



EMBASSY OF THE
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**Remarks by Ambassador Cui Tiankai at the International
Symposium to Commemorate the 40th Anniversary of
Establishment of China-US Diplomatic Relations**

Atlanta

January 18, 2019

President Jimmy Carter,

Madam Li Xiaolin,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking President Carter, the Carter Center, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Institute of American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, for organizing this Symposium to commemorate the 40th anniversary of China-US diplomatic

relations. My sincere thanks also go to all participants here for your precious contribution to the development of the relations.

Forty years ago, China and the US established diplomatic ties. Almost in the same period, China launched its reform and opening-up. Over the past 40 years, both countries and our relations have developed by leaps and bounds, delivering huge benefits to the people of our two countries and the whole world. Just as President Carter wrote in his recent article in the Washington Post: “The 40th anniversary of this relationship is a testament to the ability of countries with different histories, cultures and political systems to work together for the greater good. ”

As Confucius famously said and is quoted on many occasions, “At forty I had no doubts ” . However, while we are commemorating the 40th anniversary, we cannot but notice some irrational doubts and myths about our relations.

One myth claims that the US policy toward China in the last forty years has failed, as China has not copied the American model in its political and economic systems. Obviously, people holding this view have no idea why we established diplomatic relations in the first place. It is not to remodel one side after the other; it is not to remove all distinctions between our two countries. At least China never has the slightest idea of transforming the US, and not a single US administration so far has formally taken changing China ’ s social system, development path or ideology as its official policy. Forty years ago it was our common interests and responsibilities that brought us together, and it is still the same that have enabled our relationship to continue to grow and expand today.

Another myth is that China has been taking advantage of the US. In fact, China-US relations have always been mutually beneficial. Our trade volume, for instance, has grown from less than 2.5 billion dollars in 1979 to 633.5 billion dollars last year. According to the latest report by AmCham China, 74% of its member companies plan to expand their investment in China. I don ’ t think any sensible American businessmen will keep their presence in China if there is nothing for them to gain. And I don ’ t think our business relations could have developed to such depths and breadths with only one side ripping off the other.

If this is not enough, please look at these figures: America ’ s GDP soared from 2.63 trillion dollars 40 years ago to 19.36 trillion dollars in 2017, while China ’ s GDP in 2017 was 12.2 trillion dollars. It means that the US economy has grown

over the years by a greater increment than the total annual GDP of China. There is no evidence that the US is on the losing side in its relations with China; what we have is nothing but a win-win scenario.

In fact, not only our two countries, but the entire region and the world have benefited enormously from our ties. Over the past 40 years, the Asia-Pacific has enjoyed greater stability and better prospects for peace and is now a powerhouse of the world economic growth. Largely thanks to the cooperation of our two countries, the international community has not only overcome the 2008 international financial crisis, but also made good progress in improving global economic governance.

Facts have proved that cooperation is in the interests of both countries. We have no better option than cooperation. Therefore, we should not be misled by those ill-founded myths. What we need is an objective perspective of where we were from, a keen idea of where we stand and a clear faith in where we are going.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world is undergoing tremendous changes. The people of our two countries and the whole world are looking to us to do more for the shared interests of mankind, and it has never been so important for China and the US to work together. In light of this, it is necessary for us to foster a clear framework for our relations of the next 40 years or even longer. At their meeting in Argentina on December 1st last year, President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump agreed to pursue a China-US relationship based on coordination, cooperation and stability. This has charted the course for the future development of our relations.

We need to strengthen coordination so as to enhance mutual trust and avoid strategic miscalculations.

Ties between our two countries and two peoples have grown extensively over the last four decades. Yet there is still pressing need for better mutual understanding between us, especially with regard to strategic intentions. And the consequences of miscalculations resulting from misunderstanding and misinterpretation could be much more serious than ever before.

As China is seen as a “ rising power ” vis-a-vis the United States as the established power, there is clearly more misunderstanding and thus unfounded

worries about China. Much of this is due to the lack of understanding of China's history and culture. If people learn more about the history of the Chinese civilization, both over thousands of years and in the last two centuries, if they learn more about what the People's Republic has striven for, in the 40 years of reform and opening-up as well as in the entire period of 70 years since its founding, they will have a much better understanding of why China is seeking modernization and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, why China believes that the key to its success is reform and opening-up and why China is committed to peaceful development of itself and joint efforts with other countries for a community of nations with a shared future.

Such understanding and trust can be achieved through more effective communication and coordination. When this is done, the possibilities of miscalculation will be greatly reduced. Of course some self-claimed strategists may still refuse to face the realities. They may still try to sell conspiracy theories of various kinds to the world, perhaps because they themselves are true conspirators.

We need to promote cooperation so as to expand common interests and avoid vicious rivalry.

Having applauded what we have achieved over the past four decades, we need to recognize that we still have a long way to go and so much potential to tap in our cooperation. We will continue to have problems between us. But the best solution to problems is through even closer cooperation rather than disengagement or the so-called "decoupling". Now the two sides are working together on the economic and trade consultations in accordance with the agreement of the two presidents. We look forward to hearing good news from them.

The concept of competition is much talked about nowadays as people examine the relationship. Originally "competition" is not a bad word in both the Chinese and English languages. But now too much has been read into it. Some people believe that any competition is of strategic nature and can only be a zero-sum game, that competitors are by definition rivals and adversaries and that there should be a predetermined winner in competition and that winner shall take all. This is a gross distortion of the spirit of fair competition and should be firmly rejected in our relations.

We need to maintain stability through mutual respect and proper management of differences.

We should respect each other ' s independent choice of social system and developing path, and accommodate each other ' s core interests and concerns. Among those, the Taiwan issue is the most important and sensitive issue for China-US relations. The one-China policy and the basic principles of the three China-US joint communiqués remain the political foundation for the bilateral relations. In his recent speech to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, President Xi Jinping reiterated China ' s determination to achieve national reunification and the opposition to any external interference. Future stability of China-US relations will no doubt hinge on how this red line is upheld.

Stability also requires steadiness in our handling of this comprehensive and complex relationship. We should never lose sight of the greater good of world peace and prosperity as our goals. We should always bear in mind the long-term interests of our two peoples. We should guard against the interference of narrowly-defined “ political correctness ” . No noble cause is ever served by inciting and spreading hatred. No great power ' s foreign policy should be driven by fear and suspicion. Indeed, history has proven that no such attempt could succeed in the long-run.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the early days of reform and opening-up, Mr. Deng Xiaoping called for “ emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts ” . I believe that his words can also apply to today ' s China-US relations. Standing at another crossroads of history, we have upon us the heavy responsibility to ensure the sound and steady growth of our relations. If we compare the past 40 years to a test, then we have delivered impressive scores to both our peoples and the world. And now in this new test we need more than ever before to “ emancipate the mind and seek truth from facts ” . Let's work even harder to get another A+ on our score report.

Thank you very much.

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Your comments are welcome.