

# USC U.S.-China Institute

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## China in Democratic Party Platforms, 1968-2016

### 1968, Vice President Herbert Humphrey (of Minnesota) was the Democratic Party candidate

An economically strong and democratic Japan has assumed a more active role in the development of the region. Indonesia has a nationalist, non-communist government seeking to live at peace with its neighbors. Thailand, **Taiwan**, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Republic of Korea **have more stable governments and steadily growing economies. They have been aided by American economic assistance and by the American military presence in the Pacific.** They have also been encouraged by a confidence reflecting successive Presidential decisions to assist nations to live in peace and freedom.

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**Communist China is providing political and military support for so-called wars of national liberation. A growing nuclear power, Peking has disdained all arms control efforts.**

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Japan, India, Indonesia, and most of the smaller **Asian nations are understandably apprehensive about Red China because of its nuclear weapons, its support of subversive efforts abroad, and its militant rhetoric.** They have been appalled by the barbaric behavior of the Red Guards toward the Chinese people, their callous disregard for human life and their mistreatment of foreign diplomats.

**The immediate prospect that China will emerge from its self-imposed isolation is dim. But both Asians and Americans will have to coexist with the 750 million Chinese on the mainland.** We shall continue to make it clear that we are prepared to cooperate with China whenever it is ready to become a responsible member of the international community. We would actively encourage economic, social and cultural exchange with mainland China as a means of freeing that nation and her people from their narrow isolation.

### 1972, Senator George McGovern (South Dakota) was the Democratic Party candidate

A new foreign policy must be adequate for a rapidly changing world. **We welcome the opportunity this brings for improved relations with the U.S.S.R. and China. But we value even more America's relations with our friends and allies** in the Hemisphere, in Western Europe, Japan and other industrialized countries, Israel and the Middle East, and in the developing nations of Asia and Africa. With them, our relations must be conducted on a basis of mutual trust and consultation, seeking to strengthen our ties and to resolve differences on a basis of mutual advantage. Throughout the world, the focus of our policy should be a commitment to

peace, self-determination, development, liberty and international cooperation, without distortion in favor of military points of view.

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The beginnings of a new U.S.-China relationship are welcome and important. However, so far, little of substance has changed, and the exaggerated secrecy and rhetoric of the Nixon Administration have produced unnecessary complications in our relationship with our allies and friends in Asia and with the U.S.S.R.

**What is needed now is serious negotiation on trade, travel exchanges and progress on more basic issues. The U.S. should take the steps necessary to establish regular diplomatic relations with China.**

### **1976, Governor Jimmy Carter of Georgia was the Democratic Party candidate**

No foreign policy that reflects traditional American humanitarian concerns can be indifferent to the plight of the peoples of the Asian subcontinent.

**The recent improvement in relations with China, which has received bipartisan support, is a welcome recognition that there are few areas in which our vital interests clash with those of China. Our relations with China should continue to develop on peaceful lines, including early movement toward normalizing diplomatic relations in the context of a peaceful resolution of the future of Taiwan.**

### **1980, President Jimmy Carter sought reelection**

Today, **thanks to** a number of steps that have been taken—strengthening the international aid institutions, the Panama Canal treaties, the Zimbabwe settlement, **the normalization of relations with China—the United States has a healthier and more productive relationship** with these countries.

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**The establishment of normal diplomatic and economic relations with China is an historic foreign policy achievement.**

Progress in U.S.-China relations was stalled in 1977, but with patience, political courage and historic vision, the deadlock was broken by this Democratic Administration.

In the fifteen months since normalization, **the benefits of normalization have already become clear: trade, travel, cultural exchange, and, most important of all, the security and stability of the Pacific region** is greater now than in any time in this century.

The Democratic Party commits itself to a broadening and deepening of our relationship with China in a way that will benefit both our peoples and the peace and security of the world. We will continue to seek new areas where the United States and China can cooperate in support of common interests. We have

not and will not play "China cards" or other dangerous games; nor will we allow our relationship with any other country to impede our efforts to continue the process of normalization of relations with China.

**...In our relationships with the Philippines, Taiwan and others in the region, we will also press for political liberalization and human rights.**

## **1984, Former Vice President Walter Mondale (of Minnesota) was the Democratic Party candidate**

**Our relationship with Japan is a key** to the maintenance of peace, security, and development in Asia and the Pacific region. Mutual respect, enhanced cooperation, and steady diplomacy must guide our dealings with Japan. At the same time, as allies and friends, we must work to resolve areas of disagreement. A Democratic President, therefore, will press for increased access to Japanese as well as other Asian markets for American firms and their products. Finally, a Democratic President will expect Japan to continue moving toward assuming its fair share of the burden of collective security—in self-defense as well as in foreign assistance and democratic development.

