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Exchange With Reporters at the Great Wall in Mutianyu, China

June 28, 1998

Visit to the Great Wall

Q. What are your impressions of the wall, Mr. President?

The President. Quite unbelievable. It's amazing to imagine that it was done so long ago. They've even had bricks here for 400 and some odd years.

Q. Do you see any analogies, sir, to the way China is now and the way it was then?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] I said yesterday that I felt—I believe this wall now is a symbol that China shows to the rest of the world, not a wall to keep people out. It sort of unifies the country for over 7,000 kilometers.

Visit to Chongwenmen Church

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us what the woman in the church wanted to talk to you about today?

The President. She just kept saying how happy she was I was in the church and how she wished I could come to the little village where she was from. She was very emotional. But as nearly as I can tell, there was nothing specific that she was saying. She kept thanking me for being there and saying that she was glad I was there, and she wished I could come to her village, her home village.

Visit to the Great Wall

Q. What do you think, Mrs. Clinton? What are your impressions?

Mrs. Clinton. Magnificent.

The President. You know, the part—the steep incline you see up there, we were told, is the steepest part of the wall. So if we had a couple of hours, we could walk 10 kilometers, and we'd hit the biggest incline, and we'd all be in very good shape when we finished. Or we'd be finished. [*Laughter*]

Q. Was it a good workout anyway?

The President. It was a good workout. It was great.

Nice cap, Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio].

Q. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:45 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With Students at Beijing University in Beijing, China

June 29, 1998

The President. Thank you. Thank you, President Chen, Chairman Ren, Vice President Chi, Vice Minister Wei. We are delighted to be here today with a very large American delegation, including the First Lady and our daughter, who is a student at Stanford, one of the schools with which Beijing University has a relationship. We have six Members of the United States Congress; the Secretary of State; Secretary of Commerce; the Secretary of Agriculture; the Chairman of our Council of Economic Advisers; Senator Sasser, our Ambassador; the National Security Adviser; and my Chief of Staff, among others. I say that to illustrate the importance that the United States places on our relationship with China.

I would like to begin by congratulating all of you, the students, the faculty, the administrators, on celebrating the centennial year of your university. *Gongxi,* "Beida".

As I'm sure all of you know, this campus was once home to Yenching University which was founded by American missionaries. Many of its wonderful buildings were designed by an American architect. Thousands of American students and professors have come here to study and teach. We feel a special kinship with you.

I am, however, grateful that this day is different in one important respect from another important occasion 79 years ago. In June of 1919, the first president of Yenching University, John Leighton Stuart, was set to deliver the very first commencement address on these very grounds. At the appointed hour, he appeared, but no students appeared. They were all out leading the May 4th Movement for China's political and cultural renewal. When I read this, I hoped that when I walked into the auditorium today, someone would be sitting here. And I thank you for being here, very much.

Over the last 100 years, this university has grown to more than 20,000 students. Your graduates are spread throughout China and around the world. You have built the largest university library in all of Asia. Last year 20 percent of your graduates went abroad to study, including half of your math and science majors. And in this anniversary year, more than a million people in China, Asia, and beyond have logged on to your Web site. At the dawn of a new century, this university is leading China into the future.

I come here today to talk to you, the next generation of China's leaders, about the critical importance to your future of building a strong partnership between China and the United States.

The American people deeply admire China for its thousands of years of contributions to culture and religion, to philosophy and the arts, to science and technology. We remember well our strong partnership in World War II. Now we see China at a moment in history when your glorious past is matched by your present sweeping transformation and the even greater promise of your future.

Just three decades ago, China was virtually shut off from the world. Now, China is a member of more than 1,000 international organizations, enterprises that affect everything from air travel to agricultural development. You have opened your nation to trade and investment on a large scale. Today, 40,000 young Chinese study in the United States, with hundreds of thousands more learning in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

Your social and economic transformation has been even more remarkable, moving from a closed command economic system to a driving, increasingly market-based and driven economy, generating two decades of unprecedented growth, giving people greater freedom to travel within and outside China, to vote in village elections, to own a home, choose a job, attend a better school. As a result, you have lifted literally hundreds of millions of people from poverty. Per capita income has more than doubled in the last decade. Most Chinese people are leading lives they could not have imagined just 20 years ago.

