

# 'China bashing' a political game

Anti-Beijing remarks a reality of US presidential elections, politician says

By CHEN WEIHUA  
in New York  
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

United States politician Rick Larsen said he hopes China understands that the so-called "China-bashing" in the presidential campaign is simply a reality of elections — a political process that is important in the US.

Both President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate, have talked tough on China during their campaigns, accusing China of unfair trade practices and stealing American jobs.

"My advice to folks is always: Take a deep breath, the election is almost over," Larsen said.

As co-chair of the US-China Working Group, a group established in 2005 to raise awareness

in Congress of US-China issues, Larsen works with, as he puts it: "panda huggers, dragon slayers and even panda slayers — folks who are really extreme against China."

Larsen believes the US has to take a multi-pronged approach toward China. Focusing on just one aspect will hurt the whole relationship.

"We have many relations with China, not just one. A good policy toward China tries to work all of those relationships. If you just focus on one, as you might hear in the fall (election), we do that to the detriment to US interests," said Larsen, a Democrat who is now serving his sixth term in the House of Representatives, representing the state of Washington.

Larsen said the US-China relationship is a foreign policy issue that has a direct overlap

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WORKING GROUP



with economic issues in the US that people connect to in their everyday lives.

"It is not just the foreign policy aspect, but the economic aspect, trade aspect — what it means for US jobs and for US trade policy. As a result, that plays out more so than other foreign policy issues in this presidential campaign," he said.

Larsen is not a fan of TV coverage of China in the US, which he claims is often biased. "I don't watch a lot of that because it doesn't do anything good to a lot of things I am working on," said the 47-year-old.

However, Larsen said the US military rebalance in Asia, a hot topic in both China and the US, is not to contain China.

"We are not going to contain China. You can't. Not only do we have no interest, it's also impossible. So why do you bring that up, it can't happen," he said.

He described the rebalancing as the third step following diplomacy and trade and the economic relationship, which has been leading the way for the US in Asia.

Larsen said he believes the US stance on the South China Sea is about freedom of navigation, freedom of the seas as well as security and stability.

Bonnie Glaser, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies based in Washington, implied in a talk two weeks ago, that some of the US policies in the region might have unintentionally emboldened countries such as the Philippines. Having made seven trips to China over the last six or seven years and having attended many meetings with top Chinese and US officials, business leaders and academics, Larsen said he knows a lot about China now, although he barely speaks Mandarin.

However, he said he sees the need for America's next generation to learn both the language and the culture.

"In the United States, kids who are learning Chinese are learning China. The cultural aspect is as important. We are not just sending our kids to China to learn Chinese, it's more about learning cultural norms, how to do business, how to do

pleasure and how to do anything," said Larsen, who spoke highly of the Obama administration's 100,000 Strong Initiative to send 100,000 American students to China over a four-year period.

On Chinese foreign direct investment in the US, Larsen said he believes the amount is still not enough to make a broad impact because it is still less than 1 percent of the total FDI in the US.

Larsen said while different cultures and values are still a hurdle, he advised Chinese investors to try to understand the importance of attracting positive attention in the US.

He recalled a meeting in Shanghai in 2011 with a Chinese entrepreneur who said he had created 500 jobs in Michigan. Larsen asked if he had talked to the local Congressman.

"No, why would I do that?" the Chinese businessman asked. "Because it's an auto parts company in Michigan. That's why," Larsen said.

## Pakistan's top court may hold PM in contempt

By AGENCIES in Islamabad

Pakistan's top court on Wednesday summoned the new prime minister to appear later this month to face possible contempt charges, the clearest sign yet it could dismiss a second premier in a show-down over corruption cases.

The Supreme Court — which disqualified and convicted prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani over the issue — summoned his successor Raja Pervez Ashraf on Aug 27 for ignoring a request to ask Swiss authorities to reopen cases against the president.

It is the latest episode in a two-and-half years saga in which the government has resisted demands to have Asif Ali Zardari investigated, arguing that as head of state he enjoys immunity.

Gilani lost his job in June in a similar showdown with the court after refusing to write the letter.

The head of a five-judge panel, Asif Saeed Khosa, said it was unfortunate that the prime minister had failed to comply with the court order already.

If Ashraf does not appear in court or continues to refuse to write the letter, he could be charged with contempt of court.

A prominent Pakistani lawyer Abdul Hafeez Pirzada said Ashraf might also be disqualified from office if he did not write the letter to Swiss authorities, but still did not expect him to do so.

"I don't think they (the government) are in a mood to write the letter," he said.

An adviser to the prime minister, Fawad Chaudhry, said Ashraf had been informed about Wednesday's court ruling, and he would consult with his political allies before making any decision. Chaudhry said the court ruling could further deepen political instability as a time when the country was facing multiple challenges.

Zardari is in little immediate danger of being tried. The Swiss have indicated they have no plans to continue with the case which dates back to the late 1990s. But the issue has become a bone of contention between the Supreme Court and the government.

The court has been aggressive in using its clout to investigate the government as well as Pakistan's security agencies, and appears to consider it unacceptable for the government to ignore its orders.

The ruling Pakistan People's Party views the court with suspicion, and supporters have questioned whether the court is becoming too powerful. The PPP rallied support to elect a new premier and has continued to reject the court's decision.

The PPP also tried to outmaneuver the court by passing a law designed to protect the prime minister from being charged with contempt of court but the Supreme Court last week struck down the legislation.

The court could repeatedly disqualify prime ministers over the issue, undermining the government and forcing an early national election.

