

Obama seeks better trade, army ties with China-aide

Fri May 1, 2009 10:09pm BST

[Email](#) | [Print](#) | [Share](#) | [Single Page](#)

[\[-\] Text \[+\]](#)

- * Obama wants more balanced trade
- * No lecturing of Chinese on human rights
- * Closer military-to-military ties sought

By Paul Eckert, Asia Correspondent

WASHINGTON, May 1 (Reuters) - U.S. President Barack Obama wants more balanced trade and closer military ties with China and will not lecture the Chinese on human rights, his top adviser on Asia said on Friday.

Jeffrey Bader, senior director for Asian affairs at the National Security Council, told an audience of prominent Chinese-Americans in Washington that Obama also would look to China to exercise a leading role in world affairs.

Obama is not satisfied with the current U.S.-China trade relationship, Bader said. China's surplus, a constant source of friction, hit a record \$266 billion in 2008.

"He believes we need a more balanced relationship," said.

The U.S. president sought a closer trade balance as well as a better balance between savings and consumption in the two countries, he added.

Obama seeks to work with the Chinese to tackle the global economic crisis as he and Chinese President Hu Jintao did when they met in London last month at the summit of G20 industrial and big developing countries, said Bader.

"President Obama sees China as a major global player, as a leader. He does not see China as an inevitable threat or foe," he said.

"We believe that China must play a leading role, must shoulder commensurate responsibilities," Bader added.

Communist-run China's human rights situation has been a troublesome to bilateral ties for decades and Bader said the Obama administration would work on what was still a "poor" record by Beijing.

But he said, "President Obama does not believe in lecturing people" and would reach out to the Chinese people.

"He believes in leading by example, not by fingerpointing," Bader said, citing Obama's decision to close the Guantanamo detention center shortly after taking office.

"He has no instinct to impose first-world models of development or artificial timelines on developing countries as to how they should achieve democracy or protection of human rights," he said.

Bader also asked his audience, the Committee of 100, to use their influence in Beijing to seek a peaceful solution to simmering tensions in Tibet.

Prominent Chinese-American business and cultural figures can "help persuade Chinese officials that the Dalai Lama is not part of the problem but rather part of the solution" in Tibet, he said.

Obama aimed to get the U.S. and Chinese militaries talking together at high levels, Bader said.

The brief naval clash between the two Pacific Ocean powers in waters near China in March, underscored that "the absence of a sound relationship between our two militaries is a part of that strategic mistrust," Bader said.

In that encounter, the U.S. Defense Department said an unarmed U.S. Navy surveillance ship was shadowed and harassed by Chinese ships. (Editing by Bill Trott)