

(Translation)

**Galvanizing Our Peoples into a Strong Force  
For the Cause of China-U.S. Friendship**

Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping  
President of the People's Republic of China  
At Welcome Dinner by Friendly Organizations in the United States

San Francisco, November 15, 2023

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to meet with you, friends from across the American society, in San Francisco to renew our friendship and strengthen our bond. My first visit to the United States in 1985 started from San Francisco, which formed my first impression of this country. Today I still keep a photo of me in front of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Before going further, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the U.S.-China Business Council, the Asia Society, the Council on Foreign Relations, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other friendly organizations for hosting this event. I also want to express my warm greetings to all American friends who have long committed to growing China-U.S. relations and my best wishes to the friendly American people.

San Francisco has borne witness to exchanges between the Chinese and American peoples for over a century. A hundred and fifty-eight years ago, a large number of Chinese workers came all the way to the United States to build the first transcontinental railroad, and established in San Francisco the oldest Chinatown in the Western Hemisphere. From here, China and the United States have made many achievements—USD 760

billion of annual bilateral trade and over USD 260 billion of two-way investment, 284 pairs of sister provinces/states and sister cities, and over 300 scheduled flights every week and over five million travels every year at peak time. These extraordinary accomplishments were made jointly by our peoples accounting for nearly one quarter of the global population.

San Francisco has also borne witness to the efforts by China and the United States in building a better world. Seventy-eight years ago, after jointly defeating fascism and militarism, our two countries initiated together with others the San Francisco Conference, which helped found the United Nations, and China was the first country to sign the U.N. Charter. Starting from San Francisco, the postwar international order was established. Over 100 countries have gained independence one after another. Several billion people have eventually shaken off poverty. The forces for world peace, development and progress have grown stronger. This has been the main fruit jointly achieved by people of all countries and the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

**The foundation of China-U.S. relations was laid by our peoples.** During World War II, our two countries fought side by side for peace and justice. Headed by General Claire Lee Chennault, a group of American volunteers, known as the Flying Tigers, went to the battlefield in China. They not only engaged in direct combats fighting Japanese aggressors, but also created “The Hump” airlift to transport much-needed supplies to China. More than 1,000 Chinese and American airmen lost their lives on this air route. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States sent 16 B-25 bombers on an air raid to Japan in 1942. Running low on fuel after completing their mission, Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle and his fellow pilots parachuted in China. They were rescued by Chinese troops and local civilians. But some 250,000 civilian Chinese were killed by Japanese aggressors in retaliation.

The Chinese people never forget the Flying Tigers. We built a Flying

Tigers museum in Chongqing, and invited over 1,000 Flying Tigers veterans and their families to visit China. I have kept in touch with some of them through letters. Most recently, 103-year-old Harry Moyer and 98-year-old Mel McMullen, both Flying Tigers veterans, went back to China. They visited the Great Wall, and were warmly received by the Chinese people.

The American people, on their part, always remember the Chinese who risked their lives to save American pilots. Offspring of those American pilots often visit the Doolittle Raid Memorial Hall in Quzhou of Zhejiang Province to pay tribute to the Chinese people for their heroic and valorous efforts. These stories fill me with firm confidence that the friendship between our two peoples, which has stood the test of blood and fire, will be passed on from generation to generation.

**The door of China-U.S. relations was opened by our peoples.** For 22 years, there were estrangement and antagonism between our two countries. But the trend of the times brought us together, converging interests enabled us to rise above differences, and the people's longing broke the ice between the two countries. In 1971, the U.S. table tennis team visited Beijing—a small ball moved the globe. Not long after that, Mr. Mike Mansfield led the first U.S. Congressional delegation to China. This was followed by the first governors' delegation including Iowa Governor Robert Ray and then many business delegations, forming waves of friendly exchanges.

This year, after the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, I have respectively met in Beijing with Dr. Henry Kissinger, Mr. Bill Gates, Senator Chuck Schumer and his Senate colleagues, and Governor Gavin Newsom. I told them that the hope of the China-U.S. relationship lies in the people, its foundation is in our societies, its future depends on the youth, and its vitality comes from exchanges at subnational levels. I welcome more U.S. governors, Congressional members, and people from all walks of life to visit China.

**The stories of China-U.S. relations are written by our peoples.** During

my first visit to the United States, I stayed at the Dvorchaks in Iowa. I still remember their address—2911 Bonnie Drive. That was my first face-to-face contact with the Americans. The days I spent with them are unforgettable. For me, they represent America. I have found that although our two countries are different in history, culture and social system and have embarked on different development paths, our two peoples are both kind, friendly, hardworking and down-to-earth. We both love our countries, our families and our lives, and we both are friendly toward each other and are interested in each other. It is the convergence of many streams of goodwill and friendship that has created a strong current surging across the vast Pacific Ocean; it is the reaching out to each other by our peoples that has time and again brought China-U.S. relations from a low ebb back onto the right track. I am convinced that once opened, the door of China-U.S. relations cannot be shut again. Once started, the cause of China-U.S. friendship cannot be derailed halfway. The tree of our peoples' friendship has grown tall and strong; and it can surely withstand the assault of any wind or storm.