Of course, these changes have also brought disruptions in settled patterns of life and work and have imposed enormous strains on your environment. Once every urban Chinese was guaranteed employment in a state enterprise. Now you must compete in a job market. Once a Chinese worker had only to meet the demands of a central planner in Beijing. Now the global economy means all must match the quality and creativity of the rest of the world. For those who lack the right training and skills and support, this new world can be daunting.

In the short term, good, hardworking people—some, at least, will find themselves unemployed. And as all of you can see, there have been enormous environmental and economic and health care costs to the development pattern and the energy use pattern of the last 20 years, from air pollution to deforestation to acid rain and water shortage.

In the face of these challenges, new systems of training and social security will have to be devised, and new environmental policies and technologies will have to be introduced with the goal of growing your economy while improving the environment. Everything I know about the intelligence, the ingenuity, the enterprise of the Chinese people and everything I have heard these last few days in my discussions with President Jiang, Prime Minister Zhu, and others give me confidence that you will succeed.

As you build a new China, America wants to build a new relationship with you. We want China to be successful, secure, and open, working with us for a more peaceful and prosperous world. I know there are those in China and the United States who question whether closer relations between our countries is a good thing. But everything all of us know about the way the world is changing and the challenges your generation will face tell us that our two nations will be far better off working together than apart.

The late Deng Xiaoping counseled us to seek truth from facts. At the dawn of the new century, the facts are clear. The distance between our two nations, indeed between any nations, is shrinking. Where once an American clipper ship took months to cross from China to the United States, today, technology has made us all virtual neighbors.

From laptops to lasers, from microchips to megabytes, an information revolution is lighting the landscape of human knowledge, bringing us all closer together. Ideas, information, and money cross the planet at the stroke of a computer key, bringing with them extraordinary opportunities to create wealth, to prevent and conquer disease, to foster greater understanding among peoples of different histories and different cultures.

But we also know that this greater openness and faster change mean that problems which start beyond one nation's borders can quickly move inside them: the spread of weapons of mass destruction; the threats of organized crime and drug trafficking, of environmental degradation, and severe economic dislocation. No nation can isolate itself from these problems, and no nation can solve them alone. We, especially the younger generations of China and the United States, must make common cause of our common challenges, so that we can, together, shape a new century of brilliant possibilities.

In the 21st century—your century—China and the United States will face the challenge of security in Asia. On the Korean Peninsula, where once we were adversaries, today, we are working together for a permanent peace and a future freer of nuclear weapons.

On the Indian subcontinent, just as most of the rest of the world is moving away from nuclear danger, India and Pakistan risk sparking a new arms race. We are now pursuing a common strategy to move India and Pakistan away from further testing and toward a dialog to resolve their differences.

In the 21st century, your generation must face the challenge of stopping the spread of deadlier nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. In the wrong hands or the wrong places, these weapons can threaten the peace of nations large and small. Increasingly, China and the United States agree on the importance of stopping proliferation. That is why we are beginning to act in concert to control the world's most dangerous weapons.

In the 21st century, your generation will have to reverse the international tide of crime and drugs. Around the world, organized crime robs people of billions of dollars every year and undermines trust in government. America knows all about the devastation and despair that drugs can bring to schools and neighborhoods. With borders on more than a dozen countries, China has become a crossroad for smugglers of all kinds.

Last year, President Jiang and I asked senior Chinese and American law enforcement officials to step up our cooperation against these predators, to stop money from being laundered, to stop aliens from being cruelly smuggled, to stop currencies from being undermined by counterfeiting. Just this month, our Drug Enforcement Agency opened an office in Beijing, and soon Chinese counter-narcotics experts will be working out of Washington.

In the 21st century, your generation must make it your mission to ensure that today's progress does not come at tomorrow's expense. China's remarkable growth in the last two decades has come with a toxic cost, pollutants that foul the water you drink and the air you breathe. The cost is not only environmental; it is also serious in terms of the health consequences of your people and in terms of the drag on economic growth.

