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REMARKS

# Remarks by Vice President Pence at the Frederic V. Malek Memorial Lecture

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you all for that warm welcome. And to your new chairman, Governor Scott Walker; former Congresswoman Jane Harman; and to all the members of the board at this historic center; and to all the fine scholars: It is an honor to be here at the Wilson Center, named after a President that was a great champion for America leadership and for freedom on the world stage.

And in that same spirit, allow me to begin this morning by bringing greetings from another President who's a champion for freedom here at home and across the wider world. I bring greetings from the 45th President of the United States of America, President Donald Trump. (Applause.)

I come before you today at the end of a momentous week. In the wake of Turkish forces invading Syria, thanks to the strong economic and diplomatic action of the

President of the United States, and thanks to the cooperation by our Turkish and Kurdish allies, Syrian Defense Forces were able to safely withdraw from the border area that's currently under Turkish military control.

And yesterday, Turkey's Ministry of Defense confirmed a permanent cease-fire and a halt of all offensive military operations. (Applause.)

Our troops are coming home. And I am pleased to report that through this ceasefire, Turkey and our Kurdish allies have now created an opportunity that the international community can create a safe zone that we believe will restore peace and security for all the peoples of this war-torn region. It is progress, indeed.

So thank you again for the honor of being here today, and it's a particular honor to deliver the inaugural Frederic V. Malek Memorial Lecture.

Anyone who knew Fred would tell you that he was a proud son of West Point and that he lived his life by the words "duty, honor, and country." When counseling others, I'm told, he often quoted his alma mater's Cadet Prayer and urged them to, as he would say, "Choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong."

Fred understood that no one — least of all, nations — can defend their interests by forsaking their values. So in honor of Fred's memory, I come here today to discuss a subject on which much of the destiny of the 21st century will hinge: the United States relationship with China.

Since the earliest days of this administration, President Trump has been determined to build a relationship with China on a foundation of candor, fairness, and mutual respect, in order to achieve, in his words, "a more just, secure, and peaceful world."

One year ago this month, I spoke about many of Beijing's policies most harmful to America's interests and values, from China's debt diplomacy and military expansionism; its repression of people of faith; construction of a surveillance state; and, of course, to China's arsenal of policies inconsistent with free and fair trade,

including tariffs, quotas, currency manipulation, forced technology transfer, and industrial subsidies.

Past administrations have come and gone, and all were aware of these abuses. None were willing to upset the established Washington interests who not only permitted these abuses, but often profited from them. The political establishment was not only silent in the face of China's economic aggression and human rights abuses, but they often enabled them. As each year passed, as each factory closed in the heartland of America, as each new skyscraper went up in Beijing, American workers grew only more disheartened, and China grew only more emboldened.

In less than two short decades, we've seen, as President Trump has said, "the greatest transfer of wealth in the history of the world." Over the past 17 years, China's GDP has grown more than nine-fold; it has become the second-largest economy in the world. Much of this success was driven by American investment in China.

Beijing's actions have contributed to the United States' trade deficit with China that last year ran to more than \$400 billion — nearly half of our global trade deficit. As President Trump has said many times, we rebuilt China over the last 25 years. No truer words were spoken, but those days are over.

As history will surely note, in less than three years, President Donald Trump has changed that narrative forever. No longer will America and its leaders hope that economic engagement alone will transform Communist China's authoritarian state into a free and open society that respects private property, the rule of law, and international rules of commerce.

Instead, as the President's 2017 National Security Strategy articulated, the United States now recognizes China as a strategic and economic rival. And I can attest firsthand, a strong majority of the American people, in the city and on the farm, are behind President Trump's clear-eyed vision of the U.S.–China relationship. And the President's stand also enjoys broad bipartisan support in the Congress as well.

Over the past year with that support, President Trump has taken bold and decisive action to correct the failed policies of the past, to strengthen America, to hold Beijing accountable, and to set our relationship on a more fair, stable, and constructive course for the good of both of our nations and the world.

