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very important issue, not only in our own countries but around the world.

NOTE: President Jiang spoke at 12:15 p.m. in the Great Hall of the People. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Minister of Public Health Zhang Wenkang of China. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Jiang Zemin of China in Beijing
February 21, 2002

President Jiang. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by extending on behalf of the Chinese Government and people a warm welcome to President Bush.

This is my second meeting with the President. Four months ago, we had a successful meeting during the APEC Summit in Shanghai. In our talks today, President Bush and I looked back on the past 30 years of China-U.S. relations and had an in-depth discussion on bilateral ties and the current international situation. We have reached many important common understandings and achieved positive results in many areas.

We have agreed that under the current complex and volatile international situation, China and the United States, both with significant influence in the world, should step up dialog and cooperation, properly handle their differences, and work together to move the constructive and cooperative relations between us further forward.

We have agreed to intensify high-level strategic dialog, as well as contacts between various agencies at all levels, with a view to increasing mutual understanding and trust. I have accepted with pleasure and appreciation President Bush's invitation to visit the United States in October this year, prior to the APEC meeting in Mexico. At the invitation of Vice President Cheney, Vice President Hu Jintao will visit the United States in the near future.

We have agreed to vigorously carry out bilateral exchanges and cooperation in such areas as economy and trade, energy, science and technology, environmental protection, the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and law enforcement, conduct strategic dialog on regional economic and financial matters, and hold within the year meetings of the Joint Economic Commission, Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, and Joint Commission on Science and Technology.

President Bush and I have also had an in-depth discussion on the international fight against terrorism. We have agreed to step up consultation and cooperation on the basis of reciprocity and mutual benefit and to beef up the bilateral mid- and long-term mechanism for counterterrorism exchanges and cooperation. The two sides have also exchanged views on a series of major international and regional issues, and decided to enhance communication and coordination.

To properly handle the Taiwan question is vital to stability and growth of China-U.S. relations. In my meeting with President Bush, I have elaborated the Chinese Government's basic position of peaceful reunification and "one country, two systems" for the solution of the Taiwan question. And President Bush emphasized that the United States upholds the "one China" policy and will abide by the three Sino-U.S. joint communiques.

Given the differences in the national condition of the two countries, it is natural

for China and the United States to disagree on some issues, which President Bush and I have discussed with candor. So long as the two sides act in a spirit of mutual respect, equality, and seeking common ground while shelving differences, we will be able to gradually narrow our differences, enhance our mutual understanding, and advance our cooperation.

It is my hope and conviction that today's meeting will have a positive impact on improvement and growth of China-U.S. relations.

Thank you. It is your turn now, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Well, thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate so very much your hospitality. We have just concluded some very candid and positive talks. It is true that I invited the President to the United States next fall. It's true he accepted.

This is the 30th year—30th anniversary of President Nixon's first visit to China, the beginning of 30 years of growth in the U.S.-China relationship. Our ties are mature, respectful, and important to both our nations and to the world.

We discussed a lot of issues, starting with terrorism. We recognize that terrorism is a threat to both our countries, and I welcome China's cooperation in our war against terror. I encourage China to continue to be a force for peace among its neighbors on the Korean Peninsula, in Southeast Asia, and in South Asia.

China, as a full member of the WTO, will now be a full partner in the global trading system and will have the right and responsibility to fashion and enforce the rules of open trade. My Government hopes that China will strongly oppose the proliferation of missiles and other deadly technologies. President Jiang and I agreed that the United States and China could cooperate more closely to defeat HIV/AIDS.

Our talks were candid, and that's very positive. The United States shares interests with China, but we also have some disagreements. We believe that we can discuss our differences with mutual understanding and respect.

As the President mentioned, we talked about Taiwan. The position of my Government has not changed over the years. We believe in the peaceful settlement of this issue. We will urge there be no provocation. The United States will continue to support the Taiwan Relations Act.

China's future is for the Chinese people to decide. Yet no nation is exempt from the demands of human dignity. All the world's people, including the people of China, should be free to choose how they live, how they worship, and how they work. Dramatic changes have occurred in China in the last 30 years, and I believe equally dramatic changes lie ahead. These will have a profound impact not only on China itself but on the entire family of nations. And the United States will be a steady partner in China's historic transition toward greater prosperity and greater freedom.

