

His Excellency

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## Ten Episodes in China's Diplomacy

In all the 40 years of my diplomatic career I have visited Los Angeles quite a few times and three of them in particular have been the most impressive. The first visit took place before the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. In the early 1970s the leaders of our two countries at the time saw the large strategic interests for both countries and broke the ice in China-U.S. relations, thus opening the door to bilateral exchanges. I was the Director General of the Information Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in 1978, and that year I visited the United States in my capacity as a member of the Chinese press delegation. I remember that we flew in via Vancouver, and Los Angeles was the first stop. That was my very first visit to the United States and I got my first impression of the country from Los Angeles. That visit took us to more than ten American cities and we had extensive contact with the American media. It was a very rewarding and informative visit.

At that time, some newspaper employees were staging protests against layoffs due to the introduction of new type-setting technologies, but we were well received by our hosts. We asked many questions and we appreciated the responses.

I came again in 1993. In the late 1980s and early 1990s profound changes were taking place on the global scene. Some people in the United States and other countries believed that in the absence of the common enemy, China and the United States would lose the strategic foundation for cooperation, and some even predicted that China would soon collapse. So against that backdrop I was invited in November 1993 to address the Los Angeles World Affairs Council as China's Vice Premier and Foreign Minister. In my presentation I stressed that the changes in the national scene would not affect China-U.S. relations, which were based on a solid foundation. These relations had broad prospects, and their sound growth would be good for both countries and conducive to peace, stability, development and prosperity of the world. What happened later proved my point. Just a few days after my speech, President Jiang Zemin and President Bill Clinton met for the first time in Seattle. President Jiang Zemin proposed that China and the United States work together to usher into the 21<sup>st</sup> century a sound and stable China-U.S. relationship and a world of peace and security. President Clinton readily agreed to this proposal.

My third visit took place in 1997 when President Jiang Zemin paid a state visit to the United States. I was in his official party, and Los Angeles was the last stop of his

visit. The Asia Society of Southern California and other local organizations hosted a welcoming luncheon for President Jiang; the Chinese community in Southern California also hosted a dinner in his honor. We were overwhelmed by the warm reception accorded us. After that visit, thanks to the joint efforts made by both countries, China-U.S. relations moved forward steadily in spite of twists and turns and even some difficulties. As I mentioned, we have overcome many difficulties in pushing ahead China-U.S. relations, and now it is gratifying to see that a huge momentum of growth in our relations has been maintained. We have every reason to believe that such ties will enjoy an even brighter and promising future in the new century.

Ladies and gentlemen, nearly 30 years have passed since my first visit to L.A. Thirty years ago there was almost no contact to speak of between our two peoples, whereas now more than four thousand Chinese and Americans are flying over the Pacific to visit each other's countries every day. Thirty-five pairs of sister province-state relations and 131 pairs of sister city relations have been established between our two countries. Thirty years ago China-U.S. trade was negligible; by contrast, Chinese figures show that bilateral trade amounted to \$211.6 billion last year. That was 85 times that of the year when our diplomatic relations were established. China now is the third largest trading partner and the fastest growing export market of the United States, and the United States is the second largest trading partner and the biggest export market of China. Our actual trade has grown by over 20 percent in the last two years.

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Thirty years ago, China-U.S. cooperation had barely started; today more than 30 governmental cooperation agreements are being implemented between our two countries. China and the United States are conducting fruitful consultation, coordination and cooperation in many fields such as counter-terrorism,

schools.

American cultural images, such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, are very popular among Chinese kids, and my little grandson is one of them. Yao Ming, a Chinese basketball player, is now well known in the United States. Quality yet inexpensive Chinese clothes, toys and other commodities are favored by American consumers, which saves them about \$20 billion every year. Traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts, music and philosophy—the quintessence of Chinese culture—are becoming increasingly popular in this country.

Ladies and gentlemen, over 30 years China-U.S. relations have come a long way, growing amidst twists and turns. Mutual exchanges are increasing, areas for cooperation are broadening, and common interests are expanding. A review of the evolution of China-U.S. relations in the past 30 years underscores a simple but important fact that for China-U.S. relations to grow the two sides must increase mutual understanding, respect each other, and approach

ing to learn more about the United States, and I believe that people in the United States also need to get a better understanding of China. In addition to enhancing mutual understanding we need to also respect each other, given the differences in history, culture and values.

One does not expect China and the United States to agree on everything. China has its own national conditions and so does the United States. If practices in China are imposed here, or the other way around, problems are bound to occur. Confucius once said, “the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others.” In handling our relations we should not only have in mind our own interests, but should also address others’ concerns, seek and expand common ground, and strive for mutual benefit and a win-win outcome.

As for differences, we need to approach them through dialogue. We should move on when we agree, and where we disagree, let’s set aside the differences so that they do not stand in the way of our relations. And when problems occur we should be cool-headed and let them cool off for a while and we can deal with them later.

