

U.S.-China Business Council

Měi-Zhōng Mào yì Quánguó Wěi yuán huì 美中贸易全国委员会

The U.S.-China Business Council is a non-profit trade association representing over 250 major U.S. corporations. It has promoted economic engagement since its founding, as the National Council for United States–China Trade, Inc., in 1973.

The U.S.-China Business Council (USCBC) is a private, nonprofit organization of more than 250 major U.S. corporations that do business with China. Founded in 1973 as the National Council for United States–China Trade, Inc., USCBC has offices in Washington, D.C., Beijing, and Shanghai. It provides information, advisory, and advocacy services to its membership; working with its counterpart organization, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT 中国国际贸易促进委员会), USCBC's mission is to develop commercial relations with China to the benefit of members and, more broadly, the U.S. economy. The council focuses on rules-based trade, investment, and competition, and on developing a commercial environment in China that is predictable and transparent to all parties.

Member companies include American Express, Anheuser-Busch, Apple, AT&T, Coca-Cola, Walt Disney Company, Time Warner, and more than two hundred others. USCBC is governed by a board of directors composed of corporate leaders; its 2007–2008 chair was W. James McNerney Jr., chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Boeing, a company at the forefront U.S.-China

relations after President Richard Nixon's historic trip to China in 1972, when trade with China resumed and the United States sold 10 Boeing 707 aircraft to China. Andrew N. Livernis, chairman and chief operation officer of Dow Chemical Company, took office as board chair on 1 June 2008.

USCBC History

The concept of turning to a private U.S. organization to encourage the development of trade relations through initiatives such as commercial missions and trade exhibitions arose from a report to Congress by House Majority Leader Hale Boggs and Minority Leader Gerald Ford. Reporting on their June–July 1972 China trip, *Impressions of the New China*, Boggs told the House that “until we have normal state relations with China, a quasi-public body” could lay a basis for U.S. trade with the PRC. Boggs urged private efforts to enlarge trade and business with China, and identified the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) as the PRC's channel for fostering trade relations “where lack of diplomatic relations might otherwise be a barrier to international contact.” Ten members of the board of the newly founded National Council for U.S. China Trade, which would become known as the UCSBC in 1988, traveled to Beijing in early November 1973 as the first formal U.S. trade mission to China since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. Board members included the leaders of John Deere & Co.; JC Penney Co., Inc.; Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co.; and Westinghouse Electric Corp.

USCBC Today

USCBC hosts events featuring senior officials from the U.S. and Chinese governments. USCBC has received the following Chinese officials: President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao, Vice Premier Wu Yi, and others from central and provincial governments. Recent U.S. public figures to meet with USCBC members in the United States and China have included Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, former U.S. secretary of state James A. Baker III, Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, and numerous specialists on U.S.-China affairs from the executive branch of government. Other USCBC events include forums on green business practices and meetings on labor issues.

The council produces the *China Business Review* and *China Market Intelligence* in addition to books and reports aimed at helping business people understand China and facilitating business with Chinese companies. USCBC also produces policy reports and advocacy statements regarding labor, economy, trade, human rights, and politics. The council collaborates on programs and events with other organizations such as the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, which, for example, cosponsored a luncheon held in New York in September 2008 for Premier Wen Jiabao, who, while in the United States, also addressed the United Nations and was interviewed on television by U.S. journalist Fared Zakaria.

The USCBC has been criticized for a pro-business, free-trade perspective that is insufficiently attentive to issues such as human rights, product safety, and child

The first U.S. business delegation to China, led by the National Council for U.S.-China Trade (as the USCBC was then known), at the Great Wall in November 1973. Council President Christopher Phillips is the tallest man in the middle of the back row. Eugene Theroux is fifth from the left, also in the back. PHOTO BY THE U.S. CHINA BUSINESS COUNCIL.



America's First Trade Mission to "the New China"

China's market has been a magnet for U.S. merchants since the 1784 voyage of the U.S. ship, *Empress of China*. That vessel left New York and sailed east around the southern tip of Africa, across the Indian Ocean, into the Pacific, and up the Pearl River to Canton (Guangzhou), one of the Middle Kingdom's thriving southern ports. The venture launched a trade that would grow and flourish until World War II.

In his report to U.S. Secretary of Foreign Affairs John Jay in 1785, Major Samuel Shaw, soon to be the U.S. Consul at Canton, explained how he got the Chinese interested in commerce with the United States:

"By the map," he related, "we conveyed to them an idea of the extent of our country, with its present and increasing population," adding that the Chinese "were highly pleased at the prospect of so considerable a market for the production of their own empire." And how "considerable" a market it would become—the two countries recorded \$386.7 billion in bilateral trade in 2007 alone!

Source: Theroux, G. (2008). America's first trade mission to "the New China." *The China Business Review*. Retrieved March 5, 2009, from <http://www.chinabusinessreview.com/public/0811/theroux.html>

labor, and for government lobbying that focuses on the requirements of multinational corporations rather than small and medium-sized enterprises. As an established trade association it must continue to meet the needs of traditional members while attracting fast-growing, cutting-edge new businesses; it must also provide leadership in the midst of continued debate about trade restrictions, currency valuation, and cooperation as businesses

and countries alike face the global economic challenges that began in 2008.

The Editors

Further Reading

US-China Business Council. (2008). Retrieved December 26, 2008, from <http://www.uschina.org>

