

Remarks to Chinese Community Leaders in Beijing, China

April 27, 1984

Thank you very much, Dr. Zhou Peiyuan, and all of you distinguished ladies and gentlemen. I'm honored to come before you today, the first American President ever to address your nation from the Great Hall of the People.

My wife, Nancy, and I have looked forward to visiting the people and treasures of your great and historic land, one of the world's oldest civilizations. We have marveled at Beijing's sweeping vistas, and we have felt the warmth of your hospitality touch our hearts. We only regret that our visit will be so brief. I'm afraid it will be as a Tang Dynasty poet once wrote, "looking at the flowers while riding horseback." But you have another saying from the book of Han which describes how Nancy and I feel: "To see a thing once is better than hearing about it a hundred times."

Twelve years ago former President Nixon arrived in Beijing, stepped down from Air Force One, and shook hands with former Premier Zhou Enlai. Premier Zhou would later tell him, "Your handshake came over the vastest ocean in the world -- 25 years of no communication." With one handshake, America and China each turned a new page in their histories.

I believe that history beckons again. We have begun to write a new chapter for peace and progress in our histories with America and China going forward hand in hand -- xieshou bingjin [walk together hand in hand].

We must always be realistic about our relationship, frankly acknowledging the fundamental differences in ideology and institutions between our two societies. Yes, let us acknowledge those differences. Let us never minimize them. But let us not be dominated by them.

I have not come to China to hold forth on what divides us, but to build on what binds us. I have not come to dwell on a closed-door past, but to urge that Americans and Chinese look to the future, because together we can and will make tomorrow a better day.

When Premier Zhao was in the United States, he told us, "China has opened its door and will never close it again." Permit me to assure you today, America's door is open to you, and when you walk through, we'll welcome you as our neighbors and our friends.

We may live at nearly opposite ends of the world. We may be distinctly different in language, customs, and political beliefs. But on many vital questions of our time, there is little difference between the American and Chinese people. Indeed, I believe if we were to ask citizens all over this world what they desire most for their children, and for their children's children, their answer, in English, Chinese, or any language, would likely be the same: We want peace. We want freedom. We want a better life. Their dreams, so

simply stated, represent mankind's deepest aspirations for security and personal fulfillment. And helping them make their dreams come true is what our jobs are all about.

We can work together as equals in a spirit of mutual respect and mutual benefit. I believe in Chinese you say hu jing hu hui.

Well, America and China are both great nations. And we have a special responsibility to preserve world peace.

To help fulfill that responsibility, the United States is rebuilding its defenses, which had been neglected for more than a decade. Our people realize this effort is crucial if we're to deter aggression against America, our allies, and other friends. But we threaten no nation. America's troops are not massed on China's borders. And we occupy no lands. The only foreign land we occupy anywhere in the world is beneath gravesites where Americans shed their blood for peace and freedom. Nor do we commit wanton acts, such as shooting 269 innocent people out of the sky for the so-called cause of sacred airspace.

America and China both condemn military expansionism, the brutal occupation of Afghanistan, the crushing of Kampuchea; and we share a stake in preserving peace on the Korean peninsula.

I think our two peoples agree there can be only one sane policy to preserve our precious civilization in this modern nuclear age: A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. And that's why we've proposed to the Soviet Union meaningful negotiations that go beyond rhetoric to actual arms reductions and why we must all work for the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the Earth.

America's interest in China, our friendship for your people, and our respect for China's many contributions to the progress of civilization date back to the beginning of our own history. You might be interested to know that personal dinner settings used by our first three Presidents -- George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson -- were of Chinese origin, evidence of our Founding Fathers attraction for your country's high artistic standards.

Back in 1784, when the first American trading ship, the Empress of China, entered your waters, my country was unknown to you. We were a new republic, eager to win a place in international commerce. A slightly homesick American sailor recorded that first day in a letter home.

``My dear father," he wrote, ``if ever you receive this letter, it will acquaint you, that after a passage of 6 months and 7 days we came to anchor at Wampoo . . . The Chinese had never heard of us, but we introduced ourselves as a new nation, gave them our history with a description of our country, the importance and necessity of a trade here to the advantage of both, which they appear perfectly to understand and wish."

