



2010 GALA DINNER

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Welcome & Address

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[ORLINS]: A recent ad that played in the run-up to the midterm elections deeply troubled me. The ad opens with a caption that reads “Beijing 2030 A.D.” A Chinese professor is in an auditorium lecturing his students. Chinese characters behind him read Global Economics.

In perfect Mandarin he says and the subtitles read, “Why do great nations fail? The Ancient Greeks... the Roman Empire... the British Empire... and the United States of America. They all make the same mistakes: turning their back on the principles that made them great.

“America tried to spend and tax itself out of a great recession. Enormous so-called “stimulus” spending, massive changes to health care, government takeovers of private industries, and crushing debt.

“Of course, we owned most of their debt...so now they work for us.”

The students laugh evilly. The commercial ends. Millions of Americans have watched this ad.

Even if one agrees with its views, you have to be appalled by the ad’s characterization of China and the Chinese people. When I first watched it I was depressed by the seemingly insurmountable obstacles we confront in educating Americans about China. This was just one example of the over 50 political ads in this campaign that portrayed China as a thief of American jobs and an enemy of progress.

At the same time I thought of the deep strategic mistrust that many in China have about America’s intentions, a mistrust that colors China’s view of our economic, environmental, defense, and human rights policies. I despaired, albeit momentarily, considering the obstacles that we confront on both sides of the Pacific.

But then I thought about tonight and the enormous commitment that each and every one of you has made to supporting constructive engagement. I thought about people like Jim Owens, Jeff Immelt, and Hank Greenberg, men who have devoted their professional lives to building great companies while promoting constructive engagement. I thought about our chair, Carla Hills, whose public service and commitment to the development of a strong and healthy relationship has been so important to not just the National Committee, but to U.S.-China relations more



generally. I thought about everyone in this room, and the millions of Americans that are committed to understanding China and supporting positive relations. And I thought about the staff of the National Committee, who every single day come into work to develop and execute an amazing range of innovative programs that increase understanding and connectedness.

And my depression quickly lifted because of the commitment of so many and because our national interest requires a clear understanding and analysis of China and the relationship.

My spirits were also lifted because of what you have all contributed to the National Committee this year. I am thrilled, absolutely thrilled, to announce that tonight, we have raised \$1,080,000. I want to thank our friends at GE, Caterpillar, C.V. Starr, and each of you for this great show of support.

We combine the money raised tonight with foundation support and U.S. government grants to conduct our programs. 2010 has been an extremely active year for the National Committee. Our track II dialogues on economic policy, defense issues, and human rights enabled Americans and Chinese to speak candidly about topics that our two governments have difficulty directly addressing. Our Public Intellectuals Programs has trained 40 outstanding, young academics to speak out on issues related to China; we held 17 public programs on a wide range of issues, including a debate on the RMB and rebalancing, and a dinner for Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

Our China Town Hall program – where I interviewed our Ambassador to China, Jon Huntsman – grew to 52 venues across the US and China. Thousands of Americans participated. We have sent young students and teachers to China and welcomed Chinese students and educators here.

Our Young Leaders Forum has continued to build bridges between outstanding young Chinese and American leaders. In this election season I am pleased to note that that both Forum participants who are members of Congress – Gabrielle Giffords and Erik Paulsen – were re-elected, and a third, Kevin Yoder, was elected in his first bid. All three joined the Forum as state legislators and have been elected to the House since joining the Forum.

While talking about election results I should say our partner in the U.S. Congress, the U.S. China Working Group, had election successes as well. The Democratic co-chair, Congressman Rick Larsen, was re-elected from Washington state in a hard fought and close election. The Republican co-chair, Mark Kirk, was elected to the Senate from Illinois to fill the seat formerly occupied by Barack Obama. America is fortunate to have someone that understands China so well in the United States Senate. Because of the relationship with the Working Group we continue to work with the Congress and this year accompanied several Congressional staff delegations to China.

Finally, and appropriately on this Veterans Day, we held an intensive three-day seminar on China for senior U.S. army officers as we previously did for navy and air force officers.



In short, we have made a difference in the relationship and we have been able to succeed because of all of you here tonight.

I opened tonight by describing a political ad that deeply offended me. Let me close with an ad that I hope to see during the presidential election of 2020. The ad is a split screen. On one side is

Chinese President Xi Jinping addressing a joint session of Congress. He is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States, acknowledging that China's accomplishments would not have been possible without America's support and cooperation.

On the other side is the American president addressing the National People's Congress in the Great Hall of the People, laying out the contribution that Sino-American relations have made to peace and stability in the world.

Below are rotating pictures of a wind farm built in northern California with Chinese capital and U.S. labor, a high speed rail between New York and Washington using Chinese technology and built by Chinese and American workers, a GE CAT scan diagnosing patients in a Chinese hospital and Caterpillar equipment building Chinese roads.

American workers are saying that our president saved our infrastructure and saved our jobs. The ad then quotes from the Old Testament: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It concludes, "With shared vision, the people prosper. Re-elect the president. She returned prosperity to America." *[laughter, applause]*

Ladies and gentlemen, I now present to you Jon Lowet, director of leadership initiatives at the National Committee, who will introduce tonight's special performance by one of our Young Leader Forum alum, Huang Ruo, and his FIRE Ensemble.

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