

American Society of Newspaper Editors

*The President's Remarks at a Question and Answer
Session With a Panel of Six Editors and Reporters at the
Society's Annual Convention. April 16, 1971*

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

MR. DEDMON. Mr. President, when you last appeared before this convention prior to becoming President, you mentioned that laying the groundwork for future relations with the People's Republic of China would be one of the primary goals of your administration.

In light of recent events, as well as the trade review which you have ordered, it looks like this is one area where you are considerably ahead of schedule.

Do you think that we can anticipate an establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of

China in your first administration rather than your second?

THE PRESIDENT. Mr. Dedmon, since you have been so kind to me, I will be kind to you.

Let the record show—and some of you will remember that time I was here in 1968—that Mr. Dedmon was the one that asked me the question about the People's Republic of China or Mainland China, if you want to call it that, and also let the record show, as you may recall, that at an editorial conference at the Chicago Sun-Times last year you asked me the question again.

The first two times I struck out. The third time we got a hit. That is all we can say.

Let me put it all in perspective, however.

What we have here is the result of a long process that began in my own thoughts even before 1968, the spring of 1968, when I answered that question at this convention. I wrote an article for Foreign Affairs—as a matter of fact, I think your question played off of that article at that time—in which I pointed out that we could not have what will be by the end of the century a billion of the most creative and able people in the world isolated from the world and that whoever was President of the United States had to develop a policy which would bring the isolation of a billion Chinese from the rest of the world to an end.

I also pointed out that that was a long-range goal. The long-range goal of this administration and of the next one, whatever it may be, must be two things: one, a normalization of the relations between the Government of the United States and the Government of the People's Republic of China; and two, the ending of the isolation of Mainland China from the world community.

Those are long-range goals.

Let's begin with what we have done then. We can't go that far that fast in one jump. We cannot do it now. I will not speculate on it now, because it is premature to talk about either of those subjects, either recognition or admission to the United Nations.

But I can point to the goal and what we have done to get toward that goal and what it can mean to the future.

Over a year ago we relaxed, as you know, our travel conditions with regard to going to China, and also we made some relaxation with regard to trade.

Finally, we had a response from the Chinese, as you know, last week. Then, on Wednesday of this week, I announced an additional relaxation with regard to trade restrictions and a relaxation with regard to Chinese who wanted to come to the United States.

Now it's up to them. If they want to have trade in these many areas that we have opened up, we are ready. If they want to have Chinese come to the United States, we are ready. We are also ready for Americans to go there, Americans in all walks of life.

But it takes two, of course. We have taken several steps. They have taken one. We are prepared to take

other steps in the trade field and also with regard to the exchange field, but each step must be taken one at a time.

I know that as editors and as reporters, looking for that, you know, that hot lead or headline for the morning, this is not a satisfying answer. But from the standpoint of policy, it is the right answer. Because to try to make a headline by saying that tomorrow we are going to do this or that or the other thing would be misunderstood among many countries of the world where this matter has to be discussed and also might have exactly the reverse reaction with the Chinese.

I think the steady ordered process that we have engaged on now begins to bear fruit. I will just conclude with this one thought:

The other day was Easter Sunday. Both of my daughters, Tricia and Julie, were there—and Tricia with Eddie Cox—I understand they are getting married this June—and Julie and David Eisenhower.

And the conversation got around to travel and also, of course, with regard to honeymoon travel and the rest. They were asking me where would you like to go? Where do you think we ought to go?

So, I sat back and thought a bit and said, "Well, the place to go is to Asia." I said, "I hope that some time in your life, sooner rather than later, you will be able to go to China to see the great cities, and the people, and all of that, there."

I hope they do. As a matter of fact, I hope sometime I do. I am not sure that it is going to happen while I am in office. I will not speculate with regard to either of the diplomatic points. It is premature to talk about recognition. It is premature also to talk about a change of our policy with regard to the United Nations.

However, we are going to proceed in these very substantive fields of exchange of persons and also in the field of trade. That will open the way to other moves which will be made at an appropriate time.

Mr. Risher.

MR. RISHER. I just want to follow up on that if I could. Do you think that this might lead to a resumption of the meetings in Warsaw that were broken up about a year ago, I think?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, Mr. Risher, as you recall those meetings were resumed after we came into office. That, again, was a result of an initiative that we took. And then they were broken off again. We are ready to meet any time they are ready to meet.

I cannot—I don't have any information indicating that they want to resume them at this time, but we certainly have the door open. We are not pressing them, although we would welcome them opening them.