Our security in the Pacific region is also closely tied to the well-being of our long-time allies. Australia and New Zealand. A Democratic President will honor and strengthen our security commitment to ANZUS as well as to other Southeast Asian friends.

**Our relationship with the People's Republic of China must also be nurtured and strengthened.** The Democratic Party believes that our developing relations with the PRC offer a historic opportunity to bring one quarter of the world's population into the community of nations, to strengthen a counterweight to Soviet expansionism, and to enhance economic relations that offer great potential for mutual advantage. **At the same time, we recognize our historic ties to the people on Taiwan and we will continue to honor our commitments to them, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act.**

Our own principles and interests demand that we work with those in Asia, as well as elsewhere, who can encourage democratic institutions and support greater respect for human rights. A Democratic President will work closely with the world's largest democracy, India, and maintain mutually beneficial ties. **A Democratic President will press for the restoration of full democracy in the Philippines, further democratization and the elimination of martial law in Taiwan,** the return to freedom of speech and press in South Korea, and restoration of human rights for the people of East Timor. Recognizing the strategic importance of Pakistan and the close relationship which has existed between our two countries, a Democratic President would press to restore democracy and terminate its nuclear weapons program. Finally, a Democratic President would press for the fullest possible accounting of Americans still missing in Indochina.

## 1988, Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts was the Democratic Party candidate

**WE BELIEVE** in a clear-headed, tough-minded, decisive American foreign policy that will reflect the changing nature of threats to our security and respond to them in a way that reflects our values and the support of our people, a foreign policy that will respect our Constitution, our Congress and our traditional democratic principles and will in turn be respected for its quiet strength, its bipartisan goals, and its steadfast attention to the concerns and contributions of our allies and international organizations. We believe that **we must reassume a role of responsible active international leadership** based upon our commitment to democracy, human rights and a more secure world; that this nation, as the world power with the broadest global interests and concerns, has a greater stake than any in building a world at peace and governed by law; that we can neither police the world nor retreat from it; and that to have reliable allies we must be a reliable ally.

## 1992, Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas was the Democratic Party candidate

**Brave men and women—like the hero who stood in front of a tank in Beijing** and the leader who stood on a tank in Moscow—are putting their lives on the line for democracy around the world. But **as the tide of democracy rose in the former Soviet Union and in China**, in the Baltics and South Africa, only reluctantly did this Administration abandon the status quo and embrace the fight for freedom.

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**Conditioning of favorable trade terms for China on respect for human rights** in China and Tibet, **greater market access** for U.S. goods, and **responsible conduct on weapons proliferation**.

## 1996, President Bill Clinton sought re-election

We know that many of America's most pressing security challenges and most promising commercial opportunities lie in the Asia Pacific region. **The Democratic Party applauds** the important new security charter with Japan, the Administration's close cooperation with the Republic of Korea toward the goal of a unified and non-nuclear peninsula, and **the deployment of an American naval task force to the Taiwan Straits to ensure that China's military exercises did not imperil the security of the region**. **The Party supports the Administration's policy of steady engagement to encourage a stable, secure, open and prosperous China -- a China that respects human rights throughout its land and in Tibet, that joins international efforts against weapons proliferation, and that plays by the rules of free and fair trade**. Today's Democratic Party strongly supports continued American troop presence in East Asia and efforts to promote increased regional security. And we are committed to building long-term relationships with India, Pakistan, and others in South Asia in order to advance America's diverse interests in that region, from democracy and commerce to nuclear non-proliferation.

## 2000, Vice President Al Gore (Tennessee) was the Democratic Party candidate

We continue to work with China and Taiwan to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

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Democrats understand that we must engage former enemies. This Administration's efforts to design new relationships with the Russian Federation and China have been continuously subjected to every form of harassment and attack by the Republicans - but they have been in America's national interest and they have been the right thing to do.

