



THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

Message for
The 40th Anniversary Celebration of Ping Pong Diplomacy
Beijing, China, December 8, 2011

I am delighted that our two governments are helping to support a visit of the U.S. Table Tennis Association to China to celebrate the 40th anniversary of ping pong diplomacy. This is an important event not only for those with a love of sports but for those with an interest in diplomacy and the development of the U.S.-China relationship.

Ping pong diplomacy played an important role in the history of U.S.-China relations. One of my predecessors, Henry Kissinger, understood its significance, and recognized that as our two great nations opened lines of communication, the rest of the world would be affected. Forty years later, we recognize how sports initiated a mutually beneficial relationship and how far we have come since ping pong diplomacy took center-stage in 1971. The U.S. mission in China is among our largest in the world, and the Chinese government has six consulates in the United States that assist the many Chinese citizens and businesses resident in America.

I have held two meetings with State Councilor Madame Liu Yandong to develop our U.S.-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange, and we are committed to doing what we can to bring the citizens of our two countries closer together. And really, that is what it is all about. We Americans benefit from knowing China – in areas as diverse as the economy, education, culture and arts. I know the United States has shared its history and culture with China in a way that benefits Chinese society as well. People-to-people exchanges play a critical role in moving us toward our goal of global peace and prosperity.

Our two nations are dedicated to building a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship that benefits the people of our countries and contributes to a safer and more productive world. Ping pong diplomacy reminds us that it is the interactions of our private citizens that helped bring us together and that continue to strengthen the ties that bind us together. I wish all participants another 40 years of successful sports diplomacy. Thank you.

Hillary Rodham Clinton
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