Well, since those early days, our countries have both profited from the exchange of people, goods, and ideas. Chinese settlers helped tame our continent during the 19th century. Today their families' descendants join other Americans in cooperating with you to build a new prosperity in China.

How did America, which began as an impoverished country and a melting pot, attracting immigrants from every corner of the globe, pull together and become the leading economic nation in the world? How did we go in so short a time from living by candlelight to exploring the frontiers of the universe by satellite, from each farmer laboring with horse and hoe for an entire year just to feed four people, to running his farm with the most modern machinery and producing enough to feed 75 people, making America the breadbasket of the world?

Well, we're people who've always believed the heritage of our past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of our future. And from our roots we have drawn tremendous power from two great forces: faith and freedom. America was founded by people who sought freedom to worship God and to trust in Him to guide them in their daily lives with wisdom, strength, goodness, and compassion.

Our passion for freedom led to the American Revolution, the first great uprising for human rights and independence against colonial rule. We knew each of us could not enjoy liberty for ourselves unless we were willing to share it with everyone else. And we knew our freedom could not truly be safe unless all of us were protected by a body of laws that treated us equally.

George Washington told us we would be bound together in a sacred brotherhood of free men. Abraham Lincoln defined the heart of American democracy when he said, "No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. . . ." These great principles have nourished the soul of America, and they have been enriched by values such as the dignity of work, the friendship of neighbors, and the warmth of family. Like China, our people see the future in the eyes of our children. And like China, we revere our elders. To be as good as our fathers and mothers, we must be better.

"Trust the people" -- these three words are not only the heart and soul of American history but the most powerful force for human progress in the world today. Those who ignore this vital truth will condemn their countries to fall farther and farther behind in the world's competition for economic leadership in the 1980's and beyond, because look around us, the societies that have made the most spectacular progress in the shortest period of time are not the most rigidly organized nor even the richest in natural resources. No, it's where people have been allowed to create, compete, and build, where they've been permitted to think for themselves, make economic decisions, and benefit from their own risks, that societies have become the most prosperous, progressive, dynamic, and free. Nothing could be more basic to the spirit of progress for a farmer, laborer, or merchant than economic reward for legitimate risk and honest toil.

A little over a century ago, Ulysses S. Grant, who was then a former President, visited your country and saw China's great potential. "I see dawning . . ." Grant wrote, "the beginning of a change. When it does come, China will rapidly become a powerful and rich nation . . . The population is industrious, frugal, intelligent, and quick to learn."

Well, today, China's economy crackles with the dynamics of change: expansion of individual incentives for farmers in your new responsibility system; new bonuses for workers and more disciplined management in terms of profits and losses; improved methods of market distribution; opening your economy to the world through China's membership in the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and through your invitation to trade and invest, especially in your four Special Economic Zones; and your commitment to attract capital and scientific knowledge to create a high technology base for the future. All this reflects China's new role in the international economic community and your determination to modernize your economy and raise the standard of living of your people.

Unlike some governments which fear change and fear the future, China is beginning to reach out toward new horizons, and we salute your courage.

"Progress," Premier Zhao has told us, "lies in our efforts to emancipate our thinking in a bold way -- to carry out reform with determination, to make new inventions with courage, and to break with the economic molds and conventions of all descriptions which fetter the development of the productive force." Well, we Americans have always considered ourselves pioneers, so we appreciate such vitality and optimism.

Today I bring you a message from my countrymen. As China moves forward in this new path, America welcomes the opportunity to walk by your side.

Incidentally, I know Premier Zhao has demonstrated mastery of his subject. When he was directing agricultural policies in Sichuan, the peasants went from food shortages and forced imports to bumper harvests and rising exports. In fact, I'm told that because of the work he did, it is said in Sichuan Province, "If you want rice, go see Zhao."

