationship.

What is more important, we should have confidence in the future of China-U.S. relations. The reasons are: First, a clear

direction has been set for the development of the relationship, that is, the consensus reached between President Hu Jintao and President Obama of jointly building a cooperative China-U.S. partnership based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Second, the two countries have had rich practice and gained successful experience in continuously overcoming difficulties and pushing forward relations since Dr. Kissinger's secret trip to China and the publication of the Shanghai Communiqué. And third, there is a good basis of friendship between the two peoples. Along with each other, they jointly resisted Fascism, "changed the world" by their hand-shakings, and developed many moving stories in their friendly exchanges. People will never forget that after the Wenchuan Earthquake in China in 2008, 345 high-school students in New Hampshire collected their pocket money and donated 2008 US dollars to the disaster-stricken people. The grand poem of China-U.S. relations was composed of numerous verses like this one.

It is expected that during Vice President Xi Jinping's official visit to the United States at the invitation of Vice President Joe Biden, both sides can seize the opportunity to further strengthen their communication, increase mutual trust, expand cooperation and deepen their friendship so as to make the China-U.S. cooperative partnership moving on continuously.

In retrospect of the past 40 years and looking forward to the future of China-U.S. relations, we have much expectation yet feel great historical responsibilities as well. We are confident that so long as the two sides keep to the consensus of the two leaders, stay on to the course of their cooperative partnership, and maintain the spirits of the Three Joint Communiqués and the China-U.S. Joint Statement, the road of China-U.S. cooperative partnership will grow to be even more solid, wider and further. ^①