Environmental problems are also increasingly global as well as national. For example, in the near future, if present energy use patterns persist, China will overtake the United States as the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, the gases which are the principal cause of global warming. If the nations of the world do not reduce the gases which are causing global warming, sometime in the next century there is a serious risk of dramatic changes in climate which will change the way we live and the way we work, which could literally bury some island nations under mountains of water and undermine the economic and social fabric of nations.

We must work together. We Americans know from our own experience that it is possible to grow an economy while improving the environment. We must do that together for ourselves and for the world. Building on the work that our Vice President, Al Gore, has done previously with the Chinese Government, President Jiang and I are working together on ways to bring American clean energy technology to help improve air quality and grow the Chinese economy at the same time.

But I will say this again—this is not on my remarks—your generation must do more about this. This is a huge challenge for you, for the American people, and for the future of the world. And it must be addressed at the university level, because political leaders will never be willing to adopt environmental measures if they believe it will lead to large-scale unemployment or more poverty. The evidence is clear; that does not have to happen. You will actually have more rapid economic growth and better paying jobs, leading to higher levels of education and technology if we do this in the proper way. But you and the university, communities in China, the United States, and throughout the world will have to lead the way.

In the 21st century, your generation must also lead the challenge of an international financial system that has no respect for national borders. When stock markets fall in Hong Kong or Jakarta, the effects are no longer local; they are global. The vibrant growth of your own economy is tied closely, therefore, to the restoration of stability and growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

China has steadfastly shouldered its responsibilities to the region and the world in this latest financial crisis, helping to prevent another cycle of dangerous devaluations. We must continue to work together to counter this threat to the global financial system and to the growth and prosperity which should be embracing all of this region.

In the 21st century, your generation will have a remarkable opportunity to bring together the talents of our scientists, doctors, engineers into a shared quest for progress. Already the breakthroughs we have achieved in our areas of joint cooperation—in challenges from dealing with spina bifida to dealing with extreme weather conditions and earthquakes—have proved what we can do together to change the lives of millions of people in China and the United States and around the world. Expanding our cooperation in science and technology can be one of our greatest gifts to the future.

In each of these vital areas that I have mentioned, we can clearly accomplish so much more by walking together rather than standing apart. That is why we should work to see that the productive relationship we now enjoy blossoms into a fuller partnership in the new century.

If that is to happen, it is very important that we understand each other better, that we understand both our common interest and our shared aspirations and our honest differences. I believe the kind of open, direct exchange that President Jiang and I had on Saturday at our press conference, which I know many of you watched on television, can both clarify and narrow our differences, and more important, by allowing people to understand and debate and discuss these things, can give a greater sense of confidence to our people that we can make a better future.

From the windows of the White House, where I live in Washington, DC, the monument to our first President, George Washington, dominates the skyline. It is a very tall obelisk. But very near this large monument there is a small stone which contains these words: ''The United States neither established titles of nobility and royalty, nor created a hereditary system. State affairs are put to the vote of public opinion.''

This created a new political situation, unprecedented from ancient times to the present. How wonderful it is. Those words were not written by an American. They were written by Xu Jiyu, Governor of Fujian Province, inscribed as a gift from the Government of China to our Nation in 1853.

I am very grateful for that gift from China. It goes to the heart of who we are as a people, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the freedom to debate, to dissent, to associate, to worship without interference from the state. These are the ideals that were at the core of our founding over 220 years ago. These are the ideas that led us across our continent and onto the world stage. These are the ideals that Americans cherish today.

As I said in my press conference with President Jiang, we have an ongoing quest ourselves to live up to those ideals. The people who framed our Constitution understood that we would never achieve perfection. They said that the mission of America would always be ''to form a more perfect Union,''—in other words, that we would never be perfect, but we had to keep trying to do better.

The darkest moments in our history have come when we abandoned the effort to do better, when we denied freedom to our people because of their race or their religion, because there were new immigrants or because they held unpopular opinions. The best moments in our history have come when we protected the freedom of people who held unpopular opinion or extended rights enjoyed by the many to the few who had previously been denied them, making, therefore, the promises of our Declaration of Independence and Constitution more than faded words on old parchment.

