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AMERICAN/CHINESE PING PONG DIPLOMACY: *THE REMATCH*

SET FOR NIXON LIBRARY JUNE 10, 11, and 12, 2008

Table tennis exhibition featuring American and Chinese champions will serve as a prologue to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing

Yorba Linda, CA --- The Richard Nixon Presidential Library will be the venue for American/Chinese Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch*, a historic sequel of the extraordinary 1971 and 1972 table tennis events between United States and Chinese table tennis teams that became internationally known as "Ping Pong Diplomacy."

The three-day table tennis tournament, scheduled for Tuesday, June 10 through Thursday, June 12, will feature greats from both countries. They'll take part in a series of table tennis exhibitions, including instructional clinics for school age youngsters, collegiate challenges, competitions against the public, and the official *Rematch* of players from the original "Ping Pong Diplomacy" teams.

Festivities will occur in the Library's spectacular East Room, a full-size replica of the White House East Room in Washington, D.C., considered America's Grand Ballroom.

"We are privileged to welcome some of the brilliant architects of 'ping pong diplomacy' to Yorba Linda as we remember the world-changing events of 1971-1972 and look forward to the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing," said John H. Taylor, Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace Foundation Executive Director. "Like a great athletic contest, ties between great powers such as the United States and China are fraught with tension, disappointment, and triumph. Besides reminding people how this vital new relationship began, *The Rematch* will be further evidence of how healthy state-to-state relations should always be founded in thriving people-to-people relations. "

The clinics, exhibitions and Rematch competition events will be under the supervision of the USA Table Tennis (USATT), which is also selecting players to represent the American side in Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch*.

Michael D. Cavanaugh, Interim CEO – USATT, said: "Ping Pong Diplomacy will aptly commemorate the significant role that the sport of Table Tennis has played in United States-China relations. Just as in 1971 and 1972, the sport remains one of the most powerful unifiers between two great nations."

Ping Pong Diplomacy

On April 6, 1971, while in Japan for the 31st World Table Tennis Championship, the United States National Table Tennis Team was invited to China by Chinese Premier Chou En-lai for an all expense paid visit. The U.S. team accepted, and on April 10, 1971, nine players, team officials, and two spouses became the first group of Americans to visit China since 1949. From April 11 – April 17, the U.S. team played against the Chinese team in a series of internationally publicized table tennis exhibitions.

The 1971 China visit by the United States National Table Tennis Team served as a prelude to President Nixon's February 1972 trip to China, when he became the first American President to visit China. His historic journey paved the way for the normalization of relations between the United States and China. "Ping Pong Diplomacy" would continue in April 1972 when the Chinese National Table Tennis Team joined President Nixon at the White House for matches in the Rose Garden.

Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch*

Thirty-seven years after the events of 1971, the world will again focus its attention on China, this time for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad. As hundreds of American and Chinese athletes prepare for the Games, it is appropriate to commemorate the 37th anniversary of "Ping Pong Diplomacy" with a historic *Rematch* at the home of America's 37th President.

A highlight of Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch* will be the exciting competition between two of the original players, Tim Boggan who played for the Americans, and Liang Geliang, a member of the original Chinese team.

Representing USATT as Manager of the American Team, as well as a participating player, will be Tawny Banh, a member of the U.S. Olympic table tennis teams in 2000 and 2004.

The Nixon Foundation invited USA Table Tennis (USATT) to assist in the planning, staging, selection of players, and execution of the exhibition competition, and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), which will be sending a formal delegation from China led by Madame Li Xiaolin, CPAFFC Vice President.

Steve Bull, White House personal aide to Richard Nixon, and organizer of the Chinese National Table Tennis Team's "Ping Pong Diplomacy" 1972 visit to the White House and Rose Garden matches, and now Director of Government Relations at the United States Olympic Committee in Washington, D.C., said: "On the eve of perhaps the most important Olympic Games in its history, Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch* will cast a light seen throughout the world on the 1971 and 1972 Table Tennis exchanges that led the way to opening relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China."

The Ping Pong Diplomacy: *The Rematch* schedule includes:

Day 1: Tuesday, June 10, 2008: Official Welcome and Banquet

- **10:00 am:** American and Chinese delegations arrive at the Nixon Presidential Library for an official Welcome Ceremony and Reception, formal wreath laying at the memorials of President and Mrs. Nixon, and a guided tour of the Library and Birthplace.
- **6:00 pm:** Welcome Banquet

Day 2: Wednesday, June 11, 2008: Exhibitions

The American and Chinese delegations will return to the Nixon Library for a full day of table tennis activities in the East Room:

- **10:00 am: Instructional Youth Clinic and Skills Exhibition** – led by members of the United States and Chinese “Ping Pong Diplomacy” Table Tennis Teams.
- **Collegiate Challenge** – local college table tennis teams will compete.
- **Challenge a Champ** – members of the public are invited to compete in a table tennis match (first to reach 5 points) against a member of the United States or Chinese “Ping Pong Diplomacy” Table Tennis Teams for \$5 per match.
- **5:30 pm:** Private reception hosted by the Consul General of the People’s Republic of China in Los Angeles.

Day 3: Thursday, June 12, 2008: The American/Chinese Rematch

- **9:00 am: *The American/Chinese Rematch*** will be a one of a kind event, appealing to youngsters and adults alike. It will begin with a formal Opening Ceremony, highlighted by the presentation of American and Chinese National Colors, musical performances, and American and Chinese entertainment. Accomplished junior table tennis champs will get things started by facing off in youth competitions. In the second part, collegiate challenge finalists from Day 2 will be paired for a collegiate challenge championship match. This will all set the table for *The American/Chinese Rematch*, unquestionably the centerpiece of the three-day table tennis tournament.

All times are PDT.

Ticket Information

VIP Ambassador Passports are \$125 (Members \$105) and include one VIP seat to *The Rematch* on June 12, a private reception with the American and Chinese players and VIP dignitaries, admission to Day 1 and Day 2 events, and one “Challenge a Champ” entry on Wednesday, June 11.

Diplomat Passports are \$35 (Members \$30) and include one General Admission seat to *The Rematch* on June 12, admission to Day 2 events, and one “Challenge a Champ” entry on Wednesday, June 11.

Consulate Passports are \$10 and include admission to Day 2 events. (“Challenge a Champ” for \$5 per match extra.)

For ticket sales information, please call 714/993-5075 or visit www.nixonlibrary.org

The privately financed Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace Foundation works to promote President Nixon's legacy of peace and to support the Presidential Library and Museum.

The federally funded Richard Nixon Library and Museum is part of the Presidential libraries system administered by the National Archives and Records Administration, a federal agency.

The Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum is located at 18001 Yorba Linda Blvd., Yorba Linda, CA 92886, and is open daily from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Sundays 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

FOR ONGOING EVENT UPDATES: Visit online at www.nixonlibrary.org

FOR EVENT COVERAGE OPPORTUNITIES: Contact Sandy Quinn, Assistant Director, Nixon Library & Birthplace Foundation, at (714) 364-1153 (w), (213) 215-5555 (c), sandy@nixonlibrary.org or Anthony Curtis, at (714) 364-1199 (w), (714) 420-2199 (c), anthony@nixonlibrary.org

FOR TOURNAMENT AND EXHIBITION FORMAT INQUIRIES: Contact Michael D. Cavanaugh, Interim CEO – USA Table Tennis (USATT), at (719) 866-4583 ext. 3, or email at mike.cavanaugh@usoc.org

FOR UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE: Contact Stephen Bull, Director of Government Relations, United States Olympic Committee, at (202) 466-3399.

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