|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Nina Henderson: | Good afternoon, everyone! It's my distinct pleasure to introduce the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in New York. Ambassador Zhang. However, I also want to tell you when we were sitting next to each other at luncheon that the ambassador has much more than New York. She covers six states and the largest population in media markets in the United States, so she has a far flung responsibility. |
|  | In addition, the consulate here has over 200 people, so it's one of the largest in New York for this territory. A little background on Ambassador Zhang. She has deep experience in multilateral and bilateral diplomacy. She has served as ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Belgium and Indonesia. Her previous experiences have also included working for the United Nations, both in New York and in Geneva. |
|  | She has been political counselor in the Chinese Permanent Mission to the United Nations, and also Director General of the Department for Chinese Diplomatic Missions Abroad in Beijing. Interestingly as well Ambassador Zhang has been the face of China for six years when she was the spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. She provided over a thousand press conferences and joined in many high level delegations traveling around the world. |
|  | She is a senior spokesperson and a senior diplomat on behalf of China and she is well positioned to provide great insights to us on China as she has been doing for many years. Ambassador, would you like to come to the podium? |
| Zhang Qiyue: | Thank you Nina, and thank you Noel for this invitation, and thank you for placing that confidence in me for the fact that you think that my speech can compete with a good dessert. Distinguished members of the Foreign Policy Association, Distinguished business leaders, students, friends and excellencies. It's really a great honor to speak before such a distinguished audience. |
|  | This year, marks the 45th Anniversary of the Normalization of the U.S.-China relations. It all started with President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger, their historical visit to China in 1972. The famous the Shanghai Communiqué issued at the end of the visit, marked a new beginning of our relationship which led to the establishment of the diplomatic relations seven years later. |
|  | This event that was 45 years ago actually transformed the world, transformed international relations, and also changed the course of my personal life. Some of you probably have heard that I came to this country in 1974, exactly to this city to study. Actually that I think sowed the seeds for our diplomatic career for me. |
|  | If you look at from a wider perspective, I think the fact that my government decided to send some students to the United States at that early stage was part of the overall preparation for China to return to the international scene so to speak, and in anticipation of the robust relations between our two countries. So much has taken place within the short span of 45 years. |
|  | Today, China has become the number one trading partner for the United States, and China and the U.S. are closely intertwined and highly interdependent. Last year, our trade volume reached 520 billion U.S. dollars in total. The two countries are among each other's top investment destinations. |
|  | Today, more than five million people traveled between our two countries, that was the figure for last year, and over 300,000 Chinese students are currently studying in the United States and out of this 300,000 one-third is in my area of responsibility. |
|  | You see that I have a big job to do, and it is calculated that there is actually a flight a direct flight between our two countries every 15 minutes. If you go to the airport, you see that there are many, many direct flights going to China today. The development of our relations have really outperformed even the most optimistic predictions. |
|  | However, in my daily work as a Consul General I must admit that once in a while I feel frustrated that there is still so much misunderstanding about China. In some quarters, there is even deep seated distrust. The gap between what China is and how it is portrayed here is so wide. |
|  | It seems that when it comes to China there is very much information but still very little knowledge. There is so much awareness but so little understanding. I see some of you nodding. I'm glad that you agree with me. Explaining about China seems to be a job impossible because on any given location you can only hope to present a few facts about China. |
|  | Thus, contributing to the incomplete picture of China. Today, I do not pretend that I can give you a complete picture because I don't think anyone can, but I just wanted to share with you a few observations of China. In an attempt to inform though in a very simple simplistic way where China came from, why China is where it is today, and which way it is heading. |
|  | Hope they will be some food for thought or more precisely some thoughts to go with your food or your dessert. First, China is not just a simple country, it comes from a time honored civilization of the world's ancient civilizations the Chinese civilization is the only one that has spanned over 5,000 years and continued uninterrupted to this day. |
|  | The Chinese characters, the Chinese words invented by our ancestors several thousand years ago are still used today, so we are so blessed that even today weeks can still read the minds of our ancestors from 2,000 years ago. Over 2,000 years ago, China produced the great thinkers such as Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Zhuangzi to name just a few who explored a wide range of topics from the universe to the earth and foments relations with nature to relations among human beings. |
|  | They have laid the foundation for social norms and values, putting emphasis on family, harmony, integrity and kindness. These teachings and values have been carried on and still have a profound impact on present day China on people's way of thinking, on people's way of life, and on China's outlook of the world. |