Well, China's growth is in China's hands. You will choose your own path to development. But we're not surprised to see the fresh breezes of incentives and innovation sweeping positive changes across China. And behind the statistics of economic growth are reports of personal success stories pointing to a new spirit of progress. Chairman Deng has a saying, "Seek truth from facts." Well, today in China, the reality of more small enterprises doing a thriving business, more families profiting from their own hard work and the bigger harvests they produce, and more investment in science and technology points to more opportunity for all. President John Kennedy often used a metaphor to describe such progress: "A rising tide lifts all boats."

In the United States, as I mentioned earlier, we've always believed deeply that incentives are key and that free people build free markets that ignite dynamic development for

everyone. For a time, America's government had drifted away from this key principle, and our economic growth suffered.

When we took office, in January 1981, we said to the people, "Let us make a new beginning. From now on, if you work harder and earn more than before, your reward will be greater than it was. We're putting America's future in your hands. You can spark the spirit of enterprise. You can get America moving again." And they have.

In 3 short years, the American people have revived a dynamic growth economy bolstered by incentives of lower tax rates, stable prices, reduced interest rates, a rebirth of productivity, and restored confidence in our currency.

Hope is high. Confidence is strong. America's future looks bright again. With a strong technological base, pioneering sunrise industries and modernizing older ones, the United States is beginning an economic renaissance and helping pull other nations toward worldwide recovery.

I see America and our Pacific neighbors going forward in a mighty enterprise to build strong economies and a safer world.

The United States and China have an historic opportunity. We can expand our economic and scientific cooperation, strengthen the ties between our peoples, and take an important step toward peace and a better life. And there is much we can share.

We think progress in four areas is particularly promising: trade, technology, investment, and exchanges of scientific and managerial expertise.

In a few short years, two-way trade has risen sharply. The United States is now China's third largest trading partner. Our bilateral trade shows great promise for the future, particularly in areas such as machinery, technology, oil equipment, petroleum, agricultural and manufacturing products.

Last June, I instructed our government to liberalize controls over the export to China of high technology products, such as computers and laboratory instruments. Our policies on technology transfer will continue to evolve along with our overall relationship and the development of broader cooperation between us. May I emphasize to the members of the scientific community here today: The relaxing of export controls reflects my determination that China be treated as a friendly, nonallied nation and that the United States be fully prepared to cooperate in your modernization.

During Premier Zhao's visit to our country, we took another step forward, signing the United States-China Industrial and Technological Cooperation Accord. Our Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade will discuss implementation of the Accord during their next meeting in Washington in May. We will focus our efforts on the sectors to which China has attached greatest priority. Our trade and development program will facilitate our progress.

Expanding cooperative ventures is another area of promising growth: American firms have invested almost \$700 million in joint ventures and offshore oil exploration in China, making the United States your largest foreign investor. We welcome your determination to improve conditions for foreign business in China. Streamlining bureaucratic procedures, establishing a more predictable system for investment through domestic legislation and international agreements, reforming prices to make them internationally competitive, and providing foreign business people with the offices, housing, and schools they and their families need to work effectively, will stimulate more American investment.

For your part, some 50 Chinese firms have established offices or branches in the United States, and China has invested in several joint ventures in our country.

We intend to strengthen these trends. When Treasury Secretary Regan was here last month for the meeting of the Joint Economic Committee, he concluded a bilateral tax agreement. Monday, our two countries will sign this agreement, which, I'm pleased to report, will increase incentives for even closer cooperation between American and Chinese firms. And we're continuing to work toward conclusion of bilateral agreements on greater investment protection and many other areas of cooperation.

I am particularly proud that the United States and China have reached agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. As many of you know, the negotiations between our two countries go back almost to the beginning of my administration. We have held a total of six sessions in Washington and Beijing. We made great progress during Premier Zhao's visit, and our negotiations have just now concluded successfully. The result: an agreement for cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

I understand that several of the people here made major contributions to this effort, which meets the requirements of both sides. Once approval is complete, it will open broad opportunities for joint work in development of the energy base which China needs for her modernization. Scientists, engineers, business leaders, and officials of both countries interested in peaceful nuclear energy will welcome this agreement. China has one of the world's most ambitious programs for expansion of electric power generation, and I believe that America's energy technology -- not just in nuclear energy but across the board -- is second to none, and perhaps most suitable for China's varied needs.

