

Remarks at Fudan University in Shanghai, China

April 30, 1984

We've been in your country only 5 days, but already we've seen the wonders of a lifetime -- the Great Wall of China, a structure so huge and marvelous that it can be seen from space; the ancient city of Xi'an; and the Tomb of the Great Emperor and the buried army that guards him still. These are the wonders of ages past. But today I want to talk to you, the young people of a great university, about the future, about our future together and how we can transform human life on this planet if we bring as much wisdom and curiosity to each other as we bring to our scholarly pursuits.

I want to begin, though, with some greetings. I bring you greetings not only from my countrymen but from one of your countrymen. Some of you know Ye Yang, who was a student here. He graduated from Fudan and became a teacher of English at this university. Now he is at Harvard University in the United States, where he is studying for a doctorate in comparative literature.

My staff spoke to him before we left. Mr. Ye wants you to know he's doing fine. He's working hard on his spring term papers, and his thoughts turn to you often. He asked me to deliver a message to his former students, colleagues, friends, and family. He asked me to say for him, and I hope I can, ``Wo xiang nian da jia" [I am thinking of all of you].

He wants you to know that he looks forward to returning to Fudan to teach. And President Xie, he said to tell you he misses your friendship and encouragement. And Mr. Ye says you are a very great woman and a great educator. You will be proud to know that he received straight A's last term. And when we congratulated him, he said, ``I have nothing to be proud of myself; I am so proud of my university."

I'd like to say a few words about our China-U.S. educational exchange programs. It's not entirely new, this exchanging of students. Your President Xie earned a degree from Smith College in the United States. Smith is also my wife Nancy's alma mater. And President Xie also attended MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of our greatest universities of science, engineering, and technology.

But in the past few years, our two countries have enjoyed an explosion in the number of student exchanges. Five years ago you numbered your students studying abroad in the hundreds. Since then, 20,000 Chinese scholars have studied throughout the world, and more than half of them have come to American schools. More than 100 American colleges and universities now have educational exchanges with nearly as many Chinese institutions.

We have committed more resources to our Fulbright program in China than in any other country. Two of the American professors teaching here at Fudan are Fulbright professors. And there are 20 American students studying with you, and we're very proud of them.

American students come to China to learn many things -- how you monitor and predict earthquakes, how you've made such strides in researching the cause and treatment of cancer. We have much to learn from you in neurosurgery and in your use of herbs in medicine. And we welcome the chance to study your language, your history, and your society.

You, in turn, have shown that you're eager to learn, to come to American schools and study electronics and computer sciences, math and engineering, physics, management, and the humanities. We have much to share in these fields, and we're eager to benefit from your curiosity. Much of this sharing is recent, only 5 years old. But the areas of our mutual cooperation continue to expand. We've already agreed to cooperate more closely in trade, technology, investment, and exchanges of scientific and managerial expertise. And we have just concluded an important agreement to help advance our technological and economic development through the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

That term "peaceful use of nuclear energy" is key. Our agreement rests upon important principles of nonproliferation. Neither of our countries will encourage nuclear proliferation nor assist any other country to acquire or develop any nuclear explosive device.

We live in a troubled world, and the United States and China, as two great nations, share a special responsibility to help reduce the risks of war. We both agree that there can be only one sane policy to preserve our precious civilization in this modern age: A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. And no matter how great the obstacles may seem, we must never stop our efforts to reduce the weapons of war. We must never stop at all until we see the day when nuclear arms have been banished from the face of this Earth.

With peaceful cooperation as our guide, the possibilities for future progress are great. For example, we look forward to exploring with China the possibilities of cooperating in the development of space on behalf of our fellow citizens.

Our astronauts have found that by working in the zero gravity environment of space, we will be able to manufacture life-saving medicines with far greater purity and efficiency, medicines that will treat diseases of heart attack and stroke that afflict millions of us. We will learn how to manufacture Factor 8, a rare and expensive medicine used to treat hemophiliacs. We can research the Beta Cell, which produces insulin, and which could provide mankind's first permanent cure for diabetes.

New satellites can be launched for use in navigation, weather forecasting, broadcasting, and computer technology. We already have the technology to make the extraordinary commonplace. We hope to see the day when a Chinese scientist working out an engineering problem in Fudan will be able to hook into the help of a scientist at a computer at MIT. And the scientist in Boston will be able to call on the expertise of the scientist in Shanghai, and all of it in a matter of seconds.

My young friends, this is the way of the future. By pooling our talents and resources, we can make space a new frontier of peace.

Your government's policy of forging closer ties in the free exchange of knowledge has not only enlivened your economy, it has opened the way to a new convergence of Chinese and American interests. You have opened the door, and let me assure you that ours is also open.

Now, all of this is particularly exciting in light of the recent history of our two countries. For many years, there was no closeness between us. The silence took its toll. A dozen years ago, it began to change. Together, we made it change. And now in the past 5 years, your policy of opening to the outside world has helped us begin to know each other better than we ever had before.

