

Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to the Opening Session of the U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue

Department of the Interior Washington, D.C. , May 09, 2011

Good morning. It's an honor to welcome you to Washington for the third meeting of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue between the United States and China.

I made my first trip to China as a young man, meeting with Deng Xiaoping in 1979. I was privileged to be with a group of very senior senators at that time. And on that trip we witnessed the changes that were being initiated, beginning to spark China's remarkable transformation. Even back then it was clear that great things were happening. At that time there was a debate here in the United States and throughout most of the West as whether a rising China was in the interest of the wider world. As the youngest member in the delegation, I said and I believed then what I believe now: That a rising China is a positive, positive development, not only for China but for America and the whole world.

When President Obama and I took office in January of 2009 we understood absolutely clearly that our relationship with China would be a key priority. The President and I were determined to set the relationship on a stable course that could be sustained for decades. Our two countries, now the world's two largest economies, were bound by growing ties of commerce and investment. We always talk about what we import from China; but last year alone we actually exported \$110 billion in American goods and services to China.

But we're bound much more than commerce. Over the last three decades, our people have become increasingly linked through education, through work and through travel. Last year, 130,000 Chinese were studying in the United States. We cannot claim the same number of Americans studying in China, but our newly launched initiative will dramatically increase this number. As a matter of fact, my niece who graduated from Harvard not too long ago, did exactly this: She studied Chinese and went and lived in China and is now devoted to making sure the relationship between our two countries gets better and better and better.

But we're also linked by our shared global responsibilities. We both serve as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. And for many of the world's pressing challenges, it's a simple fact, that when the United States and China are not at the negotiating table, the solution to the problem is less possible than when we are at the table. It's no exaggeration to say that our relationship and how we manage it will help shape the 21st century.

Thank you.