



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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For Release:
Upon receipt

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Please consider this op-ed by Secretary of State John Gale for your publication. It is the second in a three part series about Sec. Gale's recent trip to China.

China's progress as a global power

I have traveled twice to China in my capacity as Secretary of State. The most recent visit was this summer in June. The Nebraska delegation I was with went to Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai.

China now boasts the second largest economy in the world, just behind the United States. In 2010, it was the fourth largest economy.

Although the Chinese people suffered greatly through the Cultural Revolution and the accompanying collapse of the economy, under Premier DENG Xiaoping, the country finally started in 1978 on a dynamic public/private economic development program that allowed capitalist investment and opened the country to world trade. China got a late start in terms of developing its economy, but one should not underestimate the potential of the country or its 1.4 billion people.

The diversity of China's development is evident in the capital city of Beijing. In addition to considerable government facilities, the city also boasts major manufacturing, financial, engineering and energy businesses. Beijing has swiftly moved from a city of bikes, mopeds, and buses, to a city of passenger cars, limousines, and taxicabs with modern divided expressways throughout the city. The building of commercial and residential high-rises is unceasing. There were as many construction cranes in the sky in 2014 as there were in 2010.

The economic results of China's growth have been spectacular since the 1980s. China has experienced an industrial revolution in three decades, as opposed to the century or more taken by European nations. China's economy enjoyed amazing annual growth rates of about 10 percent for two decades, although it is now 7.5 percent and slowing as the country matures.

The country's infrastructure development is very impressive on a number of fronts: commercial buildings, shopping malls, hotels, convention centers, highways (many are toll roads), parks, residential complexes (where almost all the people live), museums and antiquity displays. The structures built for the 2008 Olympics like the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube are still impressive.

China has moved 300 million citizens from poor, rural areas to cities with jobs, adequate housing and health care. It intends to move its population from 60 percent rural to 60 percent urban within 15 years, moving another 300 million citizens into cities.

China now has over 160 cities with at least one million citizens and is expected to have over 220 cities of that size within 15 years. One of the world's largest cities is Chongqing, China, with 30 million people.

While the United States has been the most visible superpower since WWII, it seems clear that global leadership is moving from a unipolar to a multipolar world. China, for one, is moving center-stage. China has accumulated considerable wealth; has a positive trade balance; displays a modern economy; has a huge and growing middle class; and, is more aggressive in foreign and military affairs.

There are clear signs of diplomatic, economic and military friction between China, the United States and our allies. This will require prudent attention and close engagement between the U.S and China as we seek to develop ways to resolve these issues cooperatively and peacefully.

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