



Press Roundtable in China

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DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELICK: Well, we just have a little bit of time, so I will just make a few opening comments and then we can turn to your questions. This is obviously a very quick stop, but I like to try to get beyond Beijing and Shanghai when I can get a chance to do so for a number of reasons. One, I got the sense early on from some of my Chinese colleagues that they valued it when foreigners took the time to see other parts of the country that were related to their focus on development and get a slightly better understanding. So when I was USTR I visited Chongqing and also Liaoning Province in the north, and so I like to try to see different places.

Second, while it is obviously just a quick snapshot, I find it visually stimulating to get a sense of...as you sort of come and just get a feel for the development. Part of this is in the context of the fact that I work globally and travel to different places, and I'm always struck by the scope and pace of development here and the ambitions and challenges that people are taking on. And then third, I like to try to get some sense from the local officials of how they look at these issues and what they are focusing on in the discussions. And so while it was brief, the governor gave me a sense of some of the challenges he saw in Sichuan Province and some of the areas they were trying to focus on for development.

And then I obviously wanted to combine it with the visit to the Panda Research Center, because that has such a historic association of cooperation on conservation topics. It is one that is well known in the United States. It was interesting... I met a young woman who is getting her doctorate in conservation education, and she is now working for the center in terms of talking about conservation education topics here. And so whether it relates to the habitat development or how they need to combine their economic growth with their environmental concerns -- that is another point the governor mentioned -- it was interesting as well as a chance to get to see and hold the pandas too.

So, and I think you know, I started in Hawaii with Pacific Command, then I was in Tokyo, then I was in Beijing, I'm here, and from here I go on to Davos. And if I have my calendar right, I think tomorrow morning I'm on a panel in Davos about China where some professors focus in on some of the internal development. So it gives me a nice little reference point to have been here in Chengdu. So, over to you.

QUESTION: I'd like to ask you a question on Sino-Japanese relations since you were there earlier. In your opinion, how is the tension between China and Japan affecting U.S. interests in the region, and what messages have been going back and forth with you on this trip? Also on that score, has anyone in the U.S. government hinted to Koizumi to stop the Yasukuni Shrine visits and would such a message even be possible?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELICK: Well, on your first point, I don't think it has affected our interests. I think what is striking is that both Japan and China raised the topic with the United States. And so... and now and then you see reporting that talks about, you know, whether the United States is engaged in Asia and is it a welcome player. It is sort of striking from my perspective that two of these major powers want to talk about the subject at length with the United States.

And...this is partly in answer to your second question too, what I have tried to emphasize are the possibilities of what people refer to as track two diplomacy -- having historians go look at some of these topics. There has been some work on that by Ezra Vogel and others up at Harvard, and I've tried to encourage this. And then I try to discuss with both sides the common interests, not only between Japan and China but also the United States or other players, like Korea. This may be a particularly American attitude, but while I appreciate the relevance of history -- and I particularly have a strong interest in history -- Americans tend to look to the challenges of today and the future. And there are many areas of cooperation, whether it be energy, security issues, or the six party talks with North Korea and a host of other issues that should engage us. So I'm trying... and my sense is that both governments also recognize that, and I think both business communities in Japan and China recognize that. But you are right to say that it is the point of tension and difficulty.

As for your second point, you've probably seen, I think, the Japanese mentioned -- otherwise I wouldn't have mentioned it -- about what Prime Minister Koizumi raised in his meeting with President Bush about the Yasukuni Shrine. And again, what I have tried to emphasize is that I do think it is important for countries to pay attention to their history, to be open in discussions and debate about their history. In the speech that I gave in New York last September, I made the point that when I visited Liaoning Province and Shenyang and visited the 9.18 Museum, the scene of the Manchurian Incident, I found some historical gaps there as well, because there was this long coverage of the Japanese... the Sino-Japanese War up until 1941 and then the next big picture was the Soviets liberating in August of 1945. As I pointed out to my Chinese colleagues, in my recollection there was some very strong military activity between December '41 and August '45 involving us, so I think all parties can open up to the historical discussion.

