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Veteran diplomats praised for advancing ties

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WASHINGTON DC: The applause thundered in the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium last Thursday for Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, two veteran US diplomats.

The Committee of 100 (C-100) granted the two leadership awards for advancing China-US relations.

Kissinger, the 86-year-old former US Secretary of State and current chairman of Kissinger Associates Inc, said it was crucial for the United States and China to "work together" in the face of common challenges in the present economic crisis and seek out mutual opportunities.

The evolution of bilateral relations is an historical, remarkable success, said Brzezinski, 81, who was national security adviser under President Jimmy Carter and advised US President Barack Obama during his presidential campaign.

Both men, now naturalized Americans, are considered to be exemplary immigrants. Kissinger came from Germany and Brzezinski from Poland.

"This is the unique destiny of American society," Brzezinski said at the annual meeting of the C-100, a non-partisan organization composed of American citizens of Chinese descent.

Its members have achieved positions of leadership in the US in a broad range of professions, including noted cellist Yo-Yo Ma, composer and conductor Dun Tan and Goo Greater China president Kai-Fu Lee.

"Part of our story of building a better world is the China-US relationship," Brzezinski said. "We are making good progress and should move forward."

Gary Locke, US Secretary of Commerce who has been a C-100 member since 2005, said he was committed to strengthening economic and commercial relations between China and the United States.

"I know you join me in sharing enthusiasm for improving our economic ties with China in a way that will benefit American and Chinese citizens, as well as the entire global economy," Locke told the meeting.

"The committee is important to me not only because of my past membership, but also because I share the committee's mission of building a constructive relationship with China."