Thank you, Mr. President.

National Missile Defense

Q. Thank you, Mr. President, for your hospitality.

President Bush, on the question of strategic nuclear policy, you've said you want to develop a missile defense system in order to defend the United States and its allies from the threats and dangers of the 21st century. Do you envision circumstances where that includes Taiwan?

And President Jiang, if I may, with respect, could you explain to Americans who may not understand your reasoning why your Government restricts the practice of religious faith, in particular, why your Government has imprisoned more than 50 bishops of the Roman Catholic Church?

President Bush. I did bring up the subject of missile defenses in the broad context of protecting ourselves and our friends and allies against a launch by a threatening nation. I explained to the President that we've just recently gotten out from underneath the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and

are beginning to explore the full options as to whether or not a system will work. And that's the extent of our conversation.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Just now, President Bush mentioned that today marks the 30th anniversary of the first visit to China by President Bush. In few days' time, the 28th of this month will mark the 30th anniversary of the release of the Shanghai Communique. So my question to President Jiang is, how would you characterize the relationship over the past 30 years?

President Jiang. We will have in February the 30th anniversary of the first visit to China by President Nixon and the release of the Shanghai Communique. The visit by President Bush coincides with this day, and his visit is highly meaningful. Thirty years ago, leaders of China and the United States acted together to put an end to mutual estrangement and open the gate for exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.

History has proven that it was with great vision that our leaders took this major move. The growth of bilateral ties over the years has brought tangible benefits to the two peoples and played an important role in safeguarding peace in the Asia-Pacific region and the world as a whole.

At present, despite profound changes in the international situation, China and United States have more rather than less shared interests and more rather than less common responsibility for world peace. The importance of the relationship has increased rather than decreased. So to build a constructive and cooperative relationship serves the desire of not only the people of the two countries but also of the people throughout the world.

The Chinese side is ready to join the U.S. side in reflecting on the past and looking to the future, increasing exchanges and cooperation and enhancing understanding and trust. I'm deeply convinced that so long as the two sides bear in mind the larger picture, take a long-term perspective, and abide by the principles in the three Sino-U.S. joint communiques, the relationship will make even bigger strides forward in the years ahead.

Thank you.

North Korea/China's Role in the Coalition

Q. Thank you. President Jiang, do you agree with President Bush that there should be a regime change in Iraq? And if so, would you support the use of all necessary means to accomplish that? And with respect, sir, we're eager to hear the response to the original question about the arrest of Catholic bishops in your country and attention to religious groups in general.

And President Bush, you have thanked the Chinese for their cooperation in the antiterror campaign. As that campaign evolves, can you say today what would be the single most important contribution that China could make? And did you receive any assurance today that that will happen?

President Bush. Let me start. We discussed the Korean Peninsula, and I told the President that I was deeply concerned about a regime that is not transparent and that starves its people. I also—he reminded me that he had a conversation with Kim Chong-il last fall, urging Kim Chong-il to take up Kim Dae-jung's offer for discussion. That was constructive leadership.

I then told him that the offer I made yesterday in Seoul was a real offer and that we would be willing to meet with a North Korean regime. And I asked his help in conveying that message to Kim Chong-il, if he so chooses. If he speaks to the leader of North Korea, he can assure him that I am sincere in my desire to have our folks meet.

My point is that not every theater in the war against terror need be resolved with force. Some theaters can be resolved through diplomacy and dialog. And the Chinese Government can be very helpful.

Furthermore, in the first theater in the war against terror, part of the call for our

coalition is to make sure that Afghanistan becomes a self-supporting, peaceful nation. And the Chinese Government is supportive of the aid efforts, to make sure that we aid the new post-Taliban Afghani Government in its opportunities to develop its own army, as well as its own economy, its own security. And so they've been helpful there, as well.

Thank you.

China's Economic Development/Catholic Bishops in China/Korean Peninsula/Iraq

Q. I have got a two-part question. First, in recent years, China has enjoyed rapid economic growth, and its national strength has increased. Some people in the United States have concluded that because of this, China has posed a potential threat to the United States, and they call for a policy of containment against China. What's your comment, President Jiang?