I've also said in the case of the Japanese that we want Japan to play a larger role regionally and globally. And, as I discuss this with China, I talk about the fact that some of our alliance relations with Japan, Australia and others in the region aren't just related to the Pacific but to issues like Iraq and Afghanistan. I think the Japanese recognize that this historical issue is of sensitivity beyond China... South Korea and Southeast Asia as well. And in that case it is undoubtedly best that they try to work it out with their neighbors. If we can be of help, particularly in a dual-track sort of historical sense, we'd be pleased to try to do so.

QUESTION: There is a debate among Chinese scholars about the meaning of the word "stakeholder".

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELICK: So I've heard...

QUESTION: So what is the real meaning of the word? Is it equivalent to the word of "partner"?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELICK: Well, I wish I could say I had the foresight to design it this way, but it is a nice coincidence. The fact that it doesn't have a clear definition in Chinese has actually been positive in my view, because it has led to a debate about what the concept should mean. Now, I've explained in the speech and I've explained subsequently the origin of the idea, which was that for thirty-some years we've focused on integrating China with the international system. If you look at commodity prices, capital markets, U.N. Security Council, counterfeiting... you have integration. So now what is the purpose of the relationship, and I was trying to emphasize that the international system had been very good for China's development over the past twenty-some years and that therefore China had an interest -- as a stake -- in the sustaining and advancing and strengthening of that system. And then I set out an agenda of what that was about.

And so some of my discussions here -- you know, here being China -- are the further elucidation of that. So issues dealing with Iran, issues involving both nuclear proliferation and energy security, issues related to the Korean peninsula. But also coming out of this discussion I've encouraged the Chinese, for example, to play a positive role with Iraq and Afghanistan, and they are doing so. You saw the statement that recognized the Iraqi new...the election process, and they told me that as soon as the Iraqis pick their new heads of government that they will invite them. Foreign Minister Li is making a special effort during the new year period to go to the conference in London on Afghanistan. They've actually...as you know China has had [unintelligible] and they've lost people in Afghanistan. And we're discussing this in other contexts as well, including Latin America. I've made the point in Sudan, and the Chinese have shown some willingness in terms of trying to cooperate with the

African union, the European Union and the United States on Sudan.

Now this is not to say that we are in agreement on all topics. We're not going to be in agreement with any country on all topics, but it also gives us a framework for trying to manage some of the issues. But just to relate it to Chengdu, you see, I also make the point that I understand, partly because of my interest in economic development, that China's leaders can justifiably say, Look, we've got a major job inside China. We've got hundreds of millions of rural population trying to come to the urban areas. We've got to maintain high levels of growth. We're really focused on the internal considerations, and I think it is important for non-Chinese to recognize that that is a valid point. You come to Chengdu and you see the dynamism, but you also see big challenges here. I was talking with the governor here about the out migration from Sichuan Province and the tens of millions of people who have gone to the coastal areas and the ongoing challenge. But my point to my Chinese colleagues is it is a sign of Chinese success and respect for China's success that it cannot help but influence the international environment, whether it be -- and I don't just mean conservation environment but I mean systems -- and so therefore inaction is a form of action and therefore we want to try to discuss with China those issues. And I've been pleased with the response on it. So coming back to the term, I've been delighted -- I get the English language print outs from my colleagues, you know -- that this has become the big topic of debate within China. That's healthy in my view.

QUESTION: You have the strategic dialogue meetings regularly, and this is in addition to those. Can you just tell us what was the point of coming here now? And in specific, what issues were you bringing with you to discuss?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: Well, first off, my view of diplomacy -- Mr. Kahn covered this in the trade area at one point -- is that it is important to do what George Schultz used to refer to as "tending the garden", to go out and see people, to talk to them. There is always some issue on the plate to discuss, but partly to listen to them and get a sense of their perspectives. And so obviously I've had a lot more in depth relationships with Dai Bingguo and have been very honored that Wen Jiabao often sees me for long periods of time.

So, on this trip it was a combination of things. I just like to come out regularly and talk to people and see things, but in particular I've focused on issues with Iran, Six Party talks, sort of covered trying to move ahead on Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, economic issues, particularly in the context of President Hu's upcoming visit. So those are things that are not within my direct purview but I've dealt with those issues and tried to push them along, whether urging currency flexibility or some of the trade imbalance issues. But also connecting those, for example, with Chairman Ma Kai of the NDRC and their work with the next five-year program on the savings consumption investment balance and the aspects of that.