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Similarly, **we must continue to engage China - a nation with 1.3 billion people, a nuclear arsenal, and a role in the 21st Century that is destined to be one of the basic facts of international life.** We must search out ways to cooperate across a broad range of issues, such as the environment and trade, while **at the same time, insisting on adherence to international standards on human rights, freedom, the persecution of religions, the suppression of Tibet, and bellicose threats directed at Taiwan.** China cannot be ignored, and these issues cannot - and must not - be marginalized. A deterioration of the U.S.-China relationship would harm, not help, American national security interests and the promotion of our values. A Gore Administration will fulfill its responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act. A Gore Administration will also remain committed to a "One China" policy. **We support a resolution of cross-Straits issues that is both peaceful and consistent with the wishes of the people of Taiwan.**

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In Asia, we are working to promote fair trade with Japan and China.

## 2004, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts was the Democratic Party candidate

**In Asia, we must better engage with China to secure Chinese adherence to international trade, non-proliferation and human rights standards.** We are committed to a "One China" policy, and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-Straits issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the Taiwanese people. We must maintain our strong relationship with Japan, and explore new ways to cooperate further.

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We will stand up for American workers and consumers by building on President Clinton's progress in including enforceable, internationally recognized labor and environmental standards in trade agreements. We will aggressively enforce our trade agreements with a real plan that includes a complete review of all existing agreements; **immediate investigation into China's workers' rights abuses and currency manipulation**; increased funding for efforts to protect workers' rights and stop child labor abuse; new reforms to protect the innovations of high-tech companies; and vigorous enforcement of U.S. trade laws. **We will use all the tools we have to create new opportunities for**

**American workers, farmers, and businesses, and break down barriers in key export markets, like the Japanese auto market and the Chinese high-technology market. We will effectively enforce our trade laws protecting against dumping, illegal subsidies, and import surges that threaten American jobs.**

New trade agreements must protect internationally recognized workers' rights and environmental standards as vigorously as they now protect commercial concerns. We will build on and strengthen the progress made in the Jordan agreement to include strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards in the core of new free trade agreements. And no trade agreement should stop government from protecting the environment, food safety or the health of its citizens. Nor should an agreement give greater rights to foreign investors than to U.S. investors, require the privatization of our vital public services, or limit our government's ability to create good jobs in our communities.

## **2008, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois was the Democratic Party candidate**

**We are committed to U.S. engagement in Asia.** This begins with maintaining strong relationships with allies like Japan, Australia, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, and deepening our ties to vital democratic partners, like India, in order to create a stable and prosperous Asia. We must also forge a more effective framework in Asia that goes beyond bilateral agreements, occasional summits, and ad hoc diplomatic arrangements.

We need an open and inclusive infrastructure with the countries in Asia that can promote stability, prosperity, and human rights, and help confront transnational threats, from terrorist cells in the Philippines to avian flu in Indonesia. **We will encourage China to play a responsible role as a growing power—to help lead in addressing the common problems of the 21st century.** We are committed to a "One China" policy and the Taiwan Relations Act, and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-Straits issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. **It's time to engage China on common interests like climate change, trade, and energy, even as we continue to encourage its shift to a more open society and a market-based economy, and promote greater respect for human rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, uncensored use of the internet, and Chinese workers' right to freedom of association, as well as the rights of Tibetans.**

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We will reach out to the leaders of the biggest carbon emitting nations and ask them to join a new Global Energy Forum that will lay the foundation for the next generation of climate protocols. **China has replaced America as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases.** Clean energy development must be a central focus in our relationships with major countries in Europe and Asia. We need a global response to climate change that includes binding and enforceable commitments to reducing emissions, especially for those that pollute the most: the United States, China, India, the European Union, and Russia.

## 2012, President Barack Obama sought re-election

Working with our European allies and with Russia and **China**, the administration gained unprecedented agreement for the toughest ever UN sanctions against Iran, laying the foundation for additional national financial and energy sanctions imposed by the United States and other nations. As a result, Iran is now increasingly isolated and the regime faces crippling economic pressure - pressure that will only build over time.

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Our goal is an effective, international effort in which all major economies commit to reduce their emissions, nations meet their commitments in a transparent manner, and the necessary financing is mobilized so that developing countries can mitigate the effects of climate change and invest in clean energy technologies. **That is why the Obama administration has taken a leadership role in ongoing climate negotiations, working to ensure that other major economies like China** and India commit to taking meaningful action. It is also why we have worked regionally to build clean energy partnerships in Asia, the Americas, and Africa.