Today, we do not seek to impose our vision on others, but we are convinced that certain rights are universal, not American rights or European rights or rights for developed nations but the birthrights of people everywhere, now enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the right to be treated with dignity, the right to express one's opinions, to choose one's own leaders, to associate freely with others, and to worship or not, freely, however one chooses.

In the last letter of his life, the author of our Declaration of Independence and our third President, Thomas Jefferson, said then that ''all eyes are opening to the rights of man.'' I believe that in this time, at long last, 172 years after Jefferson wrote those words, all eyes are opening to the rights of men and women everywhere.

Over the past two decades, a rising tide of freedom has lifted the lives of millions around the world, sweeping away failed dictatorial systems in the former Soviet Union, throughout Central Europe, ending a vicious cycle of military coups and civil wars in Latin America, giving more people in Africa the chance to make the most of their hard-won independence. And from the Philippines to South Korea, from Thailand to Mongolia, freedom has reached Asia's shores, powering a surge of growth and productivity.

Economic security also can be an essential element of freedom. It is recognized in the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In China, you have made extraordinary strides in nurturing that liberty and spreading freedom from want, to be a source of strength to your people. Incomes are up, poverty is down; people do have more choices of jobs and the ability to travel, the ability to make a better life. But true freedom includes more than economic freedom. In America, we believe it is a concept which is indivisible.

Over the past 4 days, I have seen freedom in many manifestations in China. I have seen the fresh shoots of democracy growing in the villages of your heartland. I have visited a village that chose its own leaders in free elections. I have also seen the cell phones, the video players, the fax machines carrying ideas, information, and images from all over the world. I've heard people speak their minds, and I have joined people in prayer in the faith of my own choosing. In all these ways, I felt a steady breeze of freedom.

The question is, where do we go from here? How do we work together to be on the right side of history together? More than 50 years ago, Hu Shi, one of your great political thinkers and a teacher at this university, said these words: ''Now some people say to me you must sacrifice your individual freedom so that the nation may be free. But I reply, the struggle for individual freedom is the struggle for the nation's freedom. The struggle for your own character is the struggle for the nation's character.'' We Americans believe Hu Shi was right. We believe and our experience demonstrates that freedom strengthens stability and helps nations to change.

One of our Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, once said, ''Our critics are our friends, for they show us our faults.'' Now, if that is true, there are many days in the United States when the President has more friends than anyone else in America. [*Laughter*] But it is so.

In the world we live in, this global information age, constant improvement and change is necessary to economic opportunity and to national strength. Therefore, the freest possible flow of information, ideas, and opinions and a greater respect for divergent political and religious convictions will actually breed strength and stability going forward.

It is, therefore, profoundly in your interest, and the world's, that young Chinese minds be free to reach the fullness of their potential. That is the message of our time and the

mandate of the new century and the new millennium.

I hope China will more fully embrace this mandate. For all the grandeur of your history, I believe your greatest days are still ahead. Against great odds in the 20th century, China has not only survived, it is moving forward dramatically.

Other ancient cultures failed because they failed to change. China has constantly proven the capacity to change and grow. Now, you must reimagine China again for a new century, and your generation must be at the heart of China's regeneration.

The new century is upon us. All our sights are turned toward the future. Now, your country has known more millennia than the United States has known centuries. Today, however, China is as young as any nation on Earth. This new century can be the dawn of a new China, proud of your ancient greatness, proud of what you are doing, prouder still of the tomorrows to come. It can be a time when the world again looks to China for the vigor of its culture, the freshness of its thinking, the elevation of human dignity that is apparent in its works. It can be a time when the oldest of nations helps to make a new world.

The United States wants to work with you to make that time a reality.

Thank you very much.

Expanding U.S. Understanding of China

Q. Mr. President, I'm very honored to be the first one to raise question. Just as you mentioned in your address, Chinese and American people should join hands and move forward together. And what is most important in this process is for us to have more exchanges.

In our view, since China is opening up in reform, we have had better understanding of the culture, history, and literature of America, and we have also learned a lot about you from the biography. And we have also learned about a lot of American Presidents. And we have also seen the movie *Titanic.* But it seems that the American people's understanding of the Chinese people is not as much as the other way around. Maybe they are only seeing China through several movies, describing the Cultural Revolution or the rural life.