When our administration took office, China was on track to become the largest economy in the world. Experts predicted that China's economy would surpass the United States' economy in just a few short years. But thanks to bold economic agenda advanced by President Trump, all that has changed.

From early on in this administration, this President signed the largest tax cuts and tax reform in American history. We lowered the American corporate tax rate to mirror other corporate rates around the world. We rolled back federal regulation at record levels. We unleashed American energy. And President Trump has stood strong for free and fair trade.

The result? America has the strongest economy in the history of the world. (Applause.) And the strongest economy in our own history.

Unemployment today is at a 50-year low. There are more Americans working today than ever before. Median household income in the last two and half years has risen by more than \$5,000. And that doesn't even account for the savings from the President's tax cuts or energy reforms for working families.

Because of the President's policies, America has added trillions of dollars of wealth to our economy while China's economy continues to fall behind.

To level the playing field for the American worker against unethical trade practices, President Trump levied tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese goods in 2018. And earlier this year, the President announced we would place tariffs on another \$300 billion of Chinese goods if significant issues in our trading relationship were not resolved by December of this year.

To protect intellectual property rights and the privacy of our citizens and our

national security, we've taken strong steps to curtail illegal behavior of Chinese companies like Huawei and ZTE. And we've urged our allies around the world to build secure 5G networks that don't give Beijing control of our most sensitive infrastructure and data as well.

And as we've grown stronger economically, President Trump has also signed the largest increases in our national defense in more than a generation: \$2.5 trillion of new investment in our national defense just in the last three years. We've made the strongest military in the history of the world stronger still.

And to make it clear to Beijing that no nation has a right to claim the maritime commons as territorial seas, the United States, in the last year, has increased the tempo and scope of our freedom of navigation operations and strengthened our military presence across the Indo-Pacific.

To uphold the values of freedom-loving people every year [everywhere], we've also called out the Chinese Communist Party for suppressing freedom of religion of the Chinese people. Millions of ethnic and religious minorities in China are struggling against the Party's efforts to eradicate their religious and cultural identities.

The Communist Party in China has arrested Christian pastors, banned the sale of Bibles, demolished churches, and imprisoned more than one million Muslim Uighurs.

We've held Beijing accountable for its treatment of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang when, just last month, President Trump imposed visas restrictions on Chinese Communist Party officials, as well as sanctions on 20 Chinese public security bureaus and 8 Chinese companies for their complicity in the persecution of Uighurs and other Chinese Muslims. (Applause.)

And we've stood by Taiwan in defense of her hard-won freedoms. Under this administration, we've authorized additional military sales and recognized Taiwan's place as one of the world's great trading economies and beacons of Chinese culture and democracy.

And as millions have taken to the streets in peaceful protest, we've spoken out on behalf of the people of Hong Kong. And President Trump has made it clear from early on that there must be a peaceful resolution that respects the rights of the people of Hong Kong, as outlined in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration.

These are all historic actions. And no President before has so vigorously advanced America's interests in our relationship with China.

In response to America's actions and resolve, some multinational corporations say our economic policies are too tough and that advancing our interests and our values runs contrary to better relations with China.

Needless to say, we see it very differently. Despite the great power competition that is underway, and America's growing strength, we want better for China. That's why, for the first time in decades, under President Donald Trump's leadership, the United States is treating China's leaders exactly how the leaders of any great world power should be treated — with respect, yes, but also with consistency and candor.

And in that spirit of candor, I must tell you that in the year since my Hudson speech, Beijing has still not taken significant action to improve our economic relationship. And on many other issues we've raised, Beijing's behavior has become even more aggressive and destabilizing.

On the trade front, this past May, after months of painstaking negotiations resulted in mutual agreement on many key matters, at the last moment, China backed away — backed away from a 150-page agreement, sending both sides back to square one.

