



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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President Bush and Premier Wen Jiabao Remarks to the Press

Remarks by President Bush and Premier Wen Jiabao in Photo Opportunity
The Oval Office

11:05 A.M. EST

PRESIDENT BUSH: Welcome. I will make a statement; the Premier will make a statement. We'll answer questions, one from the American side, one from the Chinese side, one from the American side, and one from the Chinese side.

Mr. Premier, welcome. We're going to have extensive discussions today on a lot of issues. We've just had a very friendly and candid discussion. There's no question in my mind that when China and the United States works closely together we can accomplish a lot of very important objectives.

Our relationship is good and strong, and we are determined to keep it that way, for the good of our respective peoples, and for the sake of peace and prosperity in the world.

So, welcome, glad you're here.

PREMIER WEN: I'm very grateful towards President Bush and the U.S. government for the kind invitation and warm hospitality.

Just now, President Bush and I had an in-depth exchange of views on China-U.S. relationship, and on international and regional issues of mutual interest. The discussion took place under very friendly, candid, cooperative and constructive atmosphere, and we reached consensus on many issues.

President Bush and I both believe that the further improvement and growth of the bilateral ties between China and the U.S. will not only bring benefits for the people of the two countries, but also in the interest of world peace and stability.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: AP man.

Q Mr. President, George Gedda of AP. Given the sensitivity of the issue, do you believe the referendum planned by the Taiwanese on March 20th should be cancelled?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Someone needs to interpret that.

Let me tell you what I've just told the Premier on this issue. The United States government's policy is one China, based upon the three communiquis and the Taiwan Relations Act. We oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo. And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose.

Why don't you call on somebody from your press.

Q Premier Wen, what is the position of the Chinese government on the question of Taiwan?

PREMIER WEN: Our fundamental policy on the settlement of the question of Taiwan is peaceful reunification, and one country-two systems. We would do our utmost with utmost sincerity to bring about national unity and peaceful reunification through peaceful means.

The Chinese government respects the desire of people in Taiwan for democracy, but we must point out that the attempts of Taiwan authorities, headed by Chen Shui-bian, are only using democracy as an excuse and attempt to resort to defensive referendum to split Taiwan away from China. Such separatist activities are what the Chinese side can absolutely not accept and tolerate.

We also want to say that so long as there is a glimmer of hope, we would not give up our efforts for peaceful reunification. We have expressed our will and determination to uphold national unity. This is for the very purpose of maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits. And such stability can only be maintained through unswerving opposition and firm opposition to pro-independence activities.

On many occasions, and just now in the meeting, as well, President Bush has reiterated the U.S. commitment to the three Sino-U.S. Joint Communiquis, the one-China principle, and opposition to Taiwan independence. We appreciate that. In particular, we very much appreciate the position adopted by President Bush toward the latest moves and developments in Taiwan -- that is, the attempt to resort to referendum of various kinds as excuse to pursue Taiwan independence. We appreciate the position of the U.S. government.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Steve.

Q Mr. President, thank you. North Korea is saying they will freeze their nuclear program if the U.S. takes them off the terrorism list and provides fuel aid. Is this a worthwhile idea? And how are you going to get the six-party talks going again?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, well, we spent a lot of time talking about North Korea here. We share a mutual goal, and that is for the Korean Peninsula to be nuclear weapons-free. I thank the Premier for China starting the six-party talks, and I will continue those talks. I think they're very important.

The goal of the United States is not for a freeze of the nuclear program; the goal is to dismantle a nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible way. And that is a clear message that we are sending to the North Koreans. And we will continue to work with China and the other countries involved to resolve this issue peacefully.

Q Premier Wen, what's your reading of the status quo and the future development of China's economic relationship and trade with the United States?

PREMIER WEN: The expansion of China's economic cooperation and trade with the United States, as we see today, has not come by easily. Just imagine, 25 years ago, our trade was less than 2.5 billion U.S. dollars. And now the volume has exceeded 100 billion U.S. dollars. Our economic and trade links have been conducive to the interest of our two people and two countries.

We have to admit, though, in our economic and trade relationship problems do exist -- and mainly, the U.S. trade deficit with China. The Chinese government takes this problem seriously and has taken measures to improve the situation. Soon, in a few minutes, we will have a large group meeting with the U.S. side, and in that setting, I would make one proposal, and I will also share with President Bush five principles we think that should guide the development of economic cooperation and trade between China and the U.S.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

END 11:19 A.M. EST

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