But that process has just begun. To many Americans, China is still a faraway place, unknown, unseen, and fascinating. And we are fascinated. [Laughter]

I wonder if you're aware of the many ways China has touched American life? The signs of your influence and success abound. If I were spending this afternoon in Washington, I might look out the window and see a man and woman strolling along Pennsylvania Avenue wearing Chinese silk. They might be on their way to our National Portrait Gallery to see the Chinese art exhibit. And from there, perhaps they would stroll to our National Gallery to see the new building designed by the Chinese American architect, I.M. Pei. After that, they might end their day dining in a restaurant that serves Chinese cuisine. [Laughter]

We associate China with vitality, enormous vitality, and something that doesn't always go along with that -- subtlety, the subtlety of discerning and intelligent minds.

Premier Zhao saw something of the American attitude toward China when he visited us in January. He said after a few days in our country that he never expected such profound feelings of friendship among the American people for the Chinese people.

Well, let me say, I'm happy to return the compliment. I have found the people of China to be just as warm and friendly toward us, and it's made us very glad.

But meeting you and talking to you has only made me want to know more. And I sense that you feel the same way about Americans. You, too, wish to know more.

I would like to tell you something about us, and also share something of my own values.

First of all, America is really many Americas. We call ourselves a nation of immigrants, and that's truly what we are. We have drawn people from every corner of the Earth. We're composed of virtually every race and religion, and not in small numbers, but large. We have a statue in New York Harbor that speaks of this, a statue of a woman holding a torch of welcome to those who enter our country to become Americans. She has greeted

millions upon millions of immigrants to our country. She welcomes them still. She represents our open door.

All of the immigrants who came to us brought their own music, literature, customs, and ideas. And the marvelous thing, a thing of which we're proud, is they did not have to relinquish these things in order to fit in. In fact, what they brought to America became American. And this diversity has more than enriched us; it has literally shaped us.

This tradition -- the tradition of new immigrants adding to the sum total of what we are -- is not a thing of the past. New immigrants are still bringing their talents and improving the quality of American life. Let me name a few -- I think you'll know their names.

In America, Wang computers have become a fixture in offices throughout the country. They are the product of the energy and brilliance of Mr. An Wang, who himself is the product of a Shanghai university.

The faces of our cities shine with the gleaming buildings of Mr. I.M. Pei, who first became interested in architecture as a student here in Shanghai.

What we know of the universe and the fundamental nature of matter has been expanded by the Nobel Prize winning scientist, Dr. Lee Tsung-Dao, who was born in Shanghai.

We admire these men; we honor them; and we salute you for what you gave them that helped make them great.

Sometimes in America, some of our people may disagree with each other. We are often a highly disputatious nation. We rather like to argue. We are free to disagree among ourselves, and we do. But we always hold together as a society. We've held together for more than 200 years, because we're united by certain things in which we all believe, things to which we've quietly pledged our deepest loyalties. I draw your special attention to what I'm about to say, because it's so important to an understanding of my country.

We believe in the dignity of each man, woman, and child. Our entire system is founded on an appreciation of the special genius of each individual, and of his special right to make his own decisions and lead his own life.

We believe -- and we believe it so deeply that Americans know these words by heart -- we believe "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among those are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Take an American student or teacher aside later today and ask if he or she hasn't committed those words to memory. They are from the document by which we created our nation, the Declaration of Independence.

We elect our government by the vote of the people. That is how we choose our Congress and our President. We say of our country, "Here the People Rule," and it is so.

Let me tell you something of the American character. You might think that with such a varied nation there couldn't be one character, but in many fundamental ways there is.

We are a fairminded people. We're taught not to take what belongs to others. Many of us, as I said, are the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of immigrants, and from them we learned something of hard labor. As a nation we toiled up from poverty, and no people on Earth are more worthy to be trusted than those who have worked hard for what they have. None is less inclined to take what is not theirs.

We're idealists. Americans love freedom, and we've fought and died to protect the freedom of others. When the armies of fascism swept Europe four decades ago, the American people fought at great cost to defend the countries under assault.

When the armies of fascism swept Asia, we fought with you to stop them. And some of you listening today remember those days, remember when our General Jimmy Doolittle and his squadron came halfway around the world to help. Some of those pilots landed in China. You remember those brave young men. You hid them and cared for them and bound up their wounds. You saved many of their lives.

When the Second World War was won, the United States voluntarily withdrew from the faraway places in which we had fought. We kept no permanent armies of occupation. We didn't take an inch of territory, nor do we occupy one today. Our record of respect for the freedom and independence of others is clear.

We're a compassionate people. When the war ended we helped rebuild our allies -- and our enemies as well. We did this because we wanted to help the innocent victims of bad governments and bad policies, and because, if they prospered, peace would be more secure.