Now, President Trump still believes Beijing wants to make a deal. And we welcome the support for American agriculture in the new phase one agreement and hope it can be signed as soon as the APEC Summit in Chile this week. But China knows there's a whole range of structural and significant issues between our two countries that also must be addressed.



For instance, despite a 2015 promise in the Rose Garden by China's leader to cease and desist, China continues to aid and abet the theft of our intellectual property.

Last July, the director of the FBI told Congress that of his agency's 1,000 active investigations into intellectual property theft, the majority involve China. American enterprises continue to lose hundreds of billions of dollars each year in intellectual property theft.

Behind these statistics are not just businesses, but people, families, and dreams threatened by the violation of their rights and the theft of their genius. Free enterprise depends on the ability of risk-taking citizens to pursue their ambitions and reap the rewards of their sacrifice. When the product of their labor is stolen, when the sweat of their brow is made futile, it undermines our entire system of free enterprise.

Last year alone, there's been case after case of intellectual property theft involving China. In March, Tesla filed suit against a former engineer who's been accused of stealing 300,000 files related to its own American-developed autopilot system, before bolting for a job at a Chinese self-driving car company.

And last December, the Justice Department revealed that it had broken up a nearly four-year operation by a notorious hacking group within China's Ministry of State Security. These Chinese government officials stole the names and data of 100,000 U.S. Navy personnel, as well as ship maintenance information, with grave implications for our national security.

Despite China's promises to crack down on Chinese fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, the truth is, those deadly drugs also continue to flood across our borders, claiming the lives of thousands of Americans every month.

And today, China's Communist Party is building a surveillance state unlike anything the world has ever seen. Hundreds of millions of surveillance cameras stare down from every vantage point. Ethnic minorities must navigate arbitrary checkpoints where police demand blood samples, fingerprints, voice recordings, and multiple

angle head shots, and even iris scans.

And China is now exporting to countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East the very same technological tools that it uses in its authoritarian regime: tools that it's deployed in places like Xinjiang; tools that it's deployed often with the help of American companies.

And Beijing has also smashed the barriers between civilian and military technological domains — a doctrine that China calls “military-civilian fusion.” By law and presidential fiat, companies in China — whether private, state-owned, or foreign — must share their technologies with the Chinese military.

And China's military action in the region and its approach to its neighbors over the past year has also remained increasingly provocative.

While China's leaders stood in the Rose Garden in 2015 and said that its country had, and I quote, “no intention to militarize” the South China Sea, Beijing has deployed advanced anti-ship and anti-air missiles atop an archipelago of military bases constructed on artificial islands.

And Beijing has stepped up its use of what they call “maritime militia” vessels to regularly menace Filipino and Malaysian sailors and fishermen. And the Chinese Coast Guard has tried to strong-arm Vietnam from drilling for oil and natural gas off of Vietnam's own shores.

In the East China Sea, in 2019, our close ally, Japan, is on track to scramble more fighter aircraft sorties in response to Chinese provocations than in any previous year in history. And China's Coast Guard has sent ships for more than 60 days in a row into the waters around the Senkaku Islands, which are administered by Japan.

China is also using its “One Belt, One Road” Initiative to establish footholds in ports around the world, ostensibly for commercial purposes, but those purposes could eventually become military. We see now the flag of Chinese ownership flying today in ports from Sri Lanka to Pakistan to Greece.



And earlier this year, it was reported that Beijing had signed a secret agreement to establish a naval base in Cambodia. And it is reported that Beijing is even eyeing locations on the Atlantic Ocean that could serve as naval facilities.

And while our administration will continue to respect the One China Policy — as reflected in the three joint communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act — through checkbook diplomacy, over the past year China has induced two more nations to switch diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, increasing pressure on the democracy in Taiwan.

The international community must never forget that its engagement with Taiwan does not threaten the peace; it protects peace on Taiwan and throughout the region. America will always believe that Taiwan’s embrace of democracy shows a better path for all the Chinese people. (Applause.)

