

Chinese Embassy Event Commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the Normalization of U.S.-China Relations

SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

January 1, 2024

Washington, D.C.

REMARKS FROM NATIONAL COMMITTEE PRESIDENT STEPHEN A. ORLINS

Since Ambassador Xie used perfect English to give his remarks should I use Chinese? Looking at the audience too many don't speak Chinese, so I will mostly use English.

45 years ago when the U.S. and China established diplomatic relations, I was a xiao tudou in the U.S. State Department working on this historic achievement. In the prior five decades, we had seen the deaths of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers and millions of Chinese soldiers on the battlefields of Asia. When I arrived in Asia in 1972, my friends and classmates were still dying in Vietnam. In 1978, the political environment in both countries did not support the completion of the task begun by Chairman Mao, Zhou Enlai, President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger. President Carter told me 60% of the Congress opposed the establishment of diplomatic relations. I experienced that opposition when as a xiao tudou I sat in the row behind my boss, Herb Hansell, and listened to him be excoriated by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This 29 year old xiao tudou was really terrified by the criticism. Deng had to overcome similar opposition in China.

As a xiao tudou I was not invited to the State Dinner at the White House honoring Deng's visit. I stood on the White House lawn welcoming Deng and attended a working lunch at the State Department. Deng's words at the lunch have stayed with me over these 45 years:

中美关系正常化是中美两国人民的共同胜利，因为它符合两国人民的共同愿望和利益，而且对于世界的和平和稳定十分重要。

(The normalization of Sino-American relations is a victory for both the American and Chinese people, because it supports the common aspirations and interests of the two peoples in promoting world peace and stability.)

He and President Carter were right.

Since then virtually no American and Chinese soldiers have died on the battlefields of Asia. After decades of war, both sides of the Pacific have enjoyed an unprecedented period of peace and prosperity.

We should celebrate the wisdom, vision, and courage of President Carter and Deng Xiaoping and, in this time of difficulty, emulate that courage.

We are days from celebrating the year of the dragon. The dragon represents bravery and courage. As we enter this new year, let the American and Chinese people work together to realize the vision of President Carter and Deng Xiaoping and make the world a safer and more prosperous place for the next generation.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, prosperous and vigorous Year of the Dragon!

提前祝大家春节快乐，龙年吉祥;龙马精神，龙腾虎跃!谢谢!

(Early wishes for a happy Spring Festival and auspicious Year of the Dragon. Wishing you the Dragon and Horse spirit, Dragon soaring and Tiger leaping! Thank you.)