



## 2011 GALA DINNER

The Plaza Hotel, New York City

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Welcome & Address

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**President, National Committee on U.S.-China Relations**

[ORLINS]: Secretaries Kissinger and Blumenthal, Ambassadors Zhang, Hills and Sun, Chairman Watson, President Iger, distinguished guests and friends:

Steve Jobs, a visionary whose death twelve days ago made headlines around the world, said, “Here’s to the ones who see things differently—they are not fond of rules...they push the human race forward and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the ones who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

Forty-five years ago, twelve visionaries founded the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations in the belief that the United States should engage with the People’s Republic of China and that Americans should learn to talk about China in a balanced, nonpartisan way. 1966 was an extraordinary time – a crazy time, many would have said – to establish this organization. The United States was deeply divided over the war in Vietnam. China had just entered the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution. The two countries had not spoken in 17 years. Anti-American rhetoric was a staple of Chinese propaganda and anti-China sentiments a regular feature of the political discourse in the United States. Onto this scene burst the National Committee with a vision for open and informed dialogue about China.

Because of this vision and the devoted work of those visionaries, the world did indeed change. Six years later, after Secretary Kissinger’s secret visit to China, the Committee hosted the Chinese ping pong team on their historic visit to the United States and helped change how the American people viewed China. Other exchanges followed, the dialogue grew, and our countries drew closer. The Committee had achieved the vision of its founders. It could have said, “that’s enough.”

But the National Committee pushed its mission further, running more programs, opening more doors, and in 1979 the United States and the People’s Republic established diplomatic relations. The National Committee hosted Deng Xiaoping on his seminal visit to this country, and our predecessors could have declared a victory. They could have said, “that’s enough.”

A decade later we hosted then-mayor, and soon to be premier, Zhu Rongji on his visit America after the tragic events of June 4, 1989. In a very dark time, we help the countries re-establish contact. Again, our predecessors could have said, “that’s enough.”



45 years have passed since our founding and there are now myriad government, business, political, educational and personal ties between our two countries. The National Committee has been a part of it all. 786 exchanges with 8,503 participants. Public programming witnessed in person by tens of thousands and over the air and Internet by hundreds of millions. We have achieved the vision of our founders. Is it time for us to say, “that’s enough?”

No, it isn’t. Anti-China rhetoric remains part of our political and public discourse. And in China, too many believe that U.S. policy seeks to contain China. A headline in this morning’s Wall Street Journal tells the story. It reads, “One Loser in U.S. Presidential Polling: China.” In fact, one of the major Republican candidates for president says he sees eye to eye on China with a man who happens to have owned the very establishment where we sit tonight and who contemplated a run for the White House himself. After President Obama hosted President Hu at a state dinner that man said, minus the expletives, “You don’t give dinner to the enemy.... I would have sent them to McDonald’s and...then home.”

But even more troubling are our elected leaders who assert that China is the primary cause of job loss in America, rather than increases in productivity, automation and technological innovation. Worse yet, they advocate legislation that reminds me of the Smoot Hawley Tariff Act of 1930, the act raised U.S. tariffs on 20,000 imported goods and sent the world spiraling into the Great Depression.

As I think about the challenges that lie ahead, I recognize, as all of you do, that our relationship with China will determine the world we leave to our children. I think of the devoted staff at the National Committee who every day work long hours in pursuit of our mission. I think about Jan Berris who has devoted 40, yes 40, years to this organization. I think about Dr. Kissinger, our chair Carla Hills and vice chair Hank Greenberg who have worked throughout their lives to strengthen the U.S.-China relationship. And tonight I think about all of you in this room because your contributions have allowed the National Committee to raise more money than at any single event in our 45-year history. Tonight I am thrilled to announce that we have raised in excess of \$1.6 million. I want to particularly thank our friends at Chevron, Disney and C.V. Starr. I also want to recognize Dianna Roggemann for making tonight such a tremendous success.

The money we raise here, combined with foundation and government support, allows us to create and implement an amazing array of innovative programs. In the last 13 months we have hosted events for Premier Wen Jiabao, President Hu Jintao and Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. We convened four Track II dialogues: two on human rights and the rule of law; a dialogue on strategic issues and a fourth on economic issues.

We have introduced Chinese diplomats to American history, culture and society. We have welcomed teachers from China and sent Americans to teach there. We have accompanied Congressional Member and staff delegations to China. And these are just a portion of our programs. The next year will be equally as busy. In just the next eight weeks we will convene the 10th anniversary of our Young Leader’s Program in Xi’an, lead a Congressional staff delegation to China, host a delegation from China’s Ministry of Education, send a group of



American environmental law professionals to China and convene four public education programs. Finally, on November 16, in front of thousands of Americans in over 50 venues across the country, we will hold our 5th annual China Town Hall.

Our founders would be proud of what we have accomplished and would believe in our future. They would be proud that we have been crazy enough to believe that we can change the world and, in our own way, we have and we will.

Let me close my remarks with the words of Chairman Mao:

我们的同志在困难的时候，要看到成绩，要看到光明，要提高我们的勇气。

Mao zhuxi shuo, “Women de tongzhi zai kunnan de shihou, yao kandao chengji, yao kandao guangming, yao tigao women de yongqi.”

Chairman Mao said, “In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements; we must see the bright future and we must pluck up our courage.”

These are difficult times, so I thank each and every one of you for your support.

Speaking of support, I want to recognize a friend who just arrived from Beijing. The artwork to be given to our honorees tonight was created by China’s most famous sculptor, the President of the Chinese Academy of Sculpture. His award-winning work has been on display in over ten countries and is permanently featured in the Nanjing Museum. Please join me in welcoming and thanking Wu Weishan.

A year ago, the producers of the award-winning PBS series Visionaries asked the National Committee to be part of their 17th season. After a year of filming, we are thrilled to bring you a five minute clip of this one hour documentary which will air nationwide on PBS on January 16, 2012.

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