But nothing in the past year has put on display the Chinese Communist Party’s antipathy to liberty so much as the unrest in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong has served as an important gateway between China and the wider world for 150 years. Hong Kong is one of the freest economies in the world, with strong, independent legal institutions and a lively free press, and it’s home to hundreds of thousands of foreign residents.

Hong Kong is a living example of what can happen when China embraces liberty. And yet, for the last few years, Beijing has increased its interventions in Hong Kong and engaged in actions to curtail the rights and liberties of its people — rights and liberties that were guaranteed through a binding international agreement of “one country, two systems.”

But President Trump has been clear, as he said in his words, “The United States stands for liberty.” (Applause.) We respect the sovereignty of nations. But America expects Beijing to honor its commitments, and President Trump has repeatedly made it clear it would be much harder for us to make a trade deal if the authorities resort to the use of violence against protestors in Hong Kong. (Applause.)

Since then, I'm pleased to observe that Hong Kong authorities have withdrawn the extradition bill that sparked the protests in the first place, and Beijing has shown some restraint.

In the days ahead, I can assure you, the United States will continue to urge China to show restraint, to honor its commitments, and respect the people of Hong Kong. And to the millions in Hong Kong who have been peacefully demonstrating to protect your rights these past months, we stand with you. (Applause.) We are inspired by you, and we urge you to stay on the path of nonviolent protest. (Applause.) But know that you have the prayers and the admiration of millions of Americans.

As China has exercised its influence across the region and across the world, as I said last year, the Chinese Communist Party is also continuing to reward and coerce American businesses, movie studios, universities, think tanks, scholars, journalists, and local, state, and federal officials to influence the public debate here in America.

Today, China is not only exporting hundreds of billions of dollars in unfairly traded goods to the United States, but lately China has also been trying to export censorship — the hallmark of its regime. By exploiting corporate greed, Beijing is attempting to influence American public opinion, coercing corporate America.

And far too many American multinational corporations have kowtowed to the lure of China's money and markets by muzzling not only criticism of the Chinese Communist Party, but even affirmative expressions of American values.

Nike promotes itself as a so called "social justice champion," but when it comes to Hong Kong, it prefers checking its social conscience at the door. Nike stores in China actually removed their Houston Rockets merchandise from their shelves to join the Chinese government in protest against the Rockets general manager's seven-word tweet, which read: "Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong."

And some of the NBA's biggest players and owners, who routinely exercise their

freedom to criticize this country, lose their voices when it comes to the freedom and rights of the people of China. In siding with the Chinese Communist Party and silencing free speech, the NBA is acting like a wholly owned subsidiary of the authoritarian regime.

A progressive corporate culture that willfully ignores the abuse of human rights is not progressive; it is repressive. (Applause.)

When American corporations, professional sports, pro athletes embrace censorship, it's not just wrong; it's un-American. American corporations should stand up for American values here at home and around the world. (Applause.)

And Beijing's economic and strategic actions, its attempts to shape American public opinion, prove out what I said a year ago and it's just as true today: China wants a different American President, which is the ultimate proof that President Trump's leadership is working.

America's economy is growing stronger by the day, and China's economy is paying the price. The President's strategy is correct. He's fighting for the American people, for American jobs and American workers like no one has before. And I promise you this administration will not stand down. (Applause.)

That said, the President has also made it clear the United States does not seek confrontation with China. We seek a level playing field, open markets, fair trade, and a respect for our values.

We are not seeking to contain China's development. We want a constructive relationship with China's leaders, like we have enjoyed for generations with China's people. And if China will step forward and seize this unique moment in history to start anew by ending the trade practices that have taken advantage of the American people for far too long, I know President Donald Trump is ready and willing to begin that new future — (applause) — just as America has done in the past.

When Deng Xiaoping’s “Reform and Opening” policy encouraged engagement and exchange with the outside world, the United States responded with open arms. We welcomed China’s rise. We celebrated the remarkable accomplishment of 600 million people lifting themselves out of poverty. And America invested more than any other nation in China’s economic resurgence.