And secondly, in your opening remarks, President Jiang, you mentioned that the key to steady growth of Sino-U.S. relationship is the proper handling of the question of Taiwan. President Bush, in his opening remarks, also elaborated on the U.S. position on Taiwan. President Jiang, could you comment on what President Bush has said on the question of Taiwan?

President Jiang. We're living in a world of diversity. As two major countries with different national conditions, China and the U.S. have, indeed, had certain disagreements. But they also share broad and important common interests. So the old mindsets which views the relationship between countries as either of alliance or confrontation, ought to be abandoned, and a new security concept which features security through mutual trust and cooperation through mutual benefit should be established.

It's true that since the inception of reform and opening-up program, China's national strength and people's living standards have somewhat improved in recent years. Yet, compared with the developed countries, our economic and cultural developments remains quite backwards. With a population of over 1.2 billion, the road ahead is still very long before we can basically complete modernization and deliver a better life to all our people. To focus on economic development and improvements of people's livelihoods is our long-term central task.

What China wants most is a peaceful and tranquil international environment with long-term stability, to not do unto others what you would not like others to do unto you. Even if China becomes more developed in the future, it will not go for bullying or threatening other countries. Facts have proven already and will continue to prove that China is a staunch force dedicated to the maintenance of peace in the region and the world at large.

Now, let me comment on the questions posed to me by the American correspondents as they raised questions for President Bush. President Bush, he has much more experience than I. [*Laughter*] I will do my best to answer your question.

In the first question, the correspondent mentioned that some of the Catholic Church people have been detained. I want to explain that since the founding of People's Republic of China, all our constitutions, various versions, have provided for the freedom of religious belief. In China there are many religions which include Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, and a typical Chinese religion, Taoism. And their religious faiths are protected by our Constitution.

I don't have religious faith. Yet this does not prevent me from having an interest in religion. I've read the Bible. I've also read the Koran, as well as the Scriptures of Buddhism. I often have meetings with the religious leaders in this country. For instance, when we are about the celebrate the new year or during the holiday season, I would have meetings with them and exchange views.

Whatever religion people believe in, they have to abide by the law. So some of the lawbreakers have been detained because of their violation of law, not because of their religious belief. Although I'm the President of this country, I have no right interfering in the judicial affairs, because of judicial independence.

You also asked about the Korean Peninsula issue. President Bush has also commented on this. In our talks just now, the two of us exchanged views on the Korean Peninsula. I want to make clear that we have all along pursued such a position. That is, we want the Korean Peninsula to have peace and stability. We hope that the problems between DPRK and ROK can be resolved through dialog. And we also sincerely hope that the contacts between the United States and DPRK will be resumed.

All in all, in handling state-to-state relations, it is important to resolve the problems through peaceful means, in a spirit of equality, and through consultation. And that's why I've explained our consistent and clear-cut position on the question of Korean Peninsula. It's quite near.

You asked about Iraq. Iraq is not as near. But I think, as I made clear in my discussion with President Bush just now, the important thing is that peace is to be valued most.

With regard to counterterrorism, our position has not changed from the position I made clear to President Bush when we last met 4 months ago. And that is, China is firmly opposed to international terrorism of all forms.

I'm very pleased to see that Afghanistan has now embarked on a road of peaceful reconstruction. I wish them well. I hope they will succeed in rebuilding their country and enjoying national unity and peace.

Let me conclude by quoting a Chinese proverb: "More haste, less speed." Despite the fact that sometimes you will have problems that cry out for immediate solution, yet patience is sometime also necessary. Or perhaps I could quote another Chinese old saying to describe the situation: "One cannot expect to dig a well with one spade." So we need to make continuous our unlimiting efforts to fight terrorism.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:15 p.m. in the Great Hall of the People. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. President Jiang spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on Viewing the Cummins Bus Engine and an Exchange With Reporters in Beijing
February 21, 2002

The President. Well, thank you very much, Martha. I appreciate that explanation as to why trade is to the advantage of the United States worker and to the Chinese worker. I want to thank you very much for inviting me and the Secretary of State here and our Ambassador.

We've just come from a very fruitful discussion of key issues with President Jiang, and part of our discussion had to do with trade, and part of our discussion had to do with how do we make sure we've got a clean environment. And it's very interesting to me that this presentation that you just made is a clear indication of how we can achieve both, prosperity and a cleaner environment.