

Negotiations set stage for U.S.-China summit

by William Jones

Preparations are in high gear for the upcoming summit between U.S. President Bill Clinton and China's President Jiang Zemin at the end of October. Clinton has repeatedly pointed to the development of the U.S.-China relationship as being decisive for determining the character of the 21st century. And yet, many less far-sighted individuals are doing their best to ensure that that relationship be one of growing conflict and strife.

The Clinton policy was reiterated by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger to the New York Council on Foreign Relations on June 6. "The simple truth is," Berger said, "the direction China takes in the years ahead will be one of the most decisive factors that will determine whether the next century is one of conflict or cooperation. The emergence of China as a great power that is stable, open, and non-aggressive; that embraces political pluralism and international rules of conduct; that works with us to build a secure international order—the emergence of that kind of China is profoundly in America's interest."

At the time, Berger was attempting to stave off an attempt by conservative Republicans and some China-bashing Democrats to prevent renewal of most-favored-nation trade status (MFN) for China. These moves were stymied when Congress voted 259-173 on June 24 to extend MFN.

Administration officials are downplaying expectations of substantive breakthroughs at the summit. In an interview with *Newsweek* magazine on Aug. 11, U.S. Ambassador to China James Sasser outlined the overriding goals of the summit: "One principal goal is normalization of meetings between these two heads of state. This will establish a strategic framework wherein the United States and China can relate to each other in the coming years. We have joint strategic interests in securing peace and security in Asia, in dealing with the problem of proliferation, nuclear or otherwise. Other matters we need to discuss are terrorism, international drug trafficking, and trade issues. Another interest is environmental cooperation."

Other administration officials have underlined that between Jiang's visit in October, and a return visit by President Clinton to Beijing next fall, substantive agreements on a number of key issues will be consolidated.

And yet, there are certain "benchmarks" that the two governments would like to reach at the October summit. One, is

the agreement on cooperation in nuclear energy. China has embarked on an ambitious economic development program aimed at transforming China into a major industrial power during the next century, with a corresponding rise in the standard of living. This will require a tremendous increase in energy production. China possesses great quantities of coal, which it is forced to use extensively—to the detriment of air quality in many major cities. The coal is also generally located at a considerable distance from the major production centers on the coast and in the south. As a result, 40% of rail capacity is required to transport coal to the consumer.

China also has great hydroelectric power potential, and is engaged in a rapid expansion of capacity with the construction of the massive Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River, and other, smaller hydroelectric projects. But these also are located at a distance from the centers of industrial production; even with their development, there will still be an energy deficit. Therefore, China is basing much of its hopes on a rapid development of nuclear energy for power generation, and is looking to the United States to help provide that capability.

The Chinese derive about 2 gigawatts of energy from nuclear sources. By 2010, they want to increase that to 20 GW, and, by 2020, to 50 GW. If the United States were to become the main provider of nuclear plants for the Chinese energy grid, this would revive the U.S. nuclear industry and help restore the negative trade balance with China. The Clinton administration, keenly aware of the economic and political value of such high-tech cooperation, is working to create the preconditions for an agreement.

In 1985, China signed "The Agreement for Cooperation Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the People's Republic of China Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology." Congress approved it, but passed a resolution requiring that China provide assurances that it is not engaged in transferring nuclear weapons technology to a non-nuclear-weapons state. After Tiananmen Square, Congress passed legislation requiring the President to certify that China is not providing such technology to a non-nuclear-weapons state.

In 1992, China signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and negotiations among the State Department and the Department of Energy with their Chinese counterparts are ongoing to enable the Chinese to meet the requirements of the legislation, and allow the President to make such a certification. Although administration officials indicate that Clinton will probably not be able to certify China by the time of the summit, they say that it may occur shortly thereafter. In lieu of an agreement, some formal statement of intent may be signed by the two leaders.