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**President Obama has made modernizing America's defense posture across the Asia-Pacific a top priority. We remain committed to defending and deepening our partnerships** with our allies in the region: Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. We will maintain a strong presence in Japan and on the Korean Peninsula to deter and defend against provocations by states like North Korea, while enhancing our presence in Southeast Asia and in Australia. **We will also expand our networks of security cooperation with other emerging partners throughout the region to combat terrorism, counter proliferation, provide disaster relief, fight piracy, and ensure maritime security, including cooperation in the South China Sea.** And we will continue to invest in a long-term strategic partnership with India to support its ability to serve as a regional economic anchor and provider of security in the broader Indian Ocean region.

Meanwhile, **the President is committed to continuing efforts to build a cooperative relationship with China, while being clear and candid when we have differences. The world has a profound interest in the rise of a peaceful and prosperous China, but China must also understand that it must abide by clear international standards and rules of the road.** China can be a partner in reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, countering proliferation in Iran, confronting climate change, increasing trade, and resolving other global challenges. President Obama will continue to seek additional opportunities for cooperation with China, including greater communication between our militaries. We will do this even as we continue to be clear about the importance of the Chinese government upholding international economic rules regarding currency, export financing, intellectual property, indigenous innovation, and workers' rights. We will consistently speak out for the importance of respecting the universal human rights of the Chinese people, including the right of the Tibetan people to preserve their cultural and religious identity. And we remain committed to a one China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

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The President's leadership at the UN has enabled us to make real progress on a number of top national security priorities, including **getting Russia and China on board to implement the toughest UN sanctions ever on Iran and North Korea.**

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We have also sought to promote free and fair trade. Because of the economic dynamism of the Asia-Pacific region, which is already home to more than half the global economy, expanding trade with that region is critical to creating jobs and opportunities for the American people.

We have also worked to ensure that American businesses and workers are competing on an even footing with our international competitors, and we have not hesitated to take action. That's why the **Obama administration has brought trade cases against China at twice the rate of the previous administration** and recently set up a new Interagency Trade Enforcement Center, which substantially expands our ability to investigate and take action against unfair trade practices around the world.

## **2016, Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was the Democratic Party candidate**

Democrats' priority is to significantly strengthen enforcement of existing trade rules and the tools we have, including by holding countries accountable on currency manipulation and significantly expanding enforcement resources. **China and other countries are using unfair trade practices to tilt the playing field against American workers and businesses.** When they dump cheap products into our markets, subsidize state-owned enterprises, devalue currencies, and discriminate against American companies, our middle class pays the price. That has to stop. **Democrats will use all our trade enforcement tools to hold China and other trading partners accountable—because no country should be able to manipulate their currencies to gain a competitive advantage.** While we believe that openness to the world economy is an important source of American leadership and dynamism, we will oppose trade agreements that do not support good American jobs, raise wages, and improve our national security. We believe any new trade agreements must include strong and enforceable labor and environmental standards in their core text with streamlined and effective enforcement mechanisms. Trade agreements should crack down on the unfair and illegal subsidies other countries grant their businesses at the expense of ours. It should promote innovation of and access to lifesaving medicines. **And it should protect a free and open internet.** We should never enter into a trade agreement that prevents our government, or other governments, from putting in place rules that protect the environment, food safety, or the health of American citizens or others around the world. These are the standards Democrats believe must be applied to all trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

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**From the Asia Pacific to the Indian Ocean, we will deepen our relationships in the region** with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. We will honor our historic commitment to Japan. We will continue to invest in a long-term strategic partnership with India—the



world's largest democracy, a nation of great diversity, and an important Pacific power. We will build on the historic opening with Burma and advocate for greater human rights protections and national reconciliation among Burma's many different ethnic groups. We will help Pakistan stabilize its polity and build an effective relationship with the predominantly young population of this strategically located, nuclear-armed country. **We will also work with our allies and partners to fortify regional institutions and norms as well as protect freedom of the seas in the South China Sea.**

Democrats will push back against North Korean aggression and press China to play by the rules. **We will stand up to Beijing on unfair trade practices, currency manipulation, censorship of the internet, piracy, and cyberattacks. And we will look for areas of cooperation, including on combatting climate change and nuclear proliferation. We will promote greater respect for human rights, including the rights of Tibetans.** We are committed to a "One China" policy and the Taiwan Relations Act and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of Cross-Strait issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.

