

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo
Remarks at the Nixon Library:
“Communist China and the Free World’s Future”
July 23, 2020

CHECK AGAINST FINAL TRANSCRIP

I. INTRO

Good afternoon.

Thank you, Governor, for that generous
introduction.

How about we all give a round of applause for Senior Airman Kayla Highsmith, and her beautiful rendition of our national anthem?

Thanks to Hugh and the Nixon Foundation for your invitation to speak at this important American institution.

It is truly an honor to be here in Yorba Linda, where Nixon's father built the house in which he was born and raised.

To all the Nixon Center board and staff, thank you for preserving this historic landmark and for making this day possible during such a challenging time.

We are blessed to have some very special people in the audience, including President Nixon's grandson, who we just heard from, Christopher Nixon Cox. I also want to thank Tricia Nixon Cox and Julie Nixon Eisenhower for their support for this visit.

I also want to recognize several courageous Chinese dissidents who have made long trips to be here.

To all other distinguished guests, welcome.

For those watching the live feed, thank you for tuning in.

Finally, I was raised in Santa Ana. I've got a couple family members here today. Never in a million years did I think I'd return as Secretary of State. I'm sure they're just as surprised.

My remarks today are the fourth in a series of China speeches I asked National Security Advisor O'Brien, FBI Director Wray, and Attorney General Barr to deliver alongside me.

Our mission has been to explain different facets of America's relationship with China, the massive imbalances in that relationship built over decades, and the Chinese Communist Party's designs on hegemony.

Our objective has been to make clear the threats to Americans that President Trump's China policy aims to address, and our strategy for securing our freedoms.

NSA O'Brien talked ideology. Director Wray talked espionage. AG Barr talked economics. Now it's my turn to put it all together for the American people ...and detail what the China threat means for our economy, our liberty, and the free world's future.

Next year will mark half a century since Henry Kissinger's secret mission to China, and the 50th anniversary of President Nixon's trip isn't too far away either, in 2022.

The world was much different in Nixon's era.

We imagined engagement with China would produce a future bright with the promise of comity, and cooperation.

But today we sit wearing masks and watching the pandemic's body count rise because the CCP failed in its promises to the world... reading new headlines of repression in Hong Kong and Xinjiang...

seeing staggering statistics of Chinese trade abuses that cost American jobs and strike blows to our companies...watching the Chinese military grow stronger and more menacing.

I'll echo the questions ringing in the hearts and minds of Americans from here in California to my home state of Kansas, and beyond:

What do the American people have to show for 50 years of engagement with China?

Did the theories our leaders proposed of China's evolution toward freedom and democracy prove true?

Is this China's definition of a "win-win" situation?

Is America safer?

My friends, today we must admit a hard truth that should guide us in the years and decades to come, if we want to have a free 21st century, and not the Chinese century Xi Jinping dreams of:

The old paradigm of blind engagement with China has failed. We must not continue it. We must not return to it.

As President Trump has made clear, we need a strategy that protects the American economy and our way of life. The free world must triumph over this new tyranny.

II. NIXON HAD GOOD REASON TO ENGAGE CHINA...

Now, before I seem too eager to tear down President Nixon's legacy, I want to be clear that he did what he believed was best for the American people at the time.

Nixon was a brilliant student of China, a fierce cold warrior, and a great admirer of the Chinese people. He engaged Beijing with clear eyes.

He deserves great credit for realizing that China was too important to be ignored, even when the nation was weakened because of its own, self-inflicted communist brutality.

In 1967, in a famous *Foreign Affairs* article, Nixon explained his future strategy:

“Taking the long view, we simply cannot afford to leave China forever outside of the family of nations. . . the world cannot be safe until China changes. Thus, our aim – to the extent that we influence events – should be *to induce change.*”

That’s the key phrase: “to induce change.”

So, with that historic trip to Beijing, President Nixon kicked off our engagement strategy. He nobly sought a safer, freer world.

