U.S.-China Press Statements

**Remarks**

**John Kerry**
**Secretary of State**

**Secretary of the Treasury Jacob J. Lew, Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang, and Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi**

**Great Hall of the People**

**Beijing, China**

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**MODERATOR:** Distinguished guests, friends from the media, good afternoon. Welcome to the closing ceremony and press conference of the eighth S&ED. Today we have the pleasure of having with us the four special representatives. First let us invite special representative of President Xi, Vice Premier Wang Yang, to deliver his remarks. And please put on your headset for the simultaneous interpretation.

**SECRETARY KERRY:** Well, good afternoon. Very pleased to join Vice Premier Wang and the State Councilor Yang Jiechi, and of course, my colleague, Secretary of Treasury Jack Lew, in reviewing the results of the past two days and building on the considerable agenda that Secretary Lew has just laid out. The breadth of the conversations, obviously, has been extensive. I want to start by thanking President Xi for welcoming us yesterday and taking the time to come and set the tone and the direction for this dialogue, and I very much look forward to meeting with him and with Premier Li later this afternoon.

Our discussions underscore – and everybody agreed on this – that the U.S.-China relationship is absolutely vital, that it may well be the most consequential bilateral relationship of nations on the world – in the world, and that the S&ED itself is an essential mechanism for both managing our differences and also expanding our areas of cooperation. And since this is my fourth S&ED, I can tell you that I am very respectful of the degree to which we have expanded multiple areas of cooperation across the entire span of a bilateral relationship – health, science, education, security, and many other sectors.

Another area where our cooperation is absolutely critical and where global security and regional security are at stake is the relationship to North Korea. Neither one of our nations will accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state, and we are both determined to fully enforce the UN Security Council Resolution 2270. So I am grateful that our Chinese counterparts agreed to have experts from each of our countries come together to coordinate the full and effective implementation of sanctions going forward from now, because this is a concerted effort that is necessary in order to realize our shared goal of a stable and secure peninsula, also to realize the goal of a North Korea that chooses the peaceful path of denuclearization.

Finally, we also discussed several areas of disagreement. I shared with State Councilor Yang our concerns with the recently adopted law on the management of foreign NGO activities. These nongovernmental groups, in our judgment, world over – not just in China, but in every country – make important contributions. And particularly here in China we feel that they work to help to build an understanding between us and to help build capacity in certain important sectors of the economy and the relationship. They have done so for decades. I expressed the importance of allowing these organizations to continue to function effectively across the country and to further support the growth and the well being of the Chinese people through those efforts.

And we had an in-depth discussion about tensions between China and neighbors in the South China Sea. I reiterated America’s fundamental support for negotiations and a peaceful resolution, based on the rule of law, as well as, obviously, our concern about any unilateral steps by any party, whichever claimant, to alter the status quo. President Xi and President Obama had a very deep, personal conversation about this, and we believe our presidents have reached an understanding of how to proceed forward. The United States does not take a position on the sovereignty of any of the land features in the South China Sea, but we do believe that all claimants should exercise restraint as we go forward.

State Councilor Yang and I each reaffirmed our government’s commitment to uphold the freedom of navigation and overflight, and we discussed the need to fully implement the declaration on the code of conduct in the South China Sea.

So I believe that, in these two days, we have made significant headway in constructively addressing the challenges before us. And I am confident that we are going to continue to engage in productive, fruitful discussions in the weeks and in the months ahead. Our determination to do so now and in the future comes from a simple, inescapable fact: The shape of economic growth, political stability, environmental protection, the global security in the 21st century will be heavily affected and defined by the character of this relationship.

Our countries share an extraordinary responsibility, and we simply cannot permit old ways of thinking or past ideological rivalries to keep us from fulfilling our joint obligations on leadership. The complex era in which we live demands cooperation and collaboration, not conflict and discord. It requires that we embrace a new model of partnership and that we continue to engage in close and candid and constructive conversation through forums such as the S&ED.

**STATE COUNCILOR YANG:** (Via interpreter) Friends from the media, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Thanks to the personal commitment of President Xi and President Obama, as well as the joint efforts of the Chinese and American teams, the eighth round of the S&ED produced positive outcomes and will soon come to a conclusion. I fully concur with the positive comments made by Vice Premier Wang Yang about this round of the S&ED. I would like to thank our teams for their hard work.