The American people want better for the people of China. But in pursuit of that end, we must take China as it is, not as we imagine or hope it might be someday.

And people sometimes ask whether the Trump administration seeks to “de-couple” from China. The answer is a resounding “no.” The United States seeks engagement with China and China’s engagement with the wider world, but engagement in a manner consistent with fairness, mutual respect, and the international rules of commerce.

But, so far, it appears the Chinese Communist Party continues to resist a true opening or a convergence with global norms.

All that Beijing is doing today, from the Party’s great firewall in cyberspace or to that great wall of sand in the South China Sea, from their distrust of Hong Kong’s autonomy, or their repression of people of faith all demonstrate that it’s the Chinese Communist Party that has been “de-coupling” from the wider world for decades.

President Xi himself, I’m told, said in a once-secret speech shortly after his rise as Party General Secretary that China must “conscientiously prepare for all aspects of long-term cooperation and struggle between the two social systems.” He also told his colleagues at that time not to underestimate the resilience of the West. And there was wisdom in those words.

China should never underestimate the resilience of the freedom-loving people of America or the resolve of the President of the United States. (Applause.) China should know that the United States’ values run deep, that our commitment to these values remains as strong as it was for our Founding Fathers, and that there

will never be a day when the bright light of democracy and freedom goes out in America. (Applause.)

America was born out of rebellion against repression and tyranny. Our nation was founded, settled, and pioneered by men and women of extraordinary valor, rugged determination, faith, and fiery independence and an iron will. And nothing has changed much in the centuries that have passed.

Americans believe that all men and women are created equal and we're endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And nothing will change these beliefs. (Applause.) They are who we are. They are who we will always be.

And we will continue to believe that the values of democracy — of individual liberty, of freedom of religion and conscience, the rule of law — serve American and global interests because they are, and will ever be, the best form of government to unleash human aspirations and guide the relations between all the world's nations and peoples.

Despite the many challenges we face in the United States-China relationship, I can assure you that under the leadership of President Donald Trump, the United States will not allow these challenges to foreclose practical cooperation with China.

We will continue to negotiate in good faith with China to bring about long-overdue structural reforms in our economic relationship. And as I heard again from him this morning, President Trump remains optimistic that an agreement can be reached.

We'll continue to forge bonds between our two peoples through education, travel, and cultural exchange.

China and the United States will also continue in a spirit of engagement to work together to secure the full, final, and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea.

And we will seek greater cooperation on arms control and the enforcement of U.S.

sanctions in the Persian Gulf.

America will continue to seek a better relationship with China. And as we do so, we will speak plainly, because this is a relationship that both the United States and China have to get right.

America will continue to seek a fundamental restructuring of our relationship with China. And under the leadership of President Donald Trump, America will stay the course. The American people and their elected officials in both parties will stay resolved. We will defend our interests. We will defend our values. And we will do so in a spirit of charity and good will for all. (Applause.)

President Trump has forged a strong personal relationship with President Xi. And on that foundation, we will continue to look for ways to strengthen our relationship for the betterment of both of our peoples.

And we fervently believe the United States and China can and must work to share a peaceful and prosperous future together. But only honest dialogue and good-faith negotiations can make that future a reality.

And so, as I closed my speech a year ago, so I close today: America is reaching out our hand to China. And we hope that, soon, Beijing will reach back, this time with deeds, not words, and with renewed respect for America.

There is an ancient Chinese proverb that reads, “Men see only the present, but Heaven sees the future.” As we go forward, let us pursue a future of peace and prosperity with resolve and faith. Faith in President Trump’s leadership and vision for our economy and our place in the world, and faith in the relationship that he has forged with President Xi of China and in the enduring friendship between the American people and the Chinese people. And faith that Heaven sees the future — and by God’s grace, America and China will meet that future together.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.  
(Applause.)



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12:28 P.M. EDT