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Hillary Clinton Got it All Wrong in China This Weekend



Hillary Clinton's use of her trip to China to tour a Boeing facility and tout China-U.S. business relations and monetary policy seems a bit odd. Typically it is the job of the Commerce or Treasury Secretaries who would lead the charge on such subjects. While this may seem inappropriate on its surface, the real issues run much deeper into the substance of her message.

But the real issue I have is the substance of her message: "For trade to work in any economy, and for it to produce the benefits we know that it can, there must be a level playing field where domestic and international companies can compete freely and openly. That's what drives innovation." While this sounds nice, it is fully impractical. There is no way for China, and for that matter any other emerging economy, to develop its own domestic industry unless it protects its creation and development until such stage where it is able to effectively compete internationally.

This protocol faux pas leads other countries to believe that the current administration's connection to Boeing is so strong that there is no "level playing field" with the U.S. between domestic and international companies. I am sure that Airbus saw these statements as public confirmation that the contract that was initially allocated to them by the Bush administration, has been "rerouted" to Boeing for reasons that have everything to do with Boeing's support to the Democratic Party.

I plead here for an attitude that does not treat China as a colony, or as a country of second rank that we can bully at our leisure (remember Google as another example where the same Hillary Clinton interfered in a commercial dispute when she should have kept silent).

There are plenty of global issues that should be addressed by Secretary Clinton such as:

- China's approval for sanctions against Iran.
- China's reaction to North Korea after its deadly attack on a South Korean ship.
- The serious contentions around Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq .
- Tibet and the Dalai Lama are not easy issues between the U.S. and China.
- China's support for peace efforts in the Middle East .
- The United States needing to engage with China on issues such as the environment and the post Copenhagen decisions.

It is time for the U.S. Secretary of State to focus on the crucial geopolitical issues and leave the business development to someone else. The rest of the world is watching with consternation the transformation of the U.S. foreign policy into some sort of promotion of U.S. commercial interests around the world.

Madame Secretary, we need statesmanship not salesmanship. The world needs the U.S. leadership to engage China in the road to peace and prosperity.