Attempts to disrupt positive relations

But, forces in the U.S. Congress opposed to the President's policy of "constructive engagement" with China, are attempting to throw up roadblocks. On Sept. 11, Spencer

Abraham (R-Mich.) introduced legislation in the Senate which would deny visas to high-ranking Chinese government officials “involved in political and religious persecution,” and would require U.S. representatives at multilateral development banks to vote “No” on all loans to China, except those related to famine, national disaster relief, and environmental protection. The bill would also impose targeted sanctions against companies run by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, and mandate stricter enforcement of the ban against sale of Chinese products produced by prison labor. If such provocative legislation were to pass, it would effectively sabotage U.S.-Chinese relations for some time to come.

Another measure, “The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act,” sponsored by Paul Mellon’s favorite, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), would impose automatic sanctions on a country as soon as there were indications of “religious persecution.” The measure was proposed shortly after a visit by Wolf to China’s Xizang region (Tibet), where he claimed to have found “religious persecution” by the Chinese authorities.

Protests have also emerged against nuclear cooperation. On July 31, sixty-four congressmen signed a letter to Clinton calling on him not to certify that China is not proliferating nuclear weapons. “No President has thus far been able to certify that this is the case,” reads the letter, “and we do not believe that it is possible to certify that it is the case today.” The letter refers to earlier allegations about the sale of ring magnets to Pakistan, an issue that was long ago cleared up, and Chinese construction of a conventional nuclear reactor in Algeria, referring vaguely to “press reports” which “suggested” that this reactor “could have been intended” for the production of nuclear weapons materials. The letter was signed by a bipartisan group that includes China-bashing Republicans such as Wolf, but is also supported by liberal Democrats, such as House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.) and Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), a Presidential hopeful who also opposed MFN for China.

Various “donorgate” scandals, alleging Chinese attempts at illegal campaign funding in the United States, have also slowed down momentum on China policy. As one administration official put it, “We were actually relieved when the investigations began shifting from the ‘China track’ to an ‘Indonesia track,’ since this temporarily took the heat off of China, and allowed us to get back to work in trying to implement a China policy.” But GOPers seem intent on hammering away at the “China track.”

Despite continual sniping, the administration is making every effort to move the relationship forward, which is of a decisive character for the future of the world. Extensive negotiations are ongoing to sew up the loose strands in the areas that will play a prominent role at the summit — economic and scientific cooperation, fighting terrorism and drugs, and environmental agreements. And, with progress over the next few weeks, there may even be some surprises coming out of the summit.

Weld goes down; hopefully, to stay

by Edward Spannaus

A major disaster in U.S.-Mexico relations has been averted, as former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld gave up his quest to become U.S. ambassador to Mexico on Sept. 15. One can hope that Weld, who resigned as governor to play out his puerile confrontation over the nomination, will now withdraw from public life and retire to a life of tennis or beer-drinking, or whatever he does best.

But, there are a few who won’t give up. Former White House pollster Dick Morris, for example, has repeatedly floated the incomprehensible idea that Clinton should appoint Weld as U.S. Attorney General, to replace Janet Reno.

We therefore review here Weld’s sordid record as a federal prosecutor, in the interests of helping to prevent him from ever again being put in a position of public trust or authority.

Weld’s ‘priorities’

It was not only Weld’s support for legalization of marijuana that did him in. It is known that opponents of Weld’s nomination were also examining his entire, abysmal record on drug prosecutions. As an indication of what could be expected both in the United States and Mexico, the Mexican daily *Reforma* ran a two-part series on Weld in early September, charging that Weld’s lax enforcement and cover-ups of drug-trafficking and money-laundering had helped to create Mexico’s current drug crisis. Among those quoted was former Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigator Jack Blum, who cited Weld’s role when he was head of the Criminal Division in the Department of Justice (DOJ), where Weld repeatedly obstructed the U.S. Senate investigation into the relationship between the Central American Contras and drug-trafficking.

Weld’s first major law enforcement position was as U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, which office he occupied from 1981 to 1986; in the summer of 1986, he was nominated as Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division at DOJ headquarters.

When Weld was the chief federal prosecutor in Massachusetts, his office ranked near the bottom in the entire nation on drug prosecutions. When this was raised during the 1996 Senate race in Massachusetts, Weld first tried to claim that the region had “less drug activity” than the rest of the country. However, the *Boston Globe* then published statements from Weld made in internal DOJ memoranda in the early 1980s, in