Our agreement is founded on important nonproliferation standards. We have noticed recent statements of China's nonproliferation policies, particularly those by Premier Zhao in Washington and Beijing over the past several months. Premier Zhao and I have discussed these matters directly. I can tell you that our countries share the same basic principles of preserving world peace and preventing the destabilizing spread of nuclear explosives. Neither of us will encourage proliferation nor assist any other country to acquire or develop any nuclear explosive device. Our cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy will be based on shared principles of nonproliferation.

There is also great potential in our joint efforts to increase managerial and scientific expertise. I know that many of you have heard through the Chinese press about the good work of the 9-month Dalian program of management training for industry, science, and technology. More than 750 graduates have received training in modern methods of industrial management. And I'm told some of you are graduates of that program. Well, I'm delighted to announce that we have agreed to establish a special new program there offering a full 3-year master's degree in business administration. The degree will be awarded by the State University of New York. We're to share with you the knowledge that is America's key technology -- management and science skills to develop a nation.

Under our Joint Commission on Science and Technology, we have a very productive agreement with exchange programs in 21 specific areas. We're sharing the benefits of research in medicine, energy, and other technical fields. Our scientists are learning a great deal from each other in public health, agricultural sciences, and many other areas.

Men and women of vision already see that working in the zero gravity environment of space offers dazzling opportunities to improve life on Earth. Experiments done on our space shuttle have shown that lifesaving medicines can be manufactured in space with four times the purity of the same medicines on Earth. And they can be made over 400 times more rapidly, so 1 month's production of medicines in space yields as much as 30 years' production on the ground.

We also look forward to being able to manufacture large crystals of exceptional purity in space. These crystals are the basis of the semiconductor chips which run modern computers. By manufacturing them in zero gravity, we can make new strides toward producing larger, faster computers, the so-called supercomputers, and ultimately reduce the cost of computer manufacturing. We look forward to exploring with China the possibilities of cooperating in the development of space on behalf of all our fellow citizens.

In the humanities and social sciences, hundreds of American and Chinese scholars have visited each others' countries to teach and study subjects ranging from law and economics to poetry and history. For our part, we welcome this new Pacific tide. Let it roll peacefully on, carrying a two-way flow of people and ideas that can break down barriers of suspicion and mistrust, and build up bonds of cooperation and shared optimism.

The future is ours to build. Surmounting the risks and the fears of some may be difficult, but I'm convinced the challenge is worth it. The greatest victories come when people dare to be great, when they summon their spirits to brave the unknown and go forward together to reach a greater good.

So often, we see individual actions of courage and love in everyday life that give us faith to believe in ourselves and hope for a better future. In 1981 a bright, young American student, John Zeidman, came here to study China and to seek new friends. He was a boy of great heart and enthusiasm, and riding his bicycle on Beijing's streets, conversing and

camping with artists and students, he fell in love with your country. Tragically, he was struck ill on his 20th birthday and later died. But his tragedy brought forth new life.

John's family and friends have established a Chinese studies program at the Sidwell Friends School in Washington. Hundreds have contributed, and the program now attracts young people from public and private schools and serves as a model for other schools all across America. Earlier this year, Premier Zhao visited the school. This summer the entire class will come to China as his guests to meet their student contemporaries.

From the great grief of one boy's death came a seed. And from that seed has grown a tree of understanding, a tree that now blossoms with the beauty of friendship and cooperation. If our people could go forward in this same spirit, planting not one tree, but millions, and then tending each so it may grow sturdy and tall -- then the dream of a single youth might grow into the golden dreams of all mankind.

Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the auditorium at the Great Hall of the People. Zhou Peiyuan, a Chinese scientist, hosted the event, which was attended by Chinese citizens who either have been involved in the various aspects of U.S.-China cooperation directly related to China's modernization program or who study Sino-U.S. relations.