|  | Second, China has experienced extreme hardship and suffering for nearly 200 years before the founding of the People's Republic of China. For several thousand years before the industrial revolution, before the industrial revolution of the west, China had been leading the world in economic and cultural development. |
|  | However, emperors of the 18th and 19th Centuries obsessed with their own sense of abundance and superiority, chose to close the door and isolate itself. China was subdued to a semi-feudal and later semi-colonial society as a result of incessant foreign invasions. Thereafter, China experienced the great social turmoil and these people had to lead a life of extreme destitution and great sacrifices on the part of the Chinese people were made. |
|  | Only in 1949 when new China was founded did the Chinese people take their destiny back into their own hands. However, the memory of foreign invasion and bullying war and hunger has never been erased from the mind of the Chinese people. I think that probably explain why we cherish so dearly the life we lead today and the peace we enjoy today, and that also explain why the people work so hard today. |
|  | Third, China has worked out a system suited to its own situations, after the imperial monarchy was overthrown in the early 20th Century. China experimented with all forms of governing, namely constitutional monarchy, imperial restoration, parliament terrorism, and multi-party system. We actually tried all of these probably you have not heard many of these stories but we tried each and every one of these form of governing. Yet, nothing really worked. |
|  | Finally, China took on the path of socialism and in this process we had successful experiences and also paid a heavy price for some serious mistakes. It was only after the reform and opening up, the policy launched by [Mr. Dan's 00:11:02] helping in 1978. Next year will be the 40th anniversary of China's policy of opening up and reform. |
|  | That we embarked on the path of development that suited to our situations and brought great vitality to the society and to the development. This particular system that China has today, we will call it a socialist country with Chinese characteristics. Some people call it China, a socialist country but this is not the typical socialist country which is modeled on the Soviet type. |
|  | This is actually a socialist country with Chinese characteristics, well I think that's for scholars to explain what that means. Fourth, for my government the ultimate goal is to bring a better life for his people. China has achieved in several decades what took developed countries several centuries to achieve over the past 39 years. |
|  | We have succeeded in lifting about 700 million people out of poverty, but in order to fulfill the dream of each and every Chinese person there is still a long way to go. China today has a population of almost 1.4 billion people, its per capita GDP is about one-seventh that of the Americans. |
|  | We had a big delegation just visiting New York City two days ago and it's headed by a vice premier and the vice premier doing her speeches at the Columbia University. She mentioned that on her way here she made a stop in Alaska and she met with the governor there, and so she told the governor actually today the per capita income of Alaskan is about six times that of per capita in China. |
|  | In China, we have a big population so if you add the number of women and children the population of women and children alone is more than the population of the America. We have like 20 million more children and women than the total population of Americans. |
|  | This is a big job to bring such a big population to modernization. This nation the Chinese country is now working towards to Centenary Goals. I think this morning many specialists have talked about the Centenary Goals. Some call these goals the 200 goals, that is to double the GDP and per capita income from the levels of 2010 by 2020, 2020 will be the 100th Anniversary of the CPC party and to join the ranks of the developed countries in economic terms by 2049, that would be the 100 years of the founding of the new China. |
|  | We have set these two goals for the coming years, and this will be what we will call the realization of the Chinese Dream. With the attainment of the first Centenary Goal in site, actually only from now to 2020 only three years, in three years time. China is preparing itself for the second Centenary Goal, and the upcoming 19th Party Congress will lay the groundwork in this regard. |
|  | The last point I wanted to mention that China is a country of great diversity. China is not just the country, it is actually almost like a continent. It is the same size of Europe. I was once a Chinese Ambassador to Brussels to Belgium, and so I always make that comparison. As far as the size and diversity is concerned the China is about the same as Europe. |
|  | For most people here, they don't understand they feel that the Chinese are all the same, they probably for you, you think the Chinese looked the same and they certainly think the same, and they eat the same way but that is actually not true. China is a huge vast diverse country due to the scale of the country and the different geographical and social environment, each region is different in this development and conditions. |
|  | We have altogether 56 ethnic groups so the hind people is the majority ethnic group, so we have actually 55 minority ethnic groups and each ethnic group has its own unique tradition, costumes, and religious beliefs. Things are very, very different and I just wanted to give you the example that when I was an Ambassador even today here as a Consul General, people often asked me to give them a list of the best Chinese food or restaurants here. |
|  | Every time I hesitate to say, which restaurant is the best, people think that I've been very diplomatic, but I said, it is not being diplomatic it's actually, it's very difficult to say which dish is the best because it depends on your taste. Some people prefer spicy and hot and some people prefer sweet things. |
