

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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United States, China Partner to Fight Nuclear Threats

By Sadie May Davis
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States and China pledged to cooperate on combating nuclear proliferation and enhancing nuclear security during Chinese President Hu Jintao's recent visit to Washington.

The two nations announced plans January 19 to establish a Center of Excellence on Nuclear Security in China. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), the arrangement allows the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the Department of Defense to work with the China Atomic Energy Authority. This collaboration facilitates exchange of information and best practices, creation of training courses and technical collaboration to improve nuclear security throughout Asia.

"This agreement reflects the commitment of the two governments to strengthen their cooperation in nuclear nonproliferation, nuclear security and in combating nuclear terrorism, and represents a major step forward in implementing the global nuclear security outlined by our two presidents at the Nuclear Security Summit last April," said U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu, who signed the memorandum.

A separate agreement calls for countering nuclear smuggling through the establishment of a center in China to provide training in radiation detection. The facility, to be built in Qinhuangdao, will be the first of its kind in the region.

Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman signed that agreement in a ceremony at DOE headquarters January 19. He said the agreement demonstrates the nations' shared commitment to ensuring global peace and security.

The United States and China have cooperated for years to prevent dangerous materials from being transported illegally. A 2005 agreement between the two nations to combat nuclear and radiological smuggling in China focused on equipping the Yangshan Deepwater Port in Shanghai with radiation-detection equipment.

The 2005 agreement and the new training center are part of NNSA's Second Line of Defense (SLD) program. According to an NNSA fact sheet, the program helps strengthen capabilities of partner nations to "deter, detect and interdict illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive materials across international borders and through the global maritime shipping system."

NNSA has installed radiation-detection equipment at nearly 400 sites around the world. Recent work includes projects in China, Bulgaria, Cameroon, South Korea and Vietnam.

EXTENDING NUCLEAR SECURITY AROUND THE GLOBE

The SLD program has two components: the Core Program and the Megaports Initiative.

The SLD Core Program installs radiation-detection equipment at borders, airports and strategic feeder ports. Program representatives offer tools and training as well as maintenance of existing equipment.

Initially, program leaders focused on securing areas potentially vulnerable to nuclear smuggling in Russia. However, under the direction of Congress, the program extended agreements to other countries in 2002.

In 2003, NNSA offered an additional method to secure the world against nuclear smuggling. Working primarily with foreign customs and port authorities, the Megaports Initiative helps detect radioactive materials in maritime shipping containers.

The Megaports Initiative complements the Container Security Initiative (CSI) operated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Through CSI, specially trained U.S. customs agents are deployed in major non-U.S. ports to identify U.S.-destined cargo containers that pose a potential risk. Those containers receive an inspection by local customs officials before departure.

Locations participating in these programs receive detection equipment and alarm systems in addition to technical training and support. By 2015, the Megaports Initiative hopes to equip 100 seaports and scan more than 50 percent of global maritime containerized shipping. Currently, there are over 50 operational Megaports in all regions of the world, with several more in stages of implementation.

U.S. efforts to create multilateral nuclear security measures involve foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations and private industry. These partnerships are designed to benefit participating countries through exchanges of information and equipment and to serve as a deterrent to terrorists.

PROMOTING NUCLEAR LEADERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY

The United States promotes a safer future for the world by safeguarding dangerous materials. President Obama, speaking in 2009 in the Czech Republic, identified nuclear

weapons in the hands of terrorists as the “most immediate and extreme threat to global security.”

His call to secure all vulnerable nuclear material worldwide within four years was endorsed at the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington by leaders from around the globe, who recognize the threat of nuclear terrorism and the need to cooperate.

Obama told summit attendees it had become clear that the world does not “need lots of new institutions and layers of bureaucracy.”

Instead, the international community needs to “strengthen the institutions and partnerships that we already have and make them more effective,” he said.

The next Nuclear Security Summit will be held in Seoul, South Korea, in 2012.

Chinese-American Mayors Find Community Diversity an Asset

By Joshua Y. Shen
Staff Writer

Washington — The recent White House state dinner for Chinese President Hu Jintao included two special guests with similar histories and matching titles.

More than 30 years ago, she was a university student seeking classes that told the history of her own community. He was a young law clerk helping poor immigrants understand their civil rights.