It is important for us to proceed from a strategic perspective in handling China-U.S. relations. Such relations have gone beyond the bilateral scope and are becoming increasingly global in significance. Thus, we need to get on a higher plane and look at these ties from a strategic and long-term perspective. Our two countries should aim higher and go beyond immediate interests to think about the future of our relations and their impact on the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. When our ties are improving and growing, we should remain sober minded and redouble efforts to ensure their continued growth. If our relations encounter difficulties or suffer setbacks, we should remain calm, remove

these relations from a long-term perspective. Understanding is the basis of cooperation. We can only increase mutual confidence and remove mistrust by enhancing dialogue and exchanges. Before 1972, there was only antagonism and confrontation and no contact between China and the United States. After 1972, and particularly since the establishment of diplomatic relations, bilateral exchanges have increased and our mutual understanding has deepened. But is this enough? Certainly not. There are still a lot of misunderstandings and even biases between us. If policies were to be made on this basis, China-U.S. relations would be plagued by trouble.

On China’s part, we are endeavor-

nonproliferation, health, law enforcement, culture and education, and on many major international and regional issues, including the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issue, and the reform of the United Nations.

Thirty years ago, isolation and estrangement kept us apart. Today, over 60,000 Chinese are studying in the United States and over 3,000 Americans are studying in China. Most students in China’s primary schools, secondary schools and universities, over 120 million in total, are learning English. Here in the United States, Chinese is being taught in about 1,000 colleges and universities and over 200 primary and secondary



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obstacles, focus on common interests, and allow no individual incident to dilute our attention.

The Taiwan question represents China's core national interests. The Chinese government has made every effort with every sincerity to uphold and promote the peaceful and steady growth of cross-Strait relations and try for China's peaceful reunification. Recently, the Taiwan authorities blatantly announced the decision to cease the functioning of the National Unification Council and cease the application of the national reunification guidelines. This is a dangerous step towards Taiwan independence. China and the United States need to work together to oppose and counter Taiwan independence in order to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits.

I understand the concerns in the United States about the trade issue. It is true that the United States runs a big deficit in its trade with China, and we in China recognize that. We take the protection of intellectual property rights very seriously. We are making every effort to strengthen it and we know we can do better.

On the other hand, we must not fail to see that China-U.S. trade ties have brought enormous mutual benefits to both countries. Differences and frictions are hardly avoidable because our trade relations are expanding so fast. Problems arising from trade expansion should be addressed, but not by restricting trade. The best way to ensure sustained and healthy growth of China-U.S. trade relations is to respect and be sensitive to each other's interests and talk to each other on an equal footing.

Ladies and gentlemen, China has enjoyed fast economic growth over the past two decades and more. Its GDP reached \$2.22 trillion in 2005—that was 15 times

that of 1978. So, yes, it is true that China is experiencing high-speed growth, but this should not lead to the conclusion that China has become a global economic power. It is simply preposterous to assert that China attempts to dominate Asia and exclude the United States from the region. As a large and populous country, China faces many challenges in en-

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deavors, such as regional development, disparity, unbalanced economic structure and mounting pressure on resources and the environment caused by economic development. China's population is more than four times that of the United States, yet its per capita GDP in 2005 was just over \$1,700, or less than 1/20 that of the United States. The average earnings of 100 million Chinese is less than \$1 a day. There is a surplus labor force in China, [of over 100 million] and 24 million jobs need to be created for urban young people each year. So turning China into a country of moderate prosperity that benefits all the 1.3 billion people is a long-term endeavor and requires sustained efforts.

Over a century after the Opium War, the Chinese nation suffered bitterly from aggression and the scourge of wars. Peace and development are therefore the cherished aspirations and unremitting pursuit of all Chinese. Since the late 1970s we in China have embarked upon a path of peaceful development. What it means is that China strives to secure a peaceful international environment to promote world peace and development through its development. China's national conditions, its historical and cul-

tural traditions, and the development trend of the world have pointed out the way forward for China—that is, to firmly move ahead along the path of peaceful development.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we find ourselves in a world with accelerated economic globalization, rapid advancement of science and technology, closer state-to-state relations, and greater interdependence among countries. Peace, development and cooperation are the calling of our times. At the same time, mankind is confronted with numerous challenges, which can be met only through cooperation. Being that both countries have considerable influence in the world, China and the United States share growing mutual interests and joint responsibilities, so there are a lot of areas where we can cooperate and focus more closely.

Mr. Wang Xizhi, a great Chinese calligrapher in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, observed in his masterpiece, *Lanting Prologue*, "the people of the future will see us in the same way as we see those who have gone before us." And there is also a well-known Chinese saying that goes, "One can always gain new insight by reviewing the past." Looking back, I am satisfied with the great advances we have made in China-U.S. relations in the past three decades, and looking ahead I have every confidence in the future of this dynamic relationship in the new century.

Let us scale new heights and look beyond the horizon. Let us strengthen the bonds of friendship and show respect for each other. As we work together, I have no doubt that China and the United States will become good friends and good partners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and make greater progress in forging a constructive and cooperative relationship.

I thank you all.