|  | Most of the Americans because I was here in 40 years ago to study, I remember the most famous Chinese dish most Americans know is the chicken chow mein. I don't think the chicken chow mein is still on the menu today, but 40 years ago I remember when I was in school, because my students, my classmates know that I'm from China I must miss the food. One day they come all rushing to me and said, "Zhang, we're going to have Chinese food," and I said, "Oh yes, I'm very happy about it," and then they said ... I asked them, "What we're going to have," they said, "It's chicken chow mein." |
|  | When I had this chicken chow mein on my plate I said, "This is not Chinese food, I never had this." Today, most people think the Chinese food is the kung pao chicken. Actually, I can tell you that there are a thousand ways of making chicken in China, so kung pao chicken is not the Chinese food. |
|  | Just to give you another example of the diversity or the differences that there in China politically, I give you a political example. It has also particular system of governing, apart from the CPC party China has eight democratic parties that work in Unison with the Chinese Communist Party. Many people do not know we have eight other eight democratic parties. |
|  | While there is the National People's Congress which is the rough equivalent of the US Congress, we have the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference we call the CPPCC, which represent the opinions of all groups and sectors. In other words, China is a democracy though its organization and features are not completely the same as the one you are familiar with. |
|  | With these above a very few salient features that you can all see that China is a very complicated story. To understand it, we need to bear in mind both the China's past and present. The 5000 Year Long Chinese Civilization, well 170-year history as a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. |
|  | 96 years of the CPC party and 68 years of the founding of new China, which we're going to celebrate very soon the National Day for China is October the 1st and 39 years of reform and opening up. All of these should be taken into account, they each make an integral part of the Chinese history, and none should be taken out of the historical context. That's why I think it makes the Chinese story so difficult to understand and so difficult to explain. |
|  | However, China is not developing in isolation especially against the background of globalization. I think the external environment the international scene are so important to the development of China. Out of all the bilateral relations today, I think the U.S.-China relationship is really the most important one in the world. |
|  | As Dr. Kissinger said repeatedly and I heard him speaking just two days ago in Columbia University I quote, "The U.S.-China relations are the defining relations of the 21st Century, nine U.S. presidents and successive Chinese leaders have all taken this matter very seriously and as a priority issue and our relations have enjoyed over the past 38 years as a formal diplomatic relations, a steady course of development." |
|  | Well I think many of you wonder what is the relation like today and where do we stand today. Since the beginning of this year, well actually we are so happy that the relations are on the right course. President Xi and President Trump have already met twice and exchanged phone calls almost once a month. |
|  | We're so happy to learn that the both leaders have found that they have the right chemistry with each other, today when they call each other they're on the first name basis. They have very good feeling and respect for each other. I think together they have actually during these two visits they have said a constructive tone for U.S.-China relations in a new era. |
|  | They have also established four dialogue mechanisms between our two countries. They are covering the issues, diplomacy and security comprehensive trade and economy law enforcement and cybersecurity as well as on social cultural and people to people issues. |
|  | At this moment, I believe that Madame Liu Yandong the Vice Premier from China is having an official meeting with your Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to launch the people to people dialogue in Washington. |
|  | Today, we are at a very important moment in our relations, a moment challenging but also promising. Giving the serious issues in the world, issues like the North Korea, international terrorism, climate change as well as the uncertainties in the world economy we have to work closely together. |
|  | Today, the U.S. and China combined, we accounted for about one-third of the world economy and about one-fourth of the world trade. We are actually the engines of the world economy and also we matter when it comes to war and peace in this world. |
|  | It is really too important the relationship to fail, and despite of the difficulty issues and the differences I think we both know that we have to work together. In fact, most of the time I think I'm very encouraged and disheartened about this relationship and I have great confidence in this relationship, and this confidence is actually growing because I do see big changes in the exchanges between our two countries. |
|  | Nowadays, I see three year olds in kindergartens learning Mandarin Chinese. I meet with the university professors who fly once a week to Shanghai to give a course, and I meet with many people who have traveled to China over a hundred times. When I see that about 98% of employees in some Chinese companies here in the United States are locally recruited people. |
|  | I know for sure that this relationship is going to grow deep and will go well, and because it is in the fundamental interests of our two peoples, of our two countries, and the world as a whole I think you all agree with me that we have to make it right. I hope I can continue to count on your support for believing in this great relationship and making it a successful story. |
|  | Thank you very much. |