**The future of China-U.S. relations will be created by our peoples.** The more difficulties there are, the greater the need for us to forge a closer bond between our peoples and to open our hearts to each other, and more people need to speak up for the relationship. We should build more bridges and pave more roads for people-to-people interactions. We must not erect barriers or create a chilling effect.

Today, President Biden and I reached important consensus. Our two countries will roll out more measures to facilitate travels and promote people-to-people exchanges, including increasing direct passenger flights, holding a high-level dialogue on tourism, and streamlining visa application procedures. We hope that our two peoples will make more visits, contacts and exchanges and write new stories of friendship in the new era. I also hope that California and San Francisco will continue to take the lead on the journey of growing China-U.S. friendship!

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

We are in an era of challenges and changes. It is also an era of hope. The world needs China and the United States to work together for a better future. We, the largest developing country and the largest developed country, must handle our relations well. In a world of changes and chaos, it is ever more important for us to have the mind, assume the vision, shoulder the responsibility, and play the role that come along with our status as major countries.

I have always had one question on my mind: How to steer the giant ship of China-U.S. relations clear of hidden rocks and shoals, navigate it through storms and waves without getting disoriented, losing speed or even having a collision?

In this respect, the number one question for us is: are we adversaries, or partners? This is the fundamental and overarching issue. The logic is quite simple. If one sees the other side as a primary competitor, the most consequential geopolitical challenge and a pacing threat, it will only lead to misinformed policy making, misguided actions, and unwanted results. China is ready to be a partner and friend of the United States. The fundamental principles that we follow in handling China-U.S. relations are mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation.

Just as mutual respect is a basic code of behavior for individuals, it is fundamental for China-U.S. relations. The United States is unique in its history, culture and geographical position, which have shaped its distinct development path and social system. We fully respect all this. The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been found under the guidance of the theory of scientific socialism, and is rooted in the tradition of the Chinese civilization with an uninterrupted history of more than 5,000 years. We are proud of our choice, just as you are proud of yours. Our paths are different, but both are the choice by our peoples, and both lead to the realization of the common values of humanity. They should be both respected.

Peaceful coexistence is a basic norm for international relations, and is

even more of a baseline that China and the United States should hold on to as two major countries. It is wrong to view China, which is committed to peaceful development, as a threat and thus play a zero-sum game against it. China never bets against the United States, and never interferes in its internal affairs. China has no intention to challenge the United States or to unseat it. Instead, we will be glad to see a confident, open, ever-growing and prosperous United States. Likewise, the United States should not bet against China, or interfere in China's internal affairs. It should instead welcome a peaceful, stable and prosperous China.

Win-win cooperation is the trend of the times, and it is also an inherent property of China-U.S. relations. China is pursuing high-quality development, and the United States is revitalizing its economy. There is plenty of room for our cooperation, and we are fully able to help each other succeed and achieve win-win outcomes.

The Belt and Road Initiative as well as the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) proposed by China are open to all countries at all times including the United States. China is also ready to participate in U.S.-proposed multilateral cooperation initiatives. This morning, President Biden and I agreed to promote dialogue and cooperation, in the spirit of mutual respect, in areas including diplomacy, economy and trade, people-to-people exchange, education, science and technology, agriculture, military, law enforcement, and artificial intelligence. We agreed to make the cooperation list longer and the pie of cooperation bigger. I would like to let you know that China sympathizes deeply with the American people, especially the young, for the sufferings that Fentanyl has inflicted upon them. President Biden and I have agreed to set up a working group on counternarcotics to further our cooperation and help the United States tackle drug abuse. I also wish to announce here that to increase exchanges between our peoples, especially between the youth, China is ready to invite 50,000 young Americans to China on exchange and study programs in the next five years.

Recently, the three pandas at Smithsonian's National Zoo in Washington

D.C. have returned to China. I was told that many American people, especially children, were really reluctant to say goodbye to the pandas, and went to the zoo to see them off. I also learned that the San Diego Zoo and the Californians very much look forward to welcoming pandas back. Pandas have long been envoys of friendship between the Chinese and American peoples. We are ready to continue our cooperation with the United States on panda conservation, and do our best to meet the wishes of the Californians so as to deepen the friendly ties between our two peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

China is the largest developing country in the world. The Chinese people long for better jobs, better lives, and better education for their children. It is what the 1.4 billion Chinese hold dear to their hearts. The Communist Party of China (CPC) is committed to working for the people, and our people's expectation for a better life is our goal. This means we must work hard to secure their support. Thanks to a century of exploration and struggle, we have found the development path that suits us. We are now advancing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization.