So my question is, as the first President of the United States visiting China in 10 years, what do you plan to do to enhance the real understanding and the respect between our two peoples?

Thank you.

The President. First of all, I think that's a very good point. And one of the reasons that I came here was to try to—because, as you can see, a few people come with me from the news media—I hope that my trip would help to show a full and balanced picture of modern China to the United States, and that by coming here, it would encourage others to come here and others to participate in the life of China.

I see a young man out in the audience who introduced himself to me yesterday as the first American ever to be a law student in China. So I hope we will have many more Americans coming here to study, many more Americans coming here to be tourists, many more Americans coming here to do business. The First Lady this morning and the Secretary of State had a meeting on a legal project. We are doing a lot of projects together with the Chinese to help promote the rule of law. That should bring a lot more people here.

I think there is no easy answer to your question. It's something we have to work at. We just need more people involved and more kinds of contacts. And I think the more we can do that, the better.

Is there another question?

Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, as a Chinese, I'm very interested in the reunification of my motherland. Since 1972, progress has been made on the question of Taiwan question, but we have seen that the Americans repeatedly are selling advanced weapons to Taiwan. And to our great indignation, we have seen that the United States and Japan have renewed the U.S.-Japan security treaty. And according to some Japanese officials, this treaty even includes Taiwan Province of China. So I have to ask, if China were to send its naval facility to Hawaii, and if China were to sign a security treaty with other countries against one

part of the United States, will the United States agree to such an act? Will the American people agree to such an act?

The President. First of all, the United States policy is not an obstacle to the peaceful reunification of China and Taiwan. Our policy is embodied in the three communiques and in the Taiwan Relations Act. Our country recognized China and embraced a ''one China'' policy almost 20 years ago. And I reaffirmed our ''one China'' policy to President Jiang in our meetings.

Now, when the United States and China reached agreement that we would have a ''one China'' policy, we also reached agreement that the reunification would occur by peaceful means, and we have encouraged the cross-strait dialog to achieve that. Our policy is that any weapon sales, therefore, to Taiwan must be for defensive purposes only, and that the country must not believe—China must not believe that we are in any way trying to undermine our own ''one China'' policy. It is our policy. But we do believe it should occur—any reunification should occur peacefully.

Now, on Japan, if you read the security agreement we signed with Japan, I think it will be clear from its terms that the agreement is not directed against any country but rather in support of stability in Asia. We have forces in South Korea that are designed to deter a resumption of the Korean war across the dividing line between the two Koreas. Our forces in Japan are largely designed to help us promote stability anywhere in the Asia-Pacific region on short notice. But I believe that it is not fair to say that either Japan or the United States have a security relationship that is designed to contain China. Indeed, what both countries want is a security partnership with China for the 21st century.

For example, you mentioned NATO, we have expanded NATO in Europe, but we also have made a treaty, an agreement between NATO and Russia, to prove that we are not against Russia anymore. And the most important thing NATO has done in the last 5 years is to work side by side with Russia to end the war in Bosnia. And I predict to you that what you see us doing with China now, working together to try to limit the tension from the Indian and the Pakistani nuclear tests, you will see more and more and more of that in the future. And I think you will see a lot of security cooperation in that area. And we can't see the agreements of today through the mirror of yesterday's conflicts.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, I've very glad to have this opportunity to ask you a question. With a friendly smile you have set foot on the soil of China, and you have come to the campus of ''Beida'', so we are very excited and honored by your presence, for the Chinese people really aspire for the friendship between China and the United States on the basis of equality. As I know that—before your departure from the States, you said that the reason for you to visit China is because China is too important, and engagement is better than containment.

I'd like to ask you whether this sentence is kind of a commitment you made for your visit or do you have any other hidden sayings behind this smile. Do you have any other design to contain China? [*Laughter*]

The President. If I did, I wouldn't mask it behind a smile. [*Laughter*] But I don't. That is, my words mean exactly what they say. We have to make a decision, all of us do, but especially the people who live in large nations with great influence must decide how to define their greatness.