Then obviously I also want to try to emphasize human rights and open society issues, so this time I met with some rule of law people, both Chinese and Americans. I'm trying to understand more about the development in that field, some of which the United States supports, and get a better sense of how they see the changes taking place in China. This relates to everything from the role of the parliamentary system to the role of the Bar to the judiciary. It's partly a learning exercise, but also an encouraging exercise.

QUESTION: What was your take on what the Chinese said to you about the details and the import of Kim Jong Il's visit to China last week and its relationship, if any, to the six party talks.

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: Well, I think it is worth noting the course of the visit, and at least what I understand is that course was chosen by Kim. Some of you know it paralleled closely the trip that Deng Xiaoping took in '92, emphasizing the reenergizing of economic reform. I really should let the Chinese describe it more, but I think, in brief, Kim certainly got a good sense throughout China of the, in some ways, shocking economic development. So this has given him a sense of what can be done in the Chinese system and led to some thinking. They [officials with him] pointed out he had discussions about the prospects for economic reform in North Korea, but that is not to presume what actions he will take. It is a very different system, and it has been much more closed, where obviously the Chinese in the late seventies decided not only that they wanted to follow a course of economic development but they also followed a course of openness as a system, which as not been the [unintelligible] philosophy. And there are political implications of this. The Chinese political system under Mao in the seventies is not the same as the Chinese political system today, so I think those are other questions. I think it's too early to see what it will produce, but if you go back to the Six Party framework, the document from last September, it put out an agenda that obviously highlighted our interest in denuclearization but also talked about some of these other elements that lead to economic and political openness and aspects of peace on the Korean peninsula. This will also be an issue in our discussions with the South Koreans, obviously, in terms of North Korea. So it's an interesting sort of milestone, but where that road goes yet, I think is uncertain for all parties.

QUESTION: The Iran question... You mentioned earlier that "inaction is a form of action." It seems in a certain way on the Iran question you are sort of asking for a kind of inaction to just sort of follow the international consensus not to be obstructionist when it comes to Iran. Is that accurate, and did you get any fuller sense of China's thinking on that, whether they have their own view, which is different from the international consensus and how close they are merging it together with theirs?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: I wouldn't describe that I had asked for inaction, because actually what I am asking for is support of what I think is the vast majority of the international community wanting to send a signal to Iran that it should not develop nuclear weapons capability, and this is something we've worked on with the EU-3 obviously but also the Russians and many other parties in IAEA. I have no sense that the Chinese have a different view on that core principle and issue and I'll let them speak to it but I think quite to the contrary they want to emphasize that they share that view. But this kind of connects to your other question. There obviously are questions about what will be the Iran regime's behavior? How does it relate to interests that China and others have, including the energy topic? And this in some way connects with a number of your questions.

Some of what I've tried to lay in our senior dialogue is talking about issues like energy security. I made the point that if you are concerned about energy security and a country like Iran that has supported terrorism, that says that Israel should be wiped off the face of the Earth and that is going to Syria and saying things about the Palestinians that Abu Mazen says he doesn't want the help, one might conclude that developing that nuclear capability in that sensitive political region, which is the heart of the world's energy resources, would be extremely dangerous. Therefore, from an energy security point of view, one also needs to signal strongly to the Iranians not to take this course. That is not to say that there isn't a lot of room for discussion about the tactics and even the timing issues, which of course are true, with other parties as well. I think coming out of this that the Chinese also have a sense of the importance of the issues to the United States, so I think the strategic objectives are the same and the approach may or may not vary. Those are the things that go on in day to day discussions. Secretary Rice had a chance to talk to Foreign Minister Li not long ago, and I'm sure we'll have additional contacts. What I hoped for my discussions was again to try to stretch common thinking about not just how this relates to the U.S.-China relationship, as Tom Friedman and others have written, but how in their own interest for energy security they need to steer this in another direction.

