

Chinese President Hu Jintao Holds Talks With the Chilean President

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On the afternoon of November 18, 2004, Chinese President Hu Jintao held talks with Chilean President Ricardo Lagos in Santiago and both sides expressed strong aspiration for and firm belief in strengthening bilateral all-round cooperative partnership and held that China-Chile ties are facing a new stage of accelerated development.

Prior to the talks, president Lagos and his wife held a grand welcome ceremony for visiting President Hu Jintao and his wife Liu Yongqing at the Constitution Square where flew the national flags of China and Chile. The military band played the national anthems of the two countries and President Hu reviewed the honor guards of the Chilean army.

At the beginning of the talks, Lagos expressed warm welcome for Hu Jintao's visit to Chile and emphasized that this visit is a continuation of the traditional friendship between the two countries and will push Chile-China and Latin America-China ties up to a new stage for development.

Hu Jintao met with Lagos during the Informal APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Summit held in Bangkok last year and he felt pleased to meet with his Chilean counterpart again one year later, especially to see the momentum of rapid development in China-Chile ties. He said the two peoples always hold cordial and friendly feelings towards each other. Among Latin American countries, Chile is the first to establish diplomatic ties with china, the first to support resuming the legal seat of the government of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations (UN), the first to reach bilateral agreement with China on its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the first to acknowledge China's full market economy status. All this shows that our two counties are sincere friends and important cooperative partners.

Hu said that China and Chile face the same development task. Chile makes a proposal of reaching the developed countries' level by 2010. China also strives to build a well-off society in an all-round manner. That the two sides join hands to seek common development can not only benefit the two peoples, but also promote East Asia-Latin America cooperation. Looking into the future, we propose to strengthen and deepen the all-round cooperative partnership between the two counties in the following aspects. First, the two sides should expand exchanges and deepen the traditional friendship. Both sides should maintain frequent high-level contacts, increase personnel exchanges in various fields and strengthen cooperation on culture, science and technology, health, sports and tourism. Second, the two sides should promote mutual complementarities of advantages, seek common development and continuously pursue new growth points of bilateral trade. In the next period to come, the two sides can take mining industry, agriculture and infrastructure construction as priority and push bilateral trade and economic and technological cooperation up to another new level. Third, the two sides should keep closer coordination and enhance multi-lateral cooperation. Both sides conduct sound cooperation in the UN, WTO, APEC, Organization of American States (OAS) and other multi-lateral agencies and can further strengthen dialogue and communication so as to jointly push for the democratization of international relations.

Lagos gave a positive response to Hu Jintao's proposals, holding that these will strongly push forward the development of Chile-China ties and benefit the two peoples. He confirmed Chile's recognition of China's full market economy status and indicated that his country looks forward to becoming a bridge of expanding exchanges and strengthening cooperation between China and Latin American countries.

The two sides also briefed on each other's economic and social developments and exchanged views on further deepening China's relations with Latin American countries, the APEC cooperation process and other issues.

Following the talks, the two heads of state jointly attended the signing ceremony of a range of cooperation documents between China and Chile. These include the Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Bilateral Economic and Trade Cooperation, the Memorandum of Understanding on Jointly Developing Chile's Copper

Resources between Chinese and Chilean Enterprises, the Framework Agreement on Health and Medical Cooperation, the Agreement on Sport Cooperation, the Protocol on Examination and Quarantine For Poultry and Meat Trade, and the Memorandum of Understanding of the Implementation Plan on Chinese Tourist Groups Traveling to Chile.

Following that, the two heads of state jointly met with journalists from the media of China, Chile and other countries. Both of them think the talks are friendly and candid with rich content and reach broad consensus. They declared the launch of the negotiation on signing the free trade agreement through consultation between China and Chile. Hu Jintao appreciated Chile for acknowledging China's full market economy status and emphasized that China-Chile cooperation is a sincere one based on equality and mutual benefit and China-Chile ties enjoy broad prospects for development. The Chinese government attaches great importance to China-Chile ties, deems Chile a reliable friend and important cooperative partner in Latin America and would like to work along with Chile to continuously push forward the all-round cooperative partnership between the two countries featuring long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit.

On the evening of the same day, Hu Jintao and his wife Liu Yongqing attended the grand welcome banquet held by Lagos and his wife at the Presidential Palace.

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