We're an optimistic people. Like you, we inherited a vast land of endless skies, tall mountains, rich fields, and open prairies. It made us see the possibilities in everything. It made us hopeful. And we devised an economic system that rewarded individual effort, that gave us good reason for hope.

We love peace. We hate war. We think -- and always have -- that war is a great sin, a woeful waste. We wish to be at peace with our neighbors. We want to live in harmony with friends.

There is one other part of our national character I wish to speak of. Religion and faith are very important to us. We're a nation of many religions. But most Americans derive their religious belief from the Bible of Moses, who delivered a people from slavery; the Bible of Jesus Christ, who told us to love thy neighbor as thyself, to do unto your neighbor as you would have him do unto you.

And this, too, has formed us. It's why we wish well for others. It's why it grieves us when we hear of people who cannot live up to their full potential and who cannot live in peace.

We invite you to know us. That is the beginning of friendship between people. And friendship between people is the basis for friendship between governments.

The silence between our governments has ended. In the past 12 years, our people have become reacquainted, and now our relationship is maturing. And we're at the point where we can build the basis for a lasting friendship.

Now, you know, as I do, that there's much that naturally divides us: time and space, different languages and values, different cultures and histories, and political systems that are fundamentally different. It would be foolish not to acknowledge these differences. There's no point in hiding the truth for the sake of a friendship, for a friendship based on fiction will not long withstand the rigors of this world.

But let us, for a moment, put aside the words that name our differences and think what we have in common. We are two great and huge nations on opposite sides of the globe. We are both countries of great vitality and strength. You are the most populous country on Earth; we are the most technologically developed. Each of us holds a special weight in our respective sides of the world.

There exists between us a kind of equipoise. Those of you who are engineering students will perhaps appreciate that term. It speaks of a fine and special balance.

Already there are some political concerns that align us, and there are some important questions on which we both agree. Both the United States and China oppose the brutal and illegal occupation of Kampuchea. Both the United States and China have stood together in condemning the evil and unlawful invasion of Afghanistan. Both the United States and China now share a stake in preserving peace on the Korean Peninsula, and we share a stake in preserving peace in this area of the world.

Neither of us is an expansionist power. We do not desire your land, nor you ours. We do not challenge your borders. We do not provoke your anxieties. In fact, both the United States and China are forced to arm themselves against those who do.

The United States is now undertaking a major strengthening of our defenses. It's an expensive effort, but we make it to protect the peace, knowing that a strong America is a safeguard for the independence and peace of others.

Both the United States and China are rich in human resources and human talent. What wonders lie before us if we practice the advice, *Tong Li He Zuo* -- Connect strength, and work together.

Over the past 12 years, American and Chinese leaders have met frequently to discuss a host of issues. Often we have found agreement, but even when we have not, we've gained insight into each other, and we've learned to appreciate the other's perspectives on the world.

This process will continue, and it will flourish if we remember certain things. We must neither ignore our problems nor overstate them. We must never exaggerate our difficulties or send alarms for small reasons. We must remember that it is a delicate thing to oppose the wishes of a friend, and when we're forced to do so, we must be understanding with each other.

I hope that when history looks back upon this new chapter in our relationship, these will be remembered as days when America and China accepted the challenge to strengthen the ties that bind us, to cooperate for greater prosperity among our people, and to strive for a more secure and just peace in the world.

You, the students at Fudan University, and the scholars at all the universities in China and America have a great role to play in both our countries' futures. From your ranks will come the understanding and skill the world will require in decades to come. Today's leaders can pave the way of the future. That is our responsibility. But it is always the younger generation who will make the future. It is you who will decide if a continuing, personal friendship can span the generations and the differences that divide us. In such friendship lies the hope of the world.

When he was a very young man, Zhou Enlai wrote a poem for a schoolmate who was leaving to study abroad. Zhou appreciated the responsibilities that separated them, but he also remembered fondly the qualities that made them friends. And his poem ends:

Promise, I pray, that someday

When task done, we go back farming,

We'll surely rent a plot of ground

And as pairing neighbors, let's live.

Well, let us, as pairing neighbors, live.

I've been happy to speak to you here, to meet you in this city that is so rich in significance for both our countries. Shanghai is a city of scholarship, a city of learning. Shanghai has been a window to the West. It is a city in which my country and yours issued the communique that began our modern friendship. It is the city where the Yangtze meets the East China Sea, which, itself, becomes the Pacific, which touches our shores.

The Yangtze is a swift and turbulent river, one of the great rivers of the world. My young friends, history is a river that may take us as it will. But we have the power to navigate, to choose direction, and make our passage together. The wind is up, the current is swift, and opportunity for a long and fruitful journey awaits us.

Generations hence will honor us for having begun the voyage, for moving on together and escaping the fate of the buried armies of Xi'an, the buried warriors who stood for centuries frozen in time, frozen in an unknowing enmity.

We have made our choice. Our new journey will continue. And may it always continue in peace and in friendship.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the auditorium at the university.