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### **Beijing: Karen Hughes and Michelle Kwan Meet with Beijing's Brightest Young Minds**

On January 20, Under Secretary of State Karen Hughes and American Public Diplomacy Envoy Michelle Kwan, along with United States Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr. and Mrs. Randt visited the Second High School Attached to Beijing Normal University. The delegation visited a class taught by a former U.S. Fulbright grantee who is introducing the Martin Luther King's message to Chinese students.

Along with this class, the former Fulbrighter has shared Dr. King with hundreds of other Chinese students through translations of the 1960's civil rights leader's writings, and is currently even producing a play "Passage of Martin Luther King", which is to open at the National Theater in Beijing in June, 2007 thanks to a U.S. Embassy Beijing grant.

A group of Chinese and American students opened the event by singing a gospel song "Wade in the Water" followed by a recitation of "I have a Dream" speech in both Chinese and English. Under Secretary Hughes borrowed an example from Martin Luther King's message to emphasize the importance of equality. She pointed out a frequently asked question she often hears of why the United States promotes American values everywhere in the world, and explained that the answer lies in the work of Martin Luther King. Dr. King's firm conviction that everyone is entitled to equal rights and opportunities regardless of socio-economic and racial background was truly compelling in transforming an American society tainted with discrimination into a more democratic country where the nation's opportunities became open to all. American Public Diplomacy Envoy Kwan echoed Ms. Hughes's view and shared her experience as a Chinese-American and as the most decorated figure skater in the United States. She said although the figure skating field was not very ethnically diverse when she first started skating at the age of five, she always received the same opportunity, encouragement and hope to become truly successful in the United States.

In a thoughtful and sincere discussion, the students discussed whether or not Martin Luther King was successful in the end since he was violently assassinated despite his lifelong plea for non-violence. They energetically exchanged their views, expressing their belief that his noble cause paid off because he had laid a very important cornerstone in the movement, as well as inspiring them personally to carry on Dr. King's message. The event concluded with a chorus of "We Shall Overcome", pledging the students to continue to build a bridge of understanding between the United States and China, as well as reminding the students to always do their best in pursuit of their own personal dreams.

This event marked the kick-off of a number of joint programs in Beijing scheduled for Undersecretary Hughes and Public Diplomacy Envoy Kwan. Forty years hence and thousands of miles away from Birmingham, the delegation was truly moved how the message Dr. King's teachings still resonated with these young Chinese students. They left the classroom, one commented, "what a golden event."