

UNITED STATES-CHINA BUSINESS COUNCIL Records, 1973-78 (1983)

Collection Type

Personal Papers

Extent

170.3 linear feet (ca. 340,000 pages)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Open. Some items are temporarily restricted under terms of the donor's deed of gift, a copy of which is available on request, or under National Archives and Records Administration general restrictions (36 CFR 1256).

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Processed by

Helmi Raaska, September 1987

Scope and Content Note

The National Council for United States-China Trade (NCUSCT) was formed in 1973 to promote and facilitate trade between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Although trade between the two countries had resumed on June 10, 1971, after a 22 year hiatus, the impetus for a trade council came from President Nixon's visit to China in February 1972. At the end of the visit a joint communique was issued in Shanghai. Addressing the issue of trade, the communique stated, "Both sides view bilateral trade as another area from which mutual benefit can be derived, and agreed that economic relations based on equality and mutual benefit are in the interest of the people of the two countries. They agree to facilitate the progressive development of trade between their two countries." The National Council became the facilitator for the United States.

Creation and Membership

Full support for the formation of the Council was given by the White House and the Departments of State and Commerce. The Department of Commerce took the lead in the organizational effort, and Secretary Frederick B. Dent recruited twenty American business leaders to serve as an executive committee for the NCUSCT. The Executive Committee met in Washington on March 22, 1973, to undertake formation of the Council. An inaugural conference, attended by more than 300 business representatives, was held on May 31, 1973, and the Council was formally organized.

Members of the Executive Committee served as the first Board of Directors of the Council. Donald C. Burnham of Westinghouse Corporation, who had been Chairman of the Executive Committee, became the first Chairman of the Board. The Board elected Christopher H. Phillips, U.S. Deputy Representative to the United Nations, to be the president and executive director of the Council. Washington attorney Eugene A. Theroux served the Council first as a consultant and then as vice president. He was instrumental during the formative stages of the Council in developing programs and policies.

Although founded with the support and encouragement of the Government, the Council is a private, non-profit organization supported by membership dues. It was formed and is operated entirely by its members.

Membership in the Council is open to firms interested in export or import business with China. Dues are assessed on a sliding scale based on total sales or gross revenue, whichever is higher. In a special effort to assist smaller firms, the Council offers a limited, non-voting affiliated membership for one standard fee. About 200 companies joined the Council during the first year of its existence. By July 1982 membership had grown to about 400 companies.

Annual general membership and semiannual Board of Directors meetings are held in Washington. One of the Board meetings is held in conjunction with the annual membership meeting.

Programs and Services

Several programs were implemented to encourage trade, all with an emphasis on providing practical assistance to member companies. The Council provides advice and consultations for member firms, sponsors seminars and conferences, and conducts a program for exchanges of trade delegations. Translation services were offered until 1978, when that department was spun-off into an independent company.

Member firms are organized into importer and exporter committees, and Council staff work with these committees to facilitate trade in specific product areas.

In order to promote the dissemination of commercial information, the Council publishes a bimonthly magazine, *The China Business Review*. Handbooks, directories, special sector reports, and other materials are also produced. The Council is a clearinghouse for information on all aspects of China's trade and economy, and its library houses a complete and current collection of journals, trade statistics, and a reference file of clippings from around the world.

The headquarters of the Council are in Washington. At various times representatives were located in New York, Chicago and Hong Kong. In November 1979 an office was opened in Beijing. Since the fall of 1973 the Council has staffed an office at the Chinese Export Commodities Fair, and has also had representation at various mini-fairs held in cities throughout China.

NCUSCT Relations with U.S. and Chinese Governments

A good working relationship is maintained with the U.S. Government. The Council has briefed senior Government officials going to China and before meetings with the Chinese in this country. The Council is able to present the concerns of member firms to Government agencies, and when problems do arise, to refer members to the appropriate person or office. Legislation affecting trade is monitored, and Council staff have provided expert testimony before congressional committees on such matters as Most Favored Nation tariff status, export controls, and legislative impediments to trade.

The Council is the U.S. counterpart to the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, and maintains a working relationship with it and Chinese government agencies involved in foreign trade. Through this cooperative association the Council provides its members with representation and referral to the Chinese.

Scope and Content of NCUSCT Records

While certain items are dated as recently as 1983, the bulk of the records are from 1973-78. They cover the time from establishment of liaison offices and creation of the Council to the announcement on December 15, 1978, that the United States and China would normalize diplomatic relations on the first of the new year.

The collection consists of Council records and library holdings. Council records are arranged into four sub-groups: administrative files, Business Advisory Services Department files, Delegations Department files, and Publications and Research Department files. While the internal structure and staff of the Council changed, the major activities of the Council remained within the compass of these four file groups. There are no records from the Translations Department, but related material may be found in other files. For information about the four departments and the library, the researcher is referred to the series descriptions that follow.

In addition to being a source of information about the history and work of the NCUSCT and the development of US-China trade in general, the files have research value in several other areas. Specific aspects of trade such as shipping, packaging, contract negotiations, banking, inspection, and trademarks are documented. The files also have material relating to US-China relations in general, China's trade with other countries, and China's history, culture, and business practices. Briefing

materials, texts of speeches from conferences, notes and minutes from meetings, packets prepared for meetings, and trip reports are good sources for research in those areas enumerated above.

The files contain material relating to routine matters such as working papers for planning itineraries, making arrangements for special events, and orders for publications. The files also include printed materials such as annual reports and brochures from businesses and organizations, and publications on laws, regulations, and legislation affecting trade.