When the Soviet Union went away, Russia had to decide how to define its greatness. Would they attempt to develop the human capacity of the Russian people and work in partnership with their neighbors for a greater future, or would they remember the bad things that happened to them in the past 200 years and think the only way they could be great would be to dominate their neighbors militarily? They chose a forward course. The world is a better place.

The same thing is true with China. You will decide, both in terms of your policies within your country and beyond, what does it mean that China will be a great power in the 21st century? Does it mean that you will have enormous economic success? Does it mean you will have enormous cultural influence? Does it mean that you will be able to play a large role in solving the problems of the world? Or does it mean you will be

able to dominate your neighbors in some form or fashion, whether they like it or not? This is the decision that every great country has to make.

You ask me, do I really want to contain China? The answer is no. The American people have always had a very warm feeling toward China that has been interrupted from time to time when we have had problems. But if you go back through the history of our country, there's always been a feeling on the part of our people that we ought to be close to the Chinese people. And I believe that it would be far better for the people of the United States to have a partnership on equal, respectful terms with China in the 21st century than to have to spend enormous amounts of time and money trying to contain China because we disagree with what's going on beyond our borders. So I do not want that. I want a partnership. I'm not hiding another design behind a smile; it's what I really believe, because I think it's good for the American people, and it's my job to do what's good for them. What's good for them is to have a good relationship with you.

Education/Aspirations for Young People

Q. Mr. President, I'm going to graduate this year, and I'm going to work in Bank of China. Just now, Mr. President, you mentioned the responsibilities of the young generation of the two countries for international security, environment, and the financial stability. I think they are really important. And I think the most important thing is for the young people to be well educated. And I know, Mr. President, you love your daughter very much, and she is now studying at Stanford. So, my question is—several years ago you proposed the concept of knowledge economy, so, my first question is, what do you think the education of higher learning, what kind of role can this play in the future knowledge economy?

And the second question is, what expectations do you have, Mr. President, for the younger generation of our two countries?

The President. Let me answer the knowledge economy question first. And let me answer by telling you what I have tried to do in the United States. I have tried to create a situation in America in which the doors of universities and colleges are open to every young person who has sufficient academic achievement to get in, that there are no financial burdens of any kind. And we have not completely achieved it, but we have made a great deal of progress.

Now, why would I do that? Because I believe that the more advanced an economy becomes, the more important it is to have a higher and higher and higher percentage of people with a university education. Let me just tell you how important it is in the United States. We count our people—every 10 years we do a census and we count the numbers of the American people, and we get all kinds of information on them. In the 1990 census, younger Americans who had a college degree were overwhelmingly likely to get good jobs and have their incomes grow. Younger Americans who had 2 years or more of university were likely to get good jobs and have their incomes grow. Younger Americans who didn't go to university at all were likely to get jobs where their incomes declined and were much more likely to be unemployed.

And the more advanced China's economy becomes, the more that will be true of China, the more you will need very large numbers of people getting university education and technical education. So I think it is very, very important.

Now, let me say one expectation I have for the younger generation of Americans and Chinese that has nothing to do with economics. One of the biggest threats to your future is a world which is dominated not by modern problems but by ancient hatreds. Look around the world, and see how much trouble is being caused by people who dislike each other because of their racial or their religious or their ethnic differences, whether it's in Bosnia or the conflict between the Indians and the Pakistanis or in the Middle East or the tribal continents in Africa.

You look all over the world, you see these kind of problems. Young people are more open to others who are different, more interested in people who are different. And I hope young people in China and young people in America that have a good education will be a strong voice in the world against giving in to this sort of hating people or looking down on them simply because they're different.

Thank you. [*Applause*]

U.S. Domestic Human Rights Issues

Q. Mr. President, with regard to the question of democracy, human rights, and freedom, actually this is an issue of great interest to both the Chinese and American peoples. But to be honest, our two countries have some differences over these issues. In your address just now you made a very proud review and retrospection of the history of the American democracy in human rights. And you have also made some suggestions for China. Of course, for the sincere suggestions, we welcome. But I think I recall one saying, that is we should have both criticism and self-criticism.

So now I'd like to ask you a question. Do you think that in the United States today, there are also some problems in the area of democracy, freedom, and human rights, and what your Government has done in improving the situation?