QUESTION: You mentioned several times your interest in China's internal development and rule of law, and I'm sure you'll be asked this in Davos. What are your views on the outlook for stability in China in the coming years and how might that shape relations between China and the rest of the world?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: You know -- I'm not just trying to duck you on this. I just -- on things that I don't know enough about, I just am not going to comment. In other words, I think... look, here is the way I would look at the issue: you have very rapid economic development. On the one hand that is a positive because I think economic development has been one of the regime's objectives for the society and its basis for legitimacy. And as the Chinese leadership properly point out, they need to maintain very high growth rates given the population rate in the rural and urban areas and other topics. But high growth can also lead to destabilization, so you have the comments of Wen Jiabao talking about its affect on rural areas and how one deals with those topics. It also creates dangerous contexts for corruption and other topics.

The thought that I've had on this that further is in my thinking is that on the one hand, I'm struck with the focus and the energy of Chinese leaders at a number of levels about the importance of growth and development in away that also helps the poor in China. In a context of globalization... and just a point on this, is that in various parts of the world I go to, I see this tension. In some ways I'm very impressed that in China there is a sense of not trying to deny globalization, as I sometimes run into in Latin American and in Africa. They say it's a reality. How do we compete? How do we catch up? How do we stay ahead? And I find this with Chinese students that I try to talk to at various universities. They are in some ways more comfortable with globalization than others are. They have concerns and doubts but they see it as an opportunity and they tend to also see the relationship to openness for them and their lives. But on the either hand, any time countries deal with such difficult questions, it raises what I'll loosely call constitutional questions about authority, separation of powers, the role of the state verses the private sector. That is one reason that I've been interested in the rule of law topic, because you see the rule of law topic that at least from my experience first entered the debate in China related to economics. Contracts and WTO things helped this. But then it starts to open the door to other things about the role of rule of law, and it raises the question of the role of the judiciary and how does a

judiciary relate to the party system. So our -- "our" being in the case of the United States -- our Forefathers struggled with this in a whole Constitutional system about separation of powers and role of states and role of individuals, and we were extremely lucky that they did as good a job as they did. I can see that that is what is bubbling here in various things. Even to come back to one of your questions about Kim Jong Il -- this is what Kim Jong Il says. In some sense what one Chinese colleague said is that what he sees is there is Socialism, there is a Communist Party, and there is rampant Capitalism, and he's trying to reconcile that.

QUESTION: I was just going to ask you... you mentioned that you were pressing the Chinese to support what you say is the international consensus Iran developing a nuclear weapons. What specifically were you asking them to do and what was their response? Are there things that they are not agreeing to do that you want the Chinese to do?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: Now this is a fluid diplomacy and I have to be a little careful because I am here, and while I have communications, it is not sort of active day by day. But as you've seen, Secretary Rice was talking yesterday about the actions we're seeking in the IAEA, the relation to the U.N. Security Council. Then people were talking about the role the U.N. Security Council may play, and people have talked about some of the ideas the Russians have had. Those are some of the topics that I was engaging them about within the context of the core principle. And I think there was an emphasis on the shared strategic objective and recognition of its importance, but an interest in talking seriously about tactics, not necessarily disagreeing about tactics but raising the concerns about how they can play an effective role. Again, China has already played a constructive role through some of the messages it has sent to Iranians that have come to China. And the message it has sent as a member of the P-5 -- Permanent Five -- to Iran. And so it wouldn't surprise me that you'll find Russia and China not necessarily being just seen as taking the exact same course as the United States and the EU-3. We'll have to see how close we can act in concert.

QUESTION: Did you register any objections to Chinese about their harassment or targeting of foreign-funded NGOs in China?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: I talked about some human rights issues, including some individual cases. But I find it is best to keep those as individual cases in terms of the record of getting some results on them. I think I'll kind of leave it on that one.

QUESTION: Could you just make any brief comments about preparations for Hu Jintao's visit to the United States?

DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK: Well, most of which I commented on at the press thing yesterday, which is that it is a fact of life that busy governments always have a hard time anticipating preparing. This wasn't the main purpose of my coming here, but because I work a lot with the Chinese, I took the opportunity to point out some of the environment on economic topics and what I thought some of those issues that I hope we would address. I've touched on some of those in discussions. That is the main topic that I had on that, other than the fact that obviously our work on foreign policy issues more generally helps create the context.

Thank you for coming.

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