

Radio Address to the Nation on the Trip to China

April 28, 1984

My fellow Americans:

I'm sure you've heard that Nancy and I are traveling a long way from home this week. We've already flown more than 9,000 miles, stopping off in the beautiful islands of Hawaii to visit the citizens of our 50th State; and then across the International Dateline to Guam, where the rays of each sunrise first touch the Stars and Stripes; and then on to our primary destination, China, one of the world's oldest civilizations and a country of great importance in today's Pacific community of nations.

This is our second trip to Asia in the last 6 months. It demonstrates our awareness of America's responsibility as a Pacific leader in the search for regional security and economic well-being. The stability and prosperity of this region are of crucial importance to the United States. The nations comprising the Pacific Basin represent our fastest growing trading markets. Many say that the 21st century will be the century of the Pacific.

Our relations with China have continued to develop through the last four administrations, ever since President Nixon made his historic journey here in 1972. In 1978 the Chinese leadership decided to chart a new course for their country, permitting more economic freedom for the people in an effort to modernize their economy. Not surprisingly, the results have been positive.

Today China's efforts to modernize, foster the spirit of enterprise, open its doors to the West, and expand areas of mutual cooperation while opposing Soviet aggression make it a nation of increasing importance to America and to prospects for peace and prosperity in the Pacific.

When Nancy and I arrived in Beijing, we were touched by the friendly hospitality of the Chinese people, and we've been delighted to see the sweeping vistas, the bustling activity, and the many hallmarks of history in this great, old city.

In Beijing, narrow residential streets, traditional one-story houses, and treasures like the Forbidden City, a former Imperial Palace, first erected in 1420, are interspersed with modern highrises and wide avenues. The streets are normally filled with people riding bicycles. All of you who like bikeriding would love Beijing.

From the first moment, our schedule has been fully packed. I've already had extensive meetings with the Chinese leaders -- President Li, Prime Minister Zhao, General Secretary Hu, and Chairman Deng. I had the honor of addressing a large group of Chinese and American leaders in science and industry in the Great Hall of the People, and I've spoken to the people of China over Chinese television.

We've also squeezed in some side trips -- first, to the magnificent Great Wall, built by the Chinese more than 2,000 years ago to protect their country from outside invaders; and tomorrow, to the ancient city of Xi'an, an archeological treasure considered the cradle of Chinese civilization and located in a fertile plain near the Yellow River.

In all of our meetings and appearances, I've stressed one overriding point -- different as to our two forms of government -- different as they may be, the common interests that bind our two peoples are even greater. Namely, our determination to build a better life and to resist aggressors who violate the rights of law-abiding nations and endanger world peace.

When people have the opportunity to communicate, cooperate, and engage in commerce, they can often produce astonishing results. We've already agreed to cooperate more closely in the areas of trade, technology, investment, and exchange of scientific and managerial expertise. And we've reached an important agreement on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic development.

Our last stop in China will be Shanghai, a center of culture and commerce. We plan to visit the Shanghai Foxboro Company, where Americans and Chinese are making high technology equipment to help advance China's industries. And I'll also visit with the students at Fudan University and speak to them about the meaning of America, the challenges our people face, and the dreams we share.

We can learn much from the rich history of China and from the wisdom and character of her people. And I've told the Chinese that Americans are people of peace, filled with the spirit of innovation and a passion for progress to make tomorrow better than today.

Our two nations are poised to take an historic step forward on the path of peaceful cooperation and economic development. I'm confident that our trip will be a significant success, resulting in a stronger U.S.-China relationship than before. For Americans, this will mean more jobs and a better chance for a peaceful world.

Until next week, thanks for listening, and God bless you.

Note: The President recorded his address at the Diaoyutai State Guest House on Saturday, April 28, Beijing time, for broadcast on Saturday, April 28, in the United States.

As printed above, this item follows the text of the White House press release, which was released by the Office of the Press Secretary in Beijing on April 29.