The President. I do, and first of all, let me say, I never raise this question overseas in any country, not just China, without acknowledging first, that our country has had terrible problems in this area—keep in mind, slavery was legal in America for many years—and that we are still not perfect. I always say that, because I don't think it's right for any person to claim that he or she lives in a perfect country. We're all struggling toward ideals to live a better life. So I agree with the general point you made.

Now, I will give you two examples. We still have some instances of discrimination in America, in housing or employment or other areas based on race. And we have a system set up to deal with it, but we have not totally eliminated it. And in the last year, I have been engaging the American people in a conversation on this subject, and we have tried to identify the things that Government should do, the things that the American people should do either through the local government or through other organizations, and the attitudes that should change the minds and hearts of the American people. So that's one example.

Now, let me give you another example. We have—when I ran for President in 1992, I was in a hotel in New York City, and an American immigrant from Greece came up to me, and he said, ''My son is 10 years old, and he studies the election in school, and he says I should vote for you.'' But he said, ''If I vote for you, I want you to make my son free, because my son is not really free.'' So I asked this man, ''What do you mean?'' And he said, ''Well, the crime is so high in my neighborhood, there are so many guns and gangs, that my son does not feel that he—I can't let him walk to school by himself or go across the street to play in the park. So if I vote for you, I want you to make my son free.''

I think that's important, because, you see, in America, we tend to view freedom as the freedom from Government abuse or from Government control. That is our heritage. Our Founders came here to escape the monarchy in England. But sometimes freedom requires affirmative steps by Government to give everyone an equal opportunity to have an education and make a decent living and to preserve a lawful environment. So I work very hard to try to bring the crime rate down in America, and it's now lower than it has been at any time in 25 years, which means that more of our children are free. But the crime rate is still high; there is still too much violence.

So we Americans need to be sensitive not only to preserve the freedoms that we hold dear but also to create an environment in which people can build a truly good and free life.

That's a good question.

Freedom

Q. Mr. President, you are warmly welcome to ''Beida''. You mentioned a sentence by Mr. Xu Jiyu, but our former President once said that when the great moral is in practice, the morals, they will not contradict each other. And I don't think the individual freedom and the collective freedom will contradict each other. But in China the prosperous development of the nation is actually the free choice of our people, and it's also the result of their efforts. So I think that freedom, real freedom, should mean for the people to freely choose the way of life they like and also to develop. And I also think that only those who can really respect the freedom of others can

really say that they understand what freedom means.

I don't know whether you agree with me or not.

The President. First of all, if you believe in freedom, you have to respect the freedom of others to make another choice. And even societies that have rather radical views of individual freedom recognize limits on that freedom when it interferes with preserving other people's rights.

For example, there's one of our famous court cases which says we have freedom of speech, but no one should be free to shout the word ''fire'' in a crowded movie theater where there is no fire and cause people to stampede over each other. There's another famous court decision that says my freedom ends where the other person's nose begins, meaning that you don't have the freedom to hit someone else.

So I agree with that. People have the freedom to choose and you have to respect other people's freedom, and they have the right to make decisions that are different from yours. And there will never be a time when our systems and our cultures and our choices will be completely identical. That's one of the things that makes life interesting.

U.S. Economic Expansion/Protest Demonstrations

Q. Mr. President, I have two questions. The first question is, the U.S. economy has been growing for more than 18 months, so I'd like to ask, apart from your personal contribution to the United States, what other factors do you think important for the success of the U.S. economy? Maybe they can serve as good reference for China.

The second question is, when President Jiang Zemin visited Harvard University last year, there were a lot of students outside the hall demonstrating, so I'd like you, Mr. President, if you are in Beijing University and if there were a lot of students outside protesting and demonstrating, what feeling would you have?

The President. Well, first of all, on the United States economy, I believe that the principal role of Government policy since I've been President was to, first of all, get our big Government deficit—we had a huge annual deficit in spending—we got that under control. We're about to have the first balanced budget in 30 years. That drove interest rates down and freed up a lot of money to be invested in creating jobs in the private sector. Then the second thing we did was to expand trade a lot, so we began to sell a lot more around the world than we had before. And the third thing we did was to attempt to invest more in our people, in research, development, technology, and education.

