



News

About China

One Home

Key Documents

Home | [One-China Principle](#)

- [One-China Principle](#)
- [One Country Two Systems](#)
- [International Agreements](#)
- [White Papers on the Taiwan Question](#)
- [Gov's Position on the Taiwan Question](#)
- [Origin of the Taiwan Question](#)
- [Anti-Secession Law](#)
- [Important Speeches & Documents](#)

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One-China Principle

International

Agreements

One Country Two Systems

Anti-Secession Law

White Papers on the Taiwan Question

Gov's Position on the Taiwan Question

Origin of the Taiwan Question

Important Speeches & Documents

首页-英文频道-One-China principle-Important Speeches & Documents-Jiang

Jiang: Speech in English Elaborates on Consensus and Taiwan Question

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China will stick to the principles of "honesty, harmony and good faith" in its diplomatic activities, with the purpose of safeguarding world peace and advancing common development, said president Jiang Zemin Thursday.

Visiting President Jiang Zemin voiced the message to 600 guests, including former US President George Bush and Chinese basketball player Yao Ming, Thursday in a speech in English, permeated with philosophical thinking, at the George Bush Presidential Library at Texas A&M University.

Jiang said it is China's policy to seek consensus but not uniformity in the conduct of its foreign relations, and the nation will work to promote peace and cooperation with its neighbors. He reiterated a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question would not only contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large, but would secure US interests on the island.

He also promised to cooperate more closely with the United States to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula in South Asia and the Middle East, and prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Jiang was speaking at the presidential library, which was built in 1997 in honor of former President Bush.

During his speech, Jiang highly praised former President Bush, calling him "an old friend of the Chinese people."

The Chinese president cited Confucius, who said 2,000 years ago "a gentleman seeks harmony but not uniformity," when reiterating that harmony instead of sameness is the essential factor for the concerted development of all civilizations. Guided by the principle, China has resolved land boundary disputes with most of its neighbors through negotiations, joined the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the formulation of a code of conduct in the South China Sea, and decided to set up a China-ASEAN Free Trade Area within the next decade, he said. "China stands ready to work with the United States and other countries in the area to promote peace and prosperity," Jiang said.

The Chinese president reaffirmed that the Chinese Government "has the maximum sincerity and will exert its utmost efforts to make peaceful reunification (of Taiwan with the motherland) a reality."

He restated his "eight proposals" put forward in 1995, in which the mainland promises that after reunification Taiwan can keep its economic system and life style, manage its party, government and military affairs on its own and the rights and interests of people in Taiwan will be effectively protected.

"No formula is better than peaceful reunification and one country, two systems," Jiang said. "Nothing threatens peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits more than Taiwan Independence (forces do)." He called on the United States to stick to its

commitments in the three Sino-US communiqués and the one-China policy. Jiang re-emphasized the common interests China and the United States share in the global fight against terror.

"Both China and the US are victims of terrorism," Jiang said. "The Chinese and Americans have stood together and carried out effective cooperation."

Jiang flew to Houston from Chicago to continue his four-day visit of the United States. On Wednesday (local time), Jiang visited the Johnson Space Center, the research and development base and control headquarters of the US manned space program. In the evening, Jiang met with Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown and attended a banquet given in his honor by the latter.

(Xinhua News Agency October 25, 2002)

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