On January 3, that student, Jean Quan, was inaugurated as the first female mayor of Oakland, California. On January 11, the law clerk — her good friend Edwin Lee — was sworn in as mayor of San Francisco. Each is the first Chinese American to hold that post.

Their achievements were celebrated as signs of Asian Americans’ progress in U.S. political leadership.

According to the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS), there are approximately 40 Asian-American mayors currently heading U.S. cities, with San Francisco and Oakland the two largest. Within this group, Democratic mayors outnumber Republicans four to one.

“There’s been a political awakening among Asian Americans,” said Gene Kim, communications director with APAICS.

BUILDING COALITIONS

Although Quan and Lee are the first Chinese Americans

to lead major U.S. cities, their political paths are shared by many other prominent U.S. leaders.

Quan was a student at the University of California’s Berkeley campus in the late 1960s when she helped organize a movement called the Third World Strike. The movement united ethnic minority students to demand classes that told the stories of their own communities in the United States — stories mostly untold in the existing curriculum.

Quan recognized the importance of expanding her coalitions to include other groups that shared similar histories and struggles for equal rights.

After graduation, Quan continued her political activism by organizing workers in the service industry into unions and reforming education in her community. She went on to spend 20 years as an elected official in Oakland, first as a member of the school board beginning in 1990, and then of the city council in 2002.

During her service, Quan recognized that despite the diversity of ethnicities, income levels and opinions in Oakland, most people worried about the same things: good working conditions, safe neighborhoods, quality education and a healthy environment.

“Whether you supported me for mayor or didn’t support me for mayor,” Quan said during her inauguration speech, “we are family because we love this city.”

ORGANIZING COMMUNITIES

Although Quan’s election made news across the United States, her inauguration was a relatively low-key affair compared to the celebration for Lee’s inauguration in San Francisco.

Surrounded by a large group of Asian-American leaders that included Quan, four members of San Francisco’s 11-member board of supervisors and the city’s state senator, Lee’s election as mayor was celebrated as a milestone in the long struggle for Chinese-American rights in the United States.

More than 150 years ago, the first large wave of Chinese immigrated to the United States, many arriving and settling in San Francisco. Some were gold prospectors while others were instrumental in building the United States’ first intercontinental railroad.

The city initiated many anti-Chinese ordinances whose tenets eventually became federal law, culminating in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act that halted Chinese immigration and denied U.S. citizenship to those immigrants already arrived. In succeeding decades,

similar laws severely restricted immigration from other Asian countries.

As a result, many Chinese Americans were separated from their families in China, including spouses and children, for decades. Moreover, the laws discouraged Asian Americans from political engagement for fear of further backlash.

Important Asian-American rights groups arose after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which opened U.S. immigration equally to people of all nationalities and ethnic origins. Organizations like the Chinatown Community Development Center and Asian Law Caucus became vital tools for securing political rights not just for Chinese and other Asians, but also for other immigrant groups, low-wage laborers and poor tenants.

Lee's early work with the Asian Law Caucus reflected his own roots as a community organizer, helping ensure the rights and wages of vulnerable immigrants and workers. He continued his civil rights work as lead attorney successfully representing Asian Americans and women seeking an equal opportunity to enter San Francisco's fire department in the 1980s.

His reputation on behalf of the disadvantaged led to his appointment as a credible "watchdog" director of the city's Human Rights Commission in 1989. He has been in public service ever since.

FUTURE LEADERS

On January 18, Quan and Lee joined President Obama at the state dinner held at the White House for President Hu Jintao of China.

The event hosted a large number of Chinese-American leaders and celebrities, including Representative Judy Chu of California and Department of Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, the former governor of Washington state.

Kim said these leaders represent strong role models for future generations of Asian Americans, proof that the political process in the United States can be accessible.

Like President Obama, many leaders begin as community organizers fighting for rights important to their community, then widened their political support by building effective, diverse coalitions.

"Leaders don't have to look like you," Kim said, "but they must show interest in the issues that matter to you."

White House Says Only Egyptians Can Determine Their Future

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The White House says the Egyptian people will not accept a return to what existed before anti-government protests began and that while the United States has a stake in Egypt's stability, the Egyptian people are not looking to the United States to choose their leaders or how they should conduct a political transformation.

"Who leads Egypt and who leads Egypt when is a determination that can only be made by the Egyptians," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said at a February 8 press briefing. He added that their concerns "cannot, will not, and should not be addressed through violence."

