

Statement of Terry E. Branstad
Ambassador-Nominee to the People's Republic of China
Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
May 2, 2017

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Members of the Committee,

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that a boy from a small farm in Leland, Iowa, would one day have the opportunity to become, with your consent, the Ambassador to one of the world's most influential countries and one of America's largest trading partners. I am thankful to President Trump for his confidence and trust in me to take on this important diplomatic role.

I would not be where I am today if it were not for the people sitting right behind me. My wife of almost 45 years, Chris, is my constant support and the most understanding person I know. I would also like to introduce you to my two sons, Eric and Marcus, who have joined me today. I know my daughter Allison and my children's spouses, Adrienne, Jerry, and Nicole, and our seven grandchildren, are watching from afar. Pursuing this opportunity was a family decision and I am thankful for their guidance, encouragement, and support, especially over the past few months.

If confirmed, as Ambassador, I will work every day to represent American values to the leadership of China and the Chinese people at large; values that include upholding human rights for all, a free and open market, a rules-based order in the oceans surrounding China, and the importance of a free press.

I look forward to joining the impressive and committed team of public servants and their families from the U.S. State Department and many other U.S. government agencies at our embassy in Beijing and consulates across China. Leading this team of dedicated professionals, who are working as we speak to promote America's interests in China, would be a great honor and a responsibility that I would not take lightly.

My relationship with the President of China, Xi Jinping, goes all the way back to 1985. As a first term Governor, I had the opportunity to welcome an agriculture delegation from the Hebei Province of China, Iowa's sister state, to Iowa. Leading

that delegation was a young man whose business card read Xi Jinping, Feed Association of Shijiazhuang. During the trip, our sister state director Luca Baroni took our new Chinese visitors on tours of farms and factories, and to receptions and dinners with the sister state volunteers. They attended a birthday party, a Mississippi River cruise, and we showed them a true taste of Iowa life. I even hosted the delegation in the Governor's office. A connection was made and a friendship was founded. To this day, President Xi still speaks fondly of Iowa and the hospitality he enjoyed there so many years ago.

If confirmed, I hope to use my unique position as an "old friend" of President Xi and a trusted confidant of President Trump to positively influence the U.S.-China relationship. As the Governor of Iowa, I saw first-hand the importance of a positive and healthy trade relationship between our two countries. Nearly, one out of every two rows of Iowa soybeans is sent to China, as well as \$33.5 million in pork in 2016. The importance of trade extends well beyond agriculture too. Aviation products, manufactured goods, chemicals, electronics, and many other products and services are exported to China daily and help support and sustain the American economy.

As Ambassador, I will continue the work I started while Governor to open up the Chinese markets to American businesses of all sorts. This will be good for the American people as it will create more jobs, and good for the Chinese people as they will have more access to the best-made products this world has to offer. In keeping with the President's mission, I am also committed to making sure that the trade relationship between the United States and China puts the American worker first.

Our relationship with China is multi-faceted and not solely focused on trade. I am well aware of the critical national security issues our two countries must work together on as well. As President Trump made clear when he met with President Xi at Mar-a-Lago a few weeks ago, China could play a critical role in convincing North Korea to dismantle its nuclear and missile programs, a strategic policy that boosts the security of America, China, and the entire world.

As Governor, I had the opportunity to visit Taiwan. As Ambassador, I will be committed to communicating the United States' continued support of our one China Policy, expressed in the Three Joint Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. We remain committed to our goal to see this cross-Strait issue peacefully resolved in a manner that is acceptable to both sides of the Strait.

I saw first-hand many of the cybersecurity concerns the United States has in regards to China during my time as Governor, when I received my monthly security briefings. The protection of intellectual property and technology security is of the utmost importance to our country, and I will continue to make that clear in frank conversations with the Chinese government.

On the South China Sea, China cannot be allowed to use its artificial islands to coerce its neighbors or limit freedom of navigation or overflight. The United States will uphold freedom of navigation and overflight by continuing to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

As Governor, I had the opportunity to travel to all 99 counties in Iowa every year – a feat affectionately named for your esteemed colleague as “the full Grassley.” As Ambassador, I hope to continue this tradition by visiting every province in China. With a country as large and expansive as China, I know there is much life and activity outside of Beijing. I look forward to connecting with the Chinese people and continuing a vibrant exchange of culture and ideas that we began in 1983.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to represent America and Her citizens to the best of my ability. I will champion American interests in China with as much fervor and dedication as I have championed Iowa’s interests during my more than 22 years as Governor. I am humbled to be considered for this position.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome your comments, questions, and continued dialogue.