**We are committed to striving in unity to achieve modernization for all Chinese.** A large population is a fundamental aspect of China's reality. Our achievements, however great, would be very small when divided by 1.4 billion. But a problem, however small, would be huge when multiplied by 1.4 billion. This is a unique challenge for a country of our size. In the meantime, big also means strength. The leadership of the CPC, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the endorsement and support of the people are our greatest strengths. China is both a super-large economy and a super-large market. Not long ago the sixth China International Import Expo was held, attracting over 3,400 business exhibitors from 128 countries including the United States. The exhibition area of American companies has been the largest for six consecutive years at the Expo. Modernization for 1.4 billion Chinese is a huge opportunity



that China provides to the world.

**We are committed to prosperity for all to deliver a better life for each and every Chinese.** To eliminate poverty is the millennia-old dream of the Chinese nation, and prosperity for all is the longing of all Chinese. Before I turned 16, I was in a village in northern Shaanxi Province, where I lived and farmed with villagers, and I knew about their worries and needs. Now half a century on, I always feel confident and strong when staying with the people. Serving the people selflessly and living up to their expectations is my lifelong commitment. When I became General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee and President of the People's Republic of China, 100 million people were still living below the poverty line set by the United Nations. Thanks to eight years of tenacious efforts, we lifted them all out of poverty. We realized the poverty reduction goal of the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 10 years ahead of schedule. In the process, over 1,800 CPC members lost their lives in the line of duty.

Our goal is not to have just a few wealthy people, but to realize common prosperity for all. Employment, education, medical services, child care, elderly care, housing, the environment and the like are real issues important to people's daily life and close to their heart. They are being steadily integrated into our top-level plans for national development, thus ever increasing the sense of fulfillment, happiness and security of our people. We will continue to promote high-quality development and deliver the benefits of modernization to all. This is the CPC's founding mission and the pledge we have made to the people. It will surely be realized with the support of the people.

**We are committed to well-rounded development to achieve both material and cultural-ethical advancement for the people.** Our forefathers observed that "When people are well-fed and well-clad, they will have a keen sense of honor and shame." Material shortage is not socialism, nor is cultural-ethical impoverishment. Chinese modernization is people-centered. An important goal of Chinese modernization is to continue increasing the country's economic strength and improving the



people's living standards, and at the same time, enriching the people's cultural lives, enhancing civility throughout society and promoting well-rounded development of the person. The purpose of the Global Civilization Initiative I proposed is to urge the international community to address the imbalance between material and cultural advancement and jointly promote continued progress of human civilization.

**We are committed to sustainable development to achieve harmony between man and nature.** The belief that humans are an integral part of nature and need to follow nature's course is a distinctive feature of traditional Chinese culture. We live in the same global village, and we possibly won't find another inhabitable planet in our lifetime. As an English saying goes, "We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children." When I was Governor of Fujian Province in 2002, I called for turning Fujian into the first ecological province in China. Later when I worked in Zhejiang Province in 2005, I said that clear waters and green mountains are just as valuable as gold and silver. Today, this view has become a consensus of all the Chinese people. China now has close to half of the world's installed photovoltaic capacity. Over half of the world's new energy vehicles run on roads in China, and China contributes one-fourth of increased area of afforestation in the world. We will strive to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. We have made the pledge, and we will honor it.

**We are committed to peaceful development to build a community with a shared future for mankind.** Peace, amity and harmony are values embedded in Chinese civilization. Aggression and expansion are not in our genes. The Chinese people have bitter and deep memories of the turmoils and sufferings inflicted upon them in modern times. I often say that what the Chinese people oppose is war, what they want is stability, and what they hope for is enduring world peace. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation cannot be achieved without a peaceful and stable international environment. In pursuing modernization, we will never revert to the beaten path of war, colonization, plundering or coercion.

Throughout the 70 years and more since the founding of the People's Republic, China has not provoked a conflict or war, or occupied a single inch of foreign land. China is the only major country that has written peaceful development into the Constitution of the country and the Constitution of the governing party, thus making peaceful development a commitment of the nation. It benefits from and safeguards the current international order. We remain firm in safeguarding the international system with the U.N. at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. Whatever stage of development it may reach, China will never pursue hegemony or expansion, and will never impose its will on others. China does not seek spheres of influence, and will not fight a cold war or a hot war with anyone. China will remain committed to dialogue and oppose confrontation, and build partnerships instead of alliances. It will continue to pursue a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. The modernization we are pursuing is not for China alone. We are ready to work with all countries to advance global modernization featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity, and to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends,

The passage of time is like a surging river—much is washed away, but the most valuable stays. No matter how the global landscape evolves, the historical trend of peaceful coexistence between China and the United States will not change. The ultimate wish of our two peoples for exchanges and cooperation will not change. The expectations of the whole world for a steadily growing China-U.S. relationship will not change. For any great cause to succeed, it must take root in the people, gain strength from the people, and be accomplished by the people. Growing China-U.S. friendship is such a great cause. Let us galvanize the Chinese and American peoples into a strong force to renew China-U.S. friendship, advance China-U.S. relations, and make even greater contributions to world peace and development!