During this round of the Strategic Dialogue, building on the meeting between President Xi and President Obama in Washington in late March, Secretary Kerry and I had in-depth discussions about advancing the new model of major country relationship between China and the U.S., creating new bright spots in our practical cooperation, properly managing differences and sensitive issues, properly handling China-U.S. interactions in the Asia Pacific, enhancing communication and cooperation on major international, regional, and global issues.

The most important lesson we should learn from the past three years is that we must stay committed to the principles of non-confrontation, non-conflict, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation, and steadfastly advance the building of the new model of major country relationship. Our two sides need to follow through on the important agreement of our presidents, increase communication, focus on cooperation, properly handle differences, and make sure that China-U.S. relations will always stay in the right track.

We exchanged views in an in-depth way on cooperation between our two countries under G20 and expressed readiness to work with all parties for more tangible outcomes at the G20 Summit in Hangzhou in September and ensure the success of our presidents’ meeting so as to bring new impetus to the world economy and a new energy to our bilateral relations.

We will work for new progress in our mil-to-mil relations, step up policy dialogue, increase communication and interactions, build mutual trust, and ensure the success of agreed exchange programs and carry out more joint exercises and training, including those on humanitarian relief, disaster reduction, UN peacekeeping, and anti-piracy. Our two sides agreed to step up our exchanges and cooperation on counterterrorism, cyber space, justice, law enforcement, fighting corruption, return of fugitives and illicit assets, energy, environmental protection, customs, health, aviation, and ocean protection, and bring more tangible benefits to people of our two countries.

During the dialogue, we had candid and an in-depth exchange of views on how to constructively address our differences and sensitive issues. China reiterated our consistent position on Taiwan and Tibet-related issues and expressed our concerns. China appreciates that the U.S. has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the “one China” policy, the three China-U.S. joint communiques, and its opposition to Taiwan independence. We hope the U.S. will honor its commitment and take credible steps to support peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

As for maritime issues, during the Strategic Dialogue I reiterated China’s consistent position. I pointed out that the South China Sea islands have been Chinese territory since ancient times. China has every right to uphold its territorial sovereignty and lawful and legitimate maritime entitlements. China’s position of not accepting or participating in the Philippines arbitration case on the South China Sea, taken in line with international law, including the UNCLOS, has not and will not change. China consistently uphold and respect the freedom of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all countries under international law. China hopes that the United States will honor its promise of not taking a position on relevant territorial disputes and take concrete and constructive steps to uphold peace and stability in the South China Sea.

China emphasizes that it is highly important to uphold regional peace and stability. The disputes over territory and maritime entitlements in the South China Sea should be peacefully addressed through negotiation and consultation by countries directly involved. China and the United States support the full and effective implementation of the DOC and the efforts to accelerate the COC consultation. We both agreed to stay in communication on relevant issues and manage our differences in a constructive manner.

Our two sides had in-depth discussions about our interactions in the Asia Pacific. China and the United States have broad converging interests and face common challenges in this region. Our two sides need to respect each other’s interests in the Asia Pacific, and we’re willing to increase communication on regional affairs through exchanges and dialogue mechanisms at all levels, deepen our coordination on the regional multilateral mechanisms, and commit ourselves to fostering a common – not exclusive – circle of friends, cultivate an open economic environment in the region, and work together to counter piracy, natural disasters, and other challenges, thus playing a bigger role in promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia Pacific.

We held a special joint session on climate change where we applauded China-U.S. cooperation in this field, and agreed to increase communication and coordination on international negotiations on climate change, promote the implementation of the Paris agreement, and enhance the full, effective, and sustained implementation of the UNFCCC. Our two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on the Korean nuclear issue, Iranian nuclear issue, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. We agreed to stay in close communication and coordination. On the Korean nuclear issue, China reiterated its consistent position and reaffirmed its commitment to denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, upholding peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula, and peacefully resolving the problems through dialogue and consultation.

The two sides reiterated that we need to fully implement the Resolution 2270 and other related resolutions of the Security Council, and we call all relevant parties to work together and create conditions for the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.

Ladies and gentlemen, China and the United States are working together to dispel misgivings through communication, increase mutual trust through actions, and seek (inaudible) results through cooperation. We are ready to work with the United States to deliver on the outcomes of the S&ED and CPE so as to create more and early benefits for our two peoples and cement the foundation that will sustain steady and sound growth of China-U.S. (inaudible).