

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Xi Jinping of China in Rancho Mirage, California

June 7, 2013

President Obama. Well, it gives me great pleasure to welcome President Xi back to the United States. We first met during my visit to China in 2009, and I had the opportunity to welcome him to the Oval Office last year when he was still Vice President and a guest of Vice President Biden's.

I think some of you may know that President Xi is no stranger to the United States. He's remembered fondly in Iowa, where he once visited and stayed with a local family, and on his trip last year, he had a chance to come to California, including, I understand, going to a Lakers game, which I was very jealous of. [*Laughter*]

President Xi just took office in March. Our decision to meet so early, I think, signifies the importance of the U.S.-China relationship. It's important not only for the prosperity of our two countries and the security of our two countries, but it's also important for the Asia-Pacific region and important for the world.

And the importance of this relationship, in some ways, is reflected with this somewhat unusual setting that we are hosting the President in. Our thought was that we would have the opportunity for a more extended and more informal conversation in which we were able to share both our visions for our respective countries and how we can forge a new model of cooperation between countries based on mutual interest and mutual respect.

I think both of us agree that continuous and candid and constructive conversation and communication is critically important to shaping our relationship for years to come.

And for my part, this will give me an opportunity to reiterate how the United States welcomes the continuing peaceful rise of China as a world power and that, in fact, it is in the United States interest that China continues on the path of success, because we believe that a peaceful and stable and prosperous China is not only good for Chinese, but also good for the world and for the United States.

Of course, as two of the largest economies in the world, we're going to have a healthy economic competition, but we also have a whole range of challenges on which we have to cooperate, from nuclear—North Korea—or North Korea's nuclear and missile programs to proliferation, to issues like climate change.

And the United States seeks an international economy and an international economic order where nations are playing by the same rules, where trade is free and fair, and where the United States and China work together to address issues like cybersecurity and the protection of intellectual property.

In addition to the strategic concerns that we share and the economic challenges that each of our countries face, I will continue to emphasize the importance of human rights. President Xi has spoken of a nation and a people that are committed to continuous self-improvement and progress, and history shows that upholding universal rights are ultimately a key to success and prosperity and justice for all nations.

So I want to again welcome President Xi to the United States. We're very glad that he's here. Inevitably, there are areas of tension between our two countries, but what I've learned over the last 4 years is both the Chinese people and the American people want a strong, cooperative relationship and that I think there's a strong recognition on the part of both President Xi and myself that it is very much in our interests to work together to meet the global challenges that we face. And I'm very much looking forward to this being a strong foundation for the kind of new model of cooperation that we can establish for years to come.

So welcome very—and thank you very much for being here.

Thank you.

President Xi. Honorable President Obama, it's my great pleasure to meet you. We're meeting with each other earlier than people might have expected. They thought that we might have to wait until the Saint Petersburg G–20 summit to wait—to meet with each other, but here we are. I want to thank you for your invitation, and it's my great pleasure to meet you here at the Sunnylands, the Annenberg Estate.

This is a wonderful place, a place of sunshine, and it's very close to the Pacific Ocean. And on the other side of the ocean is China. When I visited the United States last year, I stated that the vast Pacific Ocean has enough space for the two large countries of China and the United States. I still believe so. And, Mr. President, we're meeting here today to chart the future of China-U.S. relations and draw a blueprint for this relationship and continue our cooperation across the Pacific Ocean.

And this reminds us of what happened over 40 years ago, when the leaders of China and the United States, with the strategists' political courage and wisdom, realized a handshake across the Pacific Ocean, and it reopened the door of exchanges between China and the United States. And in the more than 40 years since then, the China-U.S. relationship has gone through winds and rains, and it made historical progress. And our two peoples and the people elsewhere in the world have reaped huge benefits from this.

And at present, the China-U.S. relationship has reached a new historical starting point. Our two countries have vast convergence of shared interests, from promoting our respective economic growth at home to ensuring the stability of the global economy, from addressing international and regional hotspots issues to dealing with all kinds of global challenges. On all these issues, our two countries need to increase exchanges and cooperation.

And under the new environment, we need to take a close look at our bilateral relationship: What kind of China-U.S. relationship do we both want? What kind of cooperation can our two nations carry out for mutual benefit? And how can our two nations join together to promote peace and development in the world? These are things that not just the people in our two countries are watching closely, but the whole world is also watching very closely.

Both sides should proceed from the fundamental interests of our peoples and bear in mind human development and progress. We need to think creatively and act energetically so that working together, we can build a new model of major country relationship.

President Obama, I look forward to having in-depth communication with you on major strategic issues of common interest to deepen our mutual understanding and to push forward all-around cooperation. I'm confident that our meeting will achieve positive outcomes and inject fresh momentum into the China-U.S. relationship.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:21 p.m. at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands. President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : China, President Xi.

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Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Xi Jinping.

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