AFP-AP



## GETTING INTO THE GROOVE

PHOTO BY JACQUELYN MARTIN / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton holds hands during a dance with other officials including African Union Chair-Designate Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma during a gala dinner at Sefako M. Makgatho Presidential Guest House in Pretoria, South Africa, on Tuesday.

# Tucson gunman Loughner pleads guilty to rampage, spared death

By AGENCIES  
in Tucson, Arizona

Jared Loughner pleaded guilty on Tuesday to killing six people and wounding 13 others, including then-US Representative Gabrielle Giffords, in an Arizona shooting rampage last year, and will be spared the death penalty in exchange.

The 23-year-old community college dropout entered his guilty pleas in federal court in Tucson shortly after US District Judge Larry Burns ruled that he was mentally competent to stand trial following more than a year of treatment at a prison psychiatric hospital.

"I plead guilty," Loughner, dressed in a khaki prison jumpsuit with his hair trimmed short, said to each of the 19 counts read in court by Burns.

Loughner, who court-appointed psychologists say has suffered from schizophrenia and depression, was calm during the hearing, leaning forward attentively in his chair and answering questions with clear, short answers.

The plea deal calls for Loughner to be sentenced to seven consecutive life prison terms without the possibility of parole, sparing him the death



MICHAEL CHOW / THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Suzy Hileman (right), a victim in the Tucson, Arizona, mass shooting that also critically injured then-US Representative Gabrielle Giffords, receives a hug from Betty-Jean Offutt on Tuesday. Shooter Jared Lee Loughner pleaded guilty to killing six people and wounding 13 others. Loughner, 23, will be spared the death penalty but he still faces a life sentence without the possibility of parole.**

penalty. A sentencing hearing was set for Nov 15.

Giffords, then a US lawmaker from Arizona who was seen as a rising star in the Democratic Party, was meeting constituents at a Tucson supermarket on Jan 8 last year when she was shot through the head at close range.

She survived with severe injuries that left her with

broken speech and a marked limp. But six other people were killed including US District Judge John Roll and 9-year-old Christina-Taylor Green.

The 19 counts Loughner pleaded guilty to include murder, attempted murder and the attempted assassination of Giffords. Federal prosecutors had originally charged Loughner with 49 criminal counts and

agreed to dismiss 30 of them.

During an exchange with the judge before formally entering his plea, Loughner admitted going to the "Congress On Your Corner" event hosted by Giffords armed with a loaded Glock 19 pistol and 60 additional rounds of ammunition with plans to kill the congresswoman.

Loughner also admitted shooting other people at the event with the intent to kill them because they had attended.

Even so, the hearing shed little light on Loughner's motive for the attack, although a psychiatrist who testified during the competency portion painted a portrait of mental illness dating back to his time in high school.

Loughner didn't talk to his attorneys or look around the courtroom during the two-hour hearing. He folded his arms in front of him and focused his gaze on the psychologist and judge as they did most of the talking.

His parents sat silently in the back row, but sobbed and embraced after their son left looking frail on his feet.

REUTERS-AP

# Man charged in killing of Chinese mine supervisor

Zambian police promise to beef up security after labor dispute turns violent

By ZHANG YUNBI  
zhangyunbi@chinadaily.com.cn

The alleged killer of the Chinese coal-mine supervisor in Zambia has been charged, and Zambian police have promised to beef up security for Chinese citizens in the southern African country.

Information from the Chinese embassy in Zambia says that a Chinese supervisor of the Collum coal mine was killed and four other personnel were injured on Sunday in labor clashes at a coal mine in Zambia's Southern Province.

The clashes occurred during a labor dispute at the Chinese-owned Collum Coal Mining Industries Ltd in the province's Sinazongwe district.

Reuters quoted a local police official on Tuesday as saying that a coal miner has been charged with murder in connection with the killing of the Chinese supervisor.

"We have charged one person with murder and 11 others with rioting and theft. They will appear in court tomorrow," Southern Province police chief Fred Mutondo said.

Three other suspects are still at large.

The Chinese ambassador to Zambia, Zhou Yuxiao, on Tuesday met with Zambian Inspector General of Police Stella Libongani, and he lodged concern to the Zambian police about the case which has had a "terrible influence".

Zhou called for concrete measures to protect the safety and the legitimate rights of the Chinese business community in Zambia and to create an enabling environment for foreign investment.

Collum Coal Mine, a private business that run by Chinese investors from Jiangxi province located about 325 km south of Lusaka, has an annual production capacity of 100,000 tons of coal.

Zambia's government recently increased the monthly minimum wage for certain workers from 500,000 Zambian kwacha (\$105) to 1 million Zambian kwacha.

The Beijing News said the local labor union on Aug 2 reached an agreement with the coal mine to tweak the Zambian employees' wage, but the labor union reportedly did not immediately deliver the message to the workers.

He Wenping, director of the African Studies Section at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the local labor unions in African countries are influential and are good at bargaining with employers.

"Working conditions and wages are major factors behind the relevant disputes, and some staff members of the Chinese firms in Africa have not communicated enough with local people," He said.

The director urged Chinese firms to get along well with local employees when seeking safety for their personnel and property.

Recent years have seen labor disputes more often between Chinese firms and local employees in Africa. In October 2010, another clash occurred at the same mine, in which a dozen local workers were injured.

During a visit to a Chinese company in Zambia on Aug 3, the ambassador required the employer to treat employees well from both China and Zambia and boost "internal harmony and stability".

China is Zambia's fourth-largest trading partner, with a bilateral trade volume of \$2.85 billion in 2010.

The expansion of Chinese investment boosted the development of the country's infrastructure and created more jobs for locals.