As time went on, American policymakers increasingly presumed that as China became more prosperous, it would become freer at home, and friendlier abroad. It all seemed so inevitable.

III. . . BUT HIS ENGAGEMENT BENEFITED BEIJING MORE THAN IT BENEFITED US

But today, my friends, the age of inevitability is over. The kind of engagement we have been pursuing has not brought the kind of change in China that President Nixon hoped to induce.

The truth is that our policies – and those of other free nations – resurrected China's failing economy, only to see Beijing bite the international hands that fed it.

We opened our arms to Chinese citizens, only to see the CCP exploit our free and open society. It sent propagandists into our press conferences, our research centers, our high-school and college campuses, and even into our PTA meetings.

We marginalized our friends in Taiwan, which later blossomed into a vigorous democracy.

We gave the Chinese Communist regime special economic treatment...only to see the CCP insist on silence over its human rights abuses as the price of admission for Western companies in China.

National Security Advisor O'Brien ticked off a few examples the other day: Marriott, and American, Delta, and United Airlines all removed references to Taiwan from their corporate websites, so as to not anger Beijing.

Hollywood – the epicenter of American creative freedom, and self-appointed arbiters of social justice – self-censors even the most mildly unfavorable reference to China.

This corporate acquiescence to the CCP happens all over the world, too.

And how was this corporate fealty...its
flattery...rewarded? As Attorney General Barr
said in his speech last week, “The ultimate
ambition of China’s rulers isn’t to trade with the
United States. It is to raid the United States.”

China ripped off our prized intellectual property
and trade secrets.

It sucked supply chains away from America,
and then added a widget of slave labor.

It made the world's key waterways less safe for international commerce.

President Nixon once said he feared he had created a "Frankenstein" by opening the world to the CCP. How prophetic he was.

People of good faith can debate why free nations allowed these bad things and many more to happen. Perhaps we were naïve about China's virulent strain of Communism, or triumphalist after the Cold War, or cravenly capitalist, or hoodwinked by Beijing's talk of a "peaceful rise."

Whatever the reason, China today is increasingly authoritarian at home, and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom abroad.

President Trump has said: enough.

IV. THE CCP WON'T REFORM ON ITS OWN. DISTRUST AND VERIFY.

I don't think many people on either side of the aisle dispute these facts. But even now, some are insisting we preserve the model of dialogue for dialogue's sake.

Now, to be clear, we'll keep talking. But the conversations are different these days. I recently traveled to Hawaii to meet with Yang Jiechi.

It was the same old story – plenty of words, but no offer to change China’s behavior.

Yang’s promises, like so many the CCP has made before him, were empty. He expected me to cave to his demands, because that’s what prior administrations have done. I didn’t.

President Trump will not.

As NSA O'Brien explained so well, the CCP regime is a Marxist-Leninist regime. General Secretary Xi Jinping is a true believer in a bankrupt totalitarian ideology.

His ideology informs his decades-long desire for global hegemony built on Chinese Communism.

We can no longer ignore the fundamental political and ideological differences between our countries, just as the CCP has never ignored them.

My experience on the House Intelligence Committee, as CIA chief, and my two-plus years as Secretary of State have led me to this central understanding:

The only way to truly change Communist China is to act on the basis of what its leaders do, not what they say. President Reagan dealt with the Soviets on the basis of “trust but verify.” When it comes to the CCP, I say, “Distrust and verify.”

We, the free nations of the world, must induce change in the CCP's behavior in more creative and assertive ways, because Beijing's actions threaten our people and our prosperity.

V. WE MUST CHANGE HOW NATIONS VIEW AND TREAT THE CCP AND ITS PROXIES AND TAKE ACTION ACCORDINGLY.

We must start by changing how our people and our partners perceive the Chinese Communist Party. We cannot treat this incarnation of China as a normal country, just like any other.