Gibbs said the United States wants to see "a genuine and real process ... that takes place without delay," and that leads to "immediate and irreversible results" for the Egyptian people.

The United States wants to continue its partnership with Egypt and "the stability in the region and around the world that that partnership has brought," but it believes that regional stability is being threatened by the failure of governments to respond to their people.

The United States' perspective is in part driven by its own evolution as a democracy. "The broad notion of what we want to see happen in countries in the Middle East and throughout the world is shaped by the values with which we started our country," Gibbs said.

The United States will continue to advocate universal values such as free speech, free assembly and freedom of the press, but it will not determine what the scope of those freedoms will look like in Egypt.

The cares and concerns of the protesters will not be met by a process that is dictated by somebody else, Gibbs added. "It has to be a process that involves directly the Egyptian people."

The Obama administration is supporting a process that includes discussions between the Egyptian government and a broad range of Egyptian civil society, including opposition groups, that will produce substantive change.

Gibbs said he expects that the protests will continue until the Egyptian government takes concrete steps to address popular concerns, and that it will be up to the Egyptian people to decide whether or not it is doing so.

Vice President Biden telephoned Egyptian Vice President

Omar Suleiman earlier February 8 to repeat U.S. support for an orderly transition in Egypt that is prompt, meaningful, peaceful and legitimate. Biden urged that the transition produce "immediate, irreversible progress that responds to the aspirations of the Egyptian people," according to a White House statement on the discussion.

Along with urging immediate action to follow up on recent government pledges to the Egyptian opposition, Biden mentioned additional steps that the government could take that would have U.S. support. Biden urged Suleiman to restrain the Egyptian Interior Ministry and immediately end the "arrests, harassment, beating and detention of journalists and political and civil society activists."

He also called for rescinding Egypt's emergency law, which has been in place for decades, and for Suleiman to broaden his dialogue with the Egyptian people to include a wide range of the opposition. The vice president also encouraged Suleiman to partner with the opposition to develop a plan for political transition.

Biden expressed his belief to Suleiman that the demands of many in the opposition could be met through meaningful negotiations with the government, and that his suggestions were based on U.S. consultations with the opposition and U.S. belief in the importance of universal rights and representative government.

U.S., Russia Arms Reduction Begins Next Stage

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington – Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov have ratified the New START treaty, an arms reduction agreement that Clinton says "lessens the nuclear dangers facing the Russian and American people and the world."

The leaders exchanged the instruments of ratification in Munich on February 5.

"Our countries will immediately begin notifying each other of changes in our strategic forces. Within 45 days, we will exchange full data on our weapons and facilities, and 60 days from now we can resume the inspections that allow each side to 'trust but verify,'" Clinton said in remarks after the ratification.

"Our two countries, led by our two presidents, turned words into action to reach a milestone in our strategic partnership," Clinton added.

Lavrov emphasized U.S.-Russian cooperation in forming the treaty, and said the agreement "was born of our mutual understanding of the futility of a unilateral

approach to security issues."

The agreement will reduce each nation's nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels in more than a half-century.

Tom Collina, research director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, said the treaty "benefits both sides" and "makes sense from every perspective."

Collina said the treaty has global benefits, including building "a global movement to stop other nations from getting nuclear weapons," which he said decreases the international threat of nuclear terrorism.

He said the treaty is a significant step in a "multi-year effort of arms reduction that is now free to continue."

The treaty gives the United States and Russia seven years to reduce forces and remains in force for 10 years from ratification. It contains detailed definitions and counting rules that will help the parties calculate the number of warheads that count under the treaty limits. Additionally, the treaty provides for regular, on-site inspections of each country's nuclear arsenals to assure compliance and implementation of the immense technical aspects of nuclear arms reduction programs.

The New START agreement succeeds the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the 2002 Moscow Treaty. It does not block efforts to create missile-defense systems.

The treaty limits the United States and Russia to 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each, down from the current limit of 2,000 warheads, and 700 launchers. The treaty also requires on-site verification inspections, which had lapsed in December 2009 when the old START treaty expired. Russia and the United States possess 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons.

U.S. nuclear forces will continue to be based on its triad of delivery systems: land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic bombers. The treaty provides an upper boundary of 1,550 deployed warheads for each nation and up to 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers. Additionally, the treaty would permit up to 800 deployed and nondeployed missile and submarine launchers or heavy bombers.

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