Now, in addition to that, however, a lot of the credit here goes to the American people themselves. We have a very sophisticated business community; they were investing money in new technologies and in new markets and in training people. We have an environment where it's quite easy for people to start a business, and perhaps this is the area that might be most helpful to China.

I know that my wife has done a lot of work around the world in villages, trying to get credit to villagers so they could borrow money to start their own businesses, to try to take advantage of some skill they have. And we have seen this system work even in the poorest places in Africa and Latin America, where opportunity takes off.

So we have tried to make it easy in America for people to start a business, to expand a business, and to do business. And then we have also tried very, very hard to get new opportunities into areas where there were none before. And all these things together—but especially, I give most of the credit to the people of my country. After all, a person in my position, we're supposed to have correct policies so that we create a framework within which the American people then create the future. And I think that is basically what has happened.

Now, you asked me an interesting question. Actually, I have been demonstrated against quite a lot in the United States. I told President Jiang when he was there, I was glad they demonstrated against him, so I didn't feel so lonely. [*Laughter*]

I'll give you a serious answer. If there were a lot of people demonstrating against me outside, suppose they were demonstrating over the question that the first gentleman asked

me. Suppose they said, ''Oh, President Clinton is trying to interfere with the peaceful reunification of China and Taiwan, and he shouldn't be selling them any weapons whatever.'' Well, I would try to find out what they were demonstrating against, and then I would ask my host if they minded if I would go over and talk to them, or if they would mind if one or two people from the group of demonstrators could be brought to see me, and they could say what is on their minds, and I could answer.

Remember what I said before about what Benjamin Franklin said, ''Our critics are our friends, for they show us our faults.'' You have asked me some very good questions today that have an element of criticism in them. They have been very helpful to me. They have helped me to understand how what I say is perceived by others, not just in China but around the world. They have helped me to focus on what I can do to be a more effective President for my people and for the things we believe in.

And so I feel very good that we have had this interchange. And from my point of view, the questions were far more important than my speech. I never learn anything when I'm talking; I only learn things when I'm listening.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Bangong Lou auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Chen Jiaer, president, Ren Yansheng, university council chairman, and Chi Huisheng, vice president, Beijing University; President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji of China. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Beijing University Library in Beijing

June 29, 1998

Thank you very much. Well, first, let me thank all of you for coming out to see us on such a nice, warm day. [*Laughter*] I thank President Chen, Vice President Ren, Professor Chi, Senator Akaka and the Members of Congress who are here, and all the members of the university community, who have made my wife and our daughter and our whole delegation feel so very welcome today. Thank you very much.

Now, when Senator Akaka said that some people thought of ''Beida'' as the Harvard of China—[*laughter*]—all of us Americans who did not go to Harvard were thinking, perhaps, Harvard was the ''Beida'' of the United States.

You know, political leaders of my generation talk a lot about the future and the 21st century, but it is you, the students who are here, who will live in it and who must build it. A child born today will not even remember the 20th century. Indeed, a child born today may think of people like me as relics of an ancient dynasty. [*Laughter*] Americans—including that one—[*laughter*]—want to work with China to help build this future, a future of security and prosperity, a future in which we clean up the world's environment instead of destroy it, a future in which we advance education and dignity and freedom for all people.

As a small token of our respect and in honor of your centennial, we are donating over 500 reference books to the library of ''Beida''. [*Applause*] Thank you. *Xie xie.* [*Laughter*] Through the U.S. Information Agency, we have selected some of the best volumes in our history and literature, along with encyclopedias and dictionaries on every subject related to the United States. And my wife and I have added personally two books which we wrote: her book, ''It Takes A Village,'' and mine, ''Between Hope and History.'' And I'd like to present them to the President at this moment.

Now, if you're trying to decide which one to read first, I should tell you that in America her book sold a lot more copies than mine did. [*Laughter*]

We are proud of our historic relationship with this university. I hope these books will help to further our friendship for another generation. I hope, too, that more and more Americans will come to China to study and more and more young Chinese will go to America to study.

Every day I must be preoccupied with the world's problems, but I believe a lot of the world's problems would be quickly solved if the world's young people were permitted to live together and learn together and serve