- We know now that trading with China is not like trading with a normal, law-abiding nation. Beijing treats international agreements as suggestions, as conduits for global dominance.

By insisting on fair terms, USTR secured a trade deal that forces China to reckon with its IP theft and policies that have so badly harmed American workers.

- We know now that doing business with a CCP-backed company is not the same as doing business with, say, a Canadian company. They don't answer to independent boards or pursue profit.

Huawei is an excellent example. We have stopped pretending Huawei is an innocent telecommunications company. We have called it what it is – a national security threat – and taken action accordingly.

- We know now that if our companies invest in China, they may wittingly or unwittingly support the Communist Party's gross human rights abuses.

Treasury and Commerce have thus sanctioned and blacklisted Chinese leaders and entities harming America and abusing human rights.

Several agencies worked together on a business advisory to make certain our CEOs have been forewarned.

- We know now that not all Chinese students and employees are normal students or workers, pursuing knowledge for themselves — some of them are garnering it, through study

or theft, for the benefit of the CCP or its proxies.

The Department of Justice and other agencies have vigorously pursued punishment for these crimes.

- We know now that the People's Liberation Army is not a normal army. Its purpose is to uphold the absolute rule of the Chinese Communist Party elites, and expand a Chinese empire, not protect the Chinese people.

So the Department of Defense has ramped up its freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait. We created the Space Force to help deter Chinese aggression on the final frontier.

And, frankly, it's a new State Department dealing with China – one pushing President Trump's goals of fairness and reciprocity:

- Just this week we closed down China's consulate in Houston because it was a hub of spying and IP theft.
- We reversed eight years of cheek turning with respect to China's adherence to international law in the South China Sea.
- We've called on China to conform its nuclear capabilities to the strategic realities of this century.

- The State Department, at every level, has engaged with our Chinese counterparts to demand fairness and reciprocity.

**VI. WE MUST ALSO TAKE POSITIVE
STEPS TO ENGAGE AND
EMPOWER GOOD ACTORS; I.E.
THE CHINESE PEOPLE
THEMSELVES**

But our approach can't just be all about getting tough. We must also engage and empower the Chinese people...a dynamic, freedom-loving people who are completely distinct from the Chinese Communist Party.

That begins with in-person diplomacy. I've met Chinese men and women of great talent and diligence wherever I go.

I've met Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs who have escaped Xinjiang's concentration camps. I've talked with Hong Kong's democracy leaders, from Cardinal Zen to Jimmy Lai. Two days ago in London I met with Hong Kong freedom fighter Nathan Law.

Last month I heard the stories of Tiananmen Square survivors. One of them is here today.

Wang Dan was a key student leader who has never stopped fighting for freedom for the Chinese people. Mr. Wang, please stand so we can recognize you.

Also with us today is the father of the Chinese democracy movement, Wei Jingsheng (“WAY Jing-SHENG”). He spent decades in Chinese labor camps for his advocacy. Mr. Wei, please stand.

Communists always lie, but the biggest lie is that the Chinese Communist Party speaks for 1.4 billion people who are surveilled, oppressed, and scared to speak out.

Quite the contrary. The CCP fears the Chinese people's honest opinions more than any foreign foe. And save for losing their own grip on power, they have no reason to.

Just think how much better off the world would've been if the doctors in Wuhan had been allowed to raise the alarm about the outbreak of a new coronavirus.

For too many decades, our leaders have ignored or downplayed the words of brave Chinese dissidents who warned us about the nature of the regime we're facing.

We can't ignore the Chinese people any longer. They know as well as anyone that we can never go back to the status quo of engagement on the CCP's terms.

VII. THE FREE WORLD HAS BEATEN TYRANNY BEFORE, AND WE CAN BEAT IT AGAIN

But changing the CCP's behavior cannot be the mission of the Chinese people alone. Free nations have work to do to defend freedom. It's the furthest thing from easy.

But I have faith we can do it. I have faith because we've done it before.

