

# Appreciation Dinner 2023: Embrace Common Interests, Create Forward Momentum



With the advent of 2023, the US-China relationship – unquestionably one of the most important bilateral relationships today – is attracting much global attention. Senior representatives from all parts of the bilateral relationship came together at this landmark dinner to highlight the importance of the American business community to the bilateral relationship. CPPCC National Committee Vice Chairperson Wan Gang and US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns both attended the dinner and delivered keynote speeches.

In his remarks, AmCham Chairman Colm Rafferty expressed his sincere gratitude for the event taking place, as it marked the Chamber's first Government Appreciation Dinner since 2020. "Despite the challenges over the past three years, US-China trade has continued to grow, creating jobs and improving the lives of citizens in both countries," Rafferty reflected. "Tonight's dinner provides an invaluable opportunity for the American business



Above: Vice Chairperson of the CPPCC National Committee Wan Gang

Photo courtesy of AmCham China



Photo courtesy of AmCham China



Above: US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns

Photo courtesy of AmCham China

*On February 15, AmCham China held the 22nd Annual Appreciation Dinner to celebrate the efforts made by both the US and Chinese governments, as well as the American business community, towards resolving the current trade tensions and forging a stronger bilateral relationship. More than 350 guests from the US Embassy, Chinese government ministries and organizations, and the wider AmCham China community attended the event, whose theme was “Embrace Common Interests, Create Forward Momentum”.*

community to express appreciation to you all, as well as our hope for a better future”.

“As business people, we believe that continuous improvement starts with result-oriented dialogue,” Rafferty continued, identifying the great potential in deepening people-to-people exchanges with China’s borders now open for business, as well as encouraging communication between the two governments to address and constructively resolve outstanding issues. “We welcome all of your participation as a further step in that direction, because we believe that every step counts,” he said. Rafferty ended his speech by echoing the theme of the night – “embrace common interests, create forward momentum” – and called for the move towards a “mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship” between the US and China.

Ren Hongbin, Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), said that AmCham China has been an important partner for his organization and one of the most influential foreign Chambers in China. Ren further commented that the recent Xi-Biden meeting indicated the direction of the development of the bilateral relationship, injecting new vitality into the exchanges and cooperation between the business communities of both countries. He stated that CCPIT has “a focus on China and a global perspective” and is willing to work with AmCham China in further promoting the bilateral trade relationship and building an open world economy.

## “AmCham China is a vital link for the American business community with both the Chinese and US governments.”



**Top:** Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Ren Hongbin

**Middle:** AmCham China Chairman Colm Rafferty

**Bottom:** AmCham China President Michael Hart

Photos courtesy of AmCham China

US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns began by thanking AmCham China for the work the Chamber has done to support American businesses in China, saying that “AmCham China is a vital link for the American business community with both the Chinese and US governments.” Ambassador Burns called for a level playing field for American businesses in China, raising specific US concerns over PRC subsidies and industrial policies, strict cybersecurity and data localization requirements, violations of American intellectual property, and other impediments. “As Ambassador, I am concerned that imbalances in the economic relationship caused in large part by unfair PRC government policies, continue to grow,” he said, adding that the rule of law, fair play, and human dignity and freedom are essential to a successful business climate. Ambassador Burns also emphasized President Biden’s statement that “we seek competition, not conflict.” He described how Mission China officers supported the American business community during the disruptions and lockdowns in 2022 tied to the pandemic. The Ambassador described President Biden’s strategy towards China – “invest, align, compete.” Burns ended his speech by expressing his wish for a better year for US businesses in China. “Our doors are open to all American companies here in China,” Burns said.

Wan Gang, Vice Chairperson of the CPPCC National Committee, began his speech by thanking AmCham China for its efforts in deepening pragmatic economic and commercial cooperation between the US and China. He pointed out the bilateral trade relationship is, at its core, “mutually beneficial and centered on win-win cooperation”, and that its opportunities outweigh its challenges. Wan also recalled an old Chinese saying “为者常成，行者常至” – or, “those who maintain their efforts often achieve their goal, and those who keep on walking often reach their destination,” encouraging AmCham China and its member companies to continue deepening pragmatic cooperation between the US and China with the aim of bringing the US-China relationship back to the direction of healthy and stable development.

Earlier, AmCham China President Michael Hart opened proceedings by welcoming the distinguished guests, including CPPCC Vice Chair Wan Gang and US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, among other Chinese and US government officials, and thanking Ren Hongbin from CCPIT for his personal support as well as that of his organization. A video then played tribute to the role that AmCham China has played in promoting a stable and balanced US-China commercial relationship over the past three years, underscoring the important contributions the US business community has made to the development of the Chinese economy. **Q**

*AmCham China would like to thank CCPIT for their continuous support and the major sponsors of the event for their generous support: Honeywell, Amway, Cargill, ExxonMobil, J.P.Morgan, Coca Cola, FedEx, Mars, Merck, Dow, Novartis, NBA, Intel, and GE.*