## **2020, Former Vice President Joseph Biden was the Democratic Party nominee**

### Building A Fair System of International Trade for Our Workers

For too long, the global trading system has failed to keep its promises to American workers. Too many corporations have rushed to outsource jobs, and too many countries have broken their promises to be honest and transparent partners. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the risks of relying too heavily on global supply chains, as shutdowns and shortages have created chaos for workers and consumers and made our public health response even more challenging. The Trump Administration has failed time after time to deliver for American workers on this crucial issue, siding with corporate interests over our workers and **launching a trade war with China that they have no plan for winning**—creating incredible hardship for American farmers, manufacturers, workers, and consumers in the process....

**Democrats will take aggressive action against China** or any other country that tries to undercut American manufacturing by **manipulating their currencies** and maintaining a misaligned exchange rate with the dollar, dumping products like steel and aluminum in our markets, or providing unfair subsidies. **Unlike President Trump, we will stand up to efforts from China and other state actors to steal America's intellectual property and will demand China and other countries cease and desist from conducting cyberespionage against our companies.**

We will eliminate President Trump's tax and trade policies that encourage big corporations to ship jobs overseas and evade paying their fair share of taxes. If companies shut down their operations here and outsource jobs, we'll claw back any public investments or benefits they received from taxpayers. And **we will take immediate action to repair the damage President Trump's reckless policies have done to American farmers, by working with our allies to stand up to China and negotiate from the strongest possible position.**

### Climate Change

We will promote climate accountability and mobilize a united front to keep states like China from outsourcing pollution to other countries.

### Nonproliferation

We will build on this foundation to negotiate arms control agreements that reflect the emergence of new players like China, capture new technologies, and move the world back from the nuclear precipice.

#### Democracy and Human Rights

**Democrats believe that freedom of religion and the right to believe—or not to believe—are fundamental human rights.** We will never use protection of that right as a cover for discrimination. We reject the politicization of religious freedom in American foreign policy, and **we condemn atrocities against religious minorities around the world—from ISIS’ genocide of Christians and Yazidis, to China’s mass internment of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, to Burma’s persecution of the Rohingya, to attacks on religious minorities in Northeast Syria.**

#### Global Economy and Trade

**Democrats believe that if the United States does not work with its allies and partners to shape the terms of global trade, China will shape them for us—and American working families and the middle class will pay the price. That’s why we will work with our allies to mobilize more than half the world’s economy to stand up to China and negotiate from the strongest possible position.**

Democrats believe that fighting for American workers also means pushing back against global corruption, and **we will make anti-corruption a priority in our foreign policy.**

#### Asia-Pacific

As a Pacific power, the United States should work closely with its allies and partners to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values—and shape the unfolding Pacific Century.

**Democrats’ approach to China will be guided by America’s national interests and the interests of our allies, and draw on the sources of American strength—the openness of our society, the dynamism of our economy, and the power of our alliances to shape and enforce international norms that reflect our values. Undermining those strengths will not make us “tough on China.” It would be a gift to the Chinese Communist Party.**

Democrats will be clear, strong, and consistent in pushing back where we have profound economic, security, and human rights concerns about the actions of China’s government.

Democrats will protect the American worker from unfair trade practices by the Chinese government, including currency manipulation and benefiting from a misaligned exchange rate with the dollar, illegal subsidies, and theft of intellectual property. **We will rally friends and allies across the world to push back against China or any other country’s attempts to undermine international norms.**

Democrats believe the China challenge is not primarily a military one, but we will deter and respond to aggression. **We will underscore our global commitment to freedom of navigation and resist the Chinese military’s intimidation in the South China Sea. Democrats are committed to the Taiwan Relations Act and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.**

**Rather than stand with President Xi Jinping as he cracks down on Hong Kong’s autonomy, Democrats will stand for the democratic rights of its citizens.** We will fully enforce the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, including by sanctioning officials, financial institutions, companies, and individuals

responsible for undercutting Hong Kong's autonomy. **And we will bring the world together to condemn the internment of more than one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in concentration camps in China**, using the tools provided by the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act.

Democrats will pursue this strategy without resorting to self-defeating, unilateral tariff wars or falling into the trap of a new Cold War. Those mistakes would only serve to exaggerate China's weight, over-militarize our policy, and hurt American workers.

**America must approach our relationship with China with confidence—the confidence to lead international efforts to push back on malign behavior while also pursuing cooperation on issues of mutual interest like climate change and nonproliferation and ensuring that the U.S.-China rivalry does not put global stability at risk.**

Europe

**We believe Europe is our natural partner in managing areas of competition with China and will work to establish common priorities, strategies, and tools.** And just as we came together to stand up to communism and respond to global terrorism, we will come together with Europe to confront the existential challenge of climate change.