I have faith because the CCP is repeating some of the same mistakes the Soviet Union made – alienating potential allies, breaking trust at home and abroad, rejecting property rights and a predictable rule of law.

I have faith because of the awakening I see among other nations that know we cannot go back to the past. I've heard this from Brussels, to Sydney, to Hanoi.

And, most of all, I have faith we can defend freedom because of the sweet appeal of freedom itself.

Look at the Hong Kongers clamoring to emigrate abroad as the CCP tightens its grip on that proud city.

It's true that unlike the Soviet Union, China is deeply integrated into the global economy. But Beijing is more dependent on us than we are on them.

I reject the notion that we're living in the age of inevitability...that some "trap" is pre-ordained... that CCP supremacy is the future.

Our approach isn't destined to fail because America isn't in decline. As I said in Munich earlier this year, the free world is still winning.

People from all over the world still want to come to open societies to study, to work, to build a life for their families. They're not desperate to settle in Chongqing [“CHONG-king”].

It's time for free nations to act. Not every nation will approach the China challenge in the same way, nor should they. Every nation will have to come to its own understanding of how to protect its national security, its economic prosperity, and its ideals from the tentacles of the CCP.

But I call on all nations to start by doing what America has done – to insist on reciprocity, transparency, and accountability from the Chinese Communist Party...a cadre of rulers that is far from homogenous.

These are simple but powerful standards. For a long time we let the CCP set the terms of engagement. No longer. Free nations must set the tone, and operate on the same principles.

We must draw common lines in the sand that cannot be washed away by the CCP's bargains and blandishments. Indeed, this is what America did recently when we rejected China's unlawful claims in the South China Sea once and for all....as we've urged countries to become Clean Countries on 5G. We set standards.

It's true that some nations lack the courage to stand with us, for the moment.

One NATO ally of ours won't stand up for
freedom in Hong Kong because they fear
Beijing will restrict access to China's market.
This timidity will harm its people, as such
timidity historically has.

Let's not repeat the same mistakes of the past.

The challenge of China demands exertion from

democracies... those in Europe, in Africa, in

South America, and especially those in the Indo-

Pacific region.

If we don't act now, ultimately, the CCP will erode our freedoms and subvert the rules-based order free societies have built. If we bend the knee now, our children's children may be at the mercy of the CCP, whose actions are the primary challenge to the free world.

Xi isn't destined to tyrannize inside and outside of China forever, unless we let him.

This isn't about containment. It's about a
complex new challenge we've never faced
before: The USSR was closed off from the free
world. Communist China is already here, within
our borders.

So we can't face this challenge alone. The UN,
NATO, the G7, the G20, our combined
economic, diplomatic, and military power is
surely enough to meet this challenge, if directed
properly.

Maybe it's time for a new grouping of like-minded nations...a new alliance of democracies.

We have the tools. Now we need the will. To quote Scripture, I ask is "our spirit willing but our flesh weak?"

If the free world doesn't change Communist China, Communist China will change us. There can be no return to past practices just because they're comfortable, or convenient.

**VIII. CONCLUSION: AMERICA IS
PERFECLY POSITIONED TO HELP
THE FREE WORLD PRESERVE
FREEDOM – THE MISSION OF OUR
TIME**

Securing our freedoms from the Chinese

Communist Party is the mission of our time, and

America is perfectly positioned to lead it

because of our founding principles.

As I explained in Philadelphia last week, in view of Independence Hall, our nation was founded on the premise that all human beings possess certain unalienable rights.

It's government's job to secure those rights.

That simple and powerful truth has made the United States a beacon of freedom for people around the world, including in China.

Richard Nixon was right when he wrote in 1967 that "the world cannot be safe until China changes." Now it's up to us to heed his words.

Today the danger is clear.

Today the awakening is happening.

Today the free world must respond.

We can never go back to the past.

God bless you.

God bless the Chinese people.

And God bless the United States of America.

Thank you.