Related and duplicate materials are often filed in several locations. For example, the files on board of directors and annual meetings contain many duplicate items, and materials relating to delegations can be found in all four file groups.

In the process of arranging these records Ford Library staff disposed of approximately 25 feet of material. Items selected for disposal were registration forms, ballots and proxies from the annual meetings; multiple copies of mass mailings; mailing list changes; early drafts of articles and publications; note cards from the preparation of publications; drafts, mock-ups, and galley proofs from the CBR background files; a collection of business cards; and magazines in which the Council considered placing advertisements for a conference.

The Gerald R. Ford Library will continue to receive accretions to these records from the NCUSCT.

Audiovisual Materials

Photographs, negatives, slides, and audio recordings have been transferred to the audiovisual department. [View the finding aid for those items here.](#)

Related Materials (September 1987):

The following White House Central Files categories have materials relating to trade and China.

CO 34

China

CO 34-1	Republic of China
CO 34-2	People's Republic of China
TA	Trade
TA/CO 34	Trade/China
TR 18-2	Trips, President's trip to Peking, 12/1-5/75

The Ford Congressional Files contain material relating to China, including the 1972 Boggs-Ford Congressional trip. These papers are located in several series.

Scattered folders relating to China and congressional trips to China can be found in the White House staff files of Robert Hartmann, John Marsh, Richard Cheney, Max Friedersdorf, and William Timmons. The papers of Ronald Nessen include material on President Ford's trip to China and guidance on China for press briefings.

The Bentley Historical Library at The University of Michigan houses the papers of Donald C. Burnham, first Chairman of the Board of Directors of the NCUSCT, and of Alexander Eckstein, who had been a contributor to Council publications and member of its Academic Advisory Board.

ACRONYMS

AMCHAM	American Chamber of Commerce
CBR	The China Business Review
CCPIT	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade
CECF	Chinese Export Commodities Fair
FTC	Foreign Trade Corporation
NCUSCT	The National Council for United States-China Trade
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRCLO	People's Republic of China Liaison Office

ROC Republic of China
USLO United States Liaison Office

Series List

National Council Administrative Files

1-3	Board of Directors Meetings
4-6	Annual Meetings
7-21	General Correspondence
22-25	Associations, Councils, Societies, Committees
26	Government Agencies
27-28	State Files
29-30	Cables
31-41	Subject File
42-52	Office Reading File
53	Staff Files

Business Advisory Services Department

Importer Services

54-59	Importer Committees
60-70	Delegations
71-77	Trade Fairs
78-81	Subject File

82-83	China Importer Newsletter
84	Staff Chronological Files
Exporter Services	
85-91	Exporter Committees

Delegations Department

92-103	Delegations from China
104-114	Delegations to China

Publications and Research Department

115-167	Administrative Files
168-176	Staff Files
177-184	Council Publications
185-192	CBR Background Files

Library

A1-A216	Periodicals
A217-A224	Trade Statistics
A225-A231	Reference File
A232-A235	Advertising Material
A236-A239	Exhibition Catalogs

National Council Administrative Files

The administrative files are most directly related to the activities of the Council's president and vice president and their support staff. They relate to administrative matters such as organizing the office; setting policy, goals, and objectives for the Council; making arrangements and compiling materials for the board and general membership meetings; and communicating with member companies. The formation and history of the Council; its role in developing trade relations with China, and its relationship with other organizations involved in trade, scholarly, or cultural exchanges with China, and with U.S. Government agencies are documented. Also documented is the establishment of liaison with the People's Republic of China Liaison Office and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

In addition to General Correspondence, three other series - Associations, Councils, Societies, Committees; Government Agencies; and States - are largely correspondence files. It is not always clear why a particular item is filed where it is; the researcher should consult all of the files, using several access points. These files contain correspondence to and from the entire staff.

Business Advisory Services Department

This department was directly involved in providing advice and consultations to member firms, organizing and working with member committees, and making arrangements for receiving and sending delegations. The Importers Steering Committee was formed in 1974, followed by the formation of importer committees based on product areas to parallel the Chinese foreign trade corporations. Special services for importers included assistance in the process of obtaining an invitation to the Chinese Export Commodities Fair, sponsoring pre-fair briefings, and providing staff assistance and office facilities at the fair; and publication of a newsletter. The exporter committees, based on industrial sectors, were formed in 1976. These committees were involved in market research, technical exchanges, and promotion of trade in their sectors.

The records are arranged into importer and exporter services files. The bulk of the files are from importer services, with only committee files from exporter services.

Delegations Department

A separate department was created in 1978 to coordinate the growing number of trade delegations to and from China. Delegations files which were created prior to this are also included in this series. Staff from other departments continued to serve as escorts for delegations on a rotating basis.

Publications and Research Department

In addition to publications and research, the staff of this department assisted with delegations, conferences, and briefings; did research for and drafted speeches; and were involved in the preparation of annual reports, press releases, delegation booklets, and promotional literature. Nicholas Ludlow, director, in addition to his responsibilities in publications and research, was involved in planning, promotion, press relations, and supervision of the NCUSCT library. He maintained contact with a worldwide network of individuals and organizations involved in business with China.

The Council's major publication, The China Business Review, has been issued bimonthly since January 1974. Other publications include special reports; directories; handbooks; and proceedings, speeches, and workbooks from conferences. Research is related to that done for Council publications and for member firms.

Council Library

The Council library serves staff needs and provides access to research facilities and information services to member firms. It houses an extensive collection of materials on China's trade and economy gathered from worldwide sources. Included here are periodicals, Department of Commerce trade statistics, a microfiche reference file, and advertising material and exhibition catalogs printed in Chinese.

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