

ASIAN TOUR 1967TAIWANSPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD HOLT, AT STATE DINNER  
GIVEN BY VICE PRESIDENT AND MRS. YEN IN TAIPEI5TH APRIL, 1967

Mr. Vice President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

First I must apologise because my speech will be rather longer, or at least I am afraid it will seem longer, than that of His Excellency, the Vice President, not only because the text is longer, but it is longer because I really have much more to thank him about than he has to thank me about, and I have seen so much and done so much in this short time here, about which I wish to make some references.

And so, Mr. Vice President, I must first of all express the grateful thanks of myself, of Mrs. Holt and all members of my party, for the very warm and cordial welcome we have received wherever we have moved on our visit here. We have felt that we have been particularly privileged and honoured to have been received and entertained with such gracious hospitality by His Excellency your distinguished President Chiang Kai-Shek and Madam Chiang. I have valued the opportunity which came to me last night for my first discussion with your President and I look forward greatly to talking with him again as we have arranged before I leave tomorrow morning.

I must also thank you, Mr. Vice President and Mrs. Yen, for many things. Firstly, for the warmth of your welcome, the intimate and frank discussions we were able to hold together both in your Cabinet Room and as we have moved about together. The way in which you have sacrificed your own time and convenience to accompany me as I have moved about your industries this morning and finally, but by no means least, for according us this magnificent dinner this evening in such a memorable and glorious setting, and in the company of such a large and distinguished gathering. It gives me particular pleasure, as I am sure it does to all of my company to be feted in this splendid hall, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the father of modern China. I feel I can take a certain pride in being the first Prime Minister from Australia to visit the Republic of China and I interpret quite confidently the reception that you have given me as a true reflection of the tradition of friendship between our two countries.

Our Australian Embassy shared with you the hardships and rigours of war-time days in Chungking and I am pleased that my own government was recently responsible for re-establishing our mission here in your present capital. Your own embassy in Canberra is one of the oldest diplomatic missions in our capital city.

In the years since we first became associated our countries have both been through crises and we still live in turbulent times, but we both pursue courses of action designed to promote the things we believe in - peace, social justice, individual liberty, the advancement of human wellbeing and the right of all peoples to determine their own future and to defend their sovereign independence. We in Australia, espousing as we do all these causes in the United Nations and elsewhere, have given you our constant support to the Republic of China in the Security Council, the General Assembly, and all organs of the United Nations.

Mrs. Holt and I and my party will leave Taipei tomorrow morning with very happy recollections of our brief stay with you, but, although this visit has been short, thanks to the care, Mr. Vice President, that you have taken in arranging our programme, we have learned much from what we have been told by you and your Ministers and officials, and from all that we have been shown, and what we have been able to see as we have moved around, we have been particularly impressed by what we have seen of the rapid economic growth, the prosperity, the wellbeing of this province and the evident happiness of your people.

Your achievements in agriculture were apparent as we flew into your city, and since then we have seen your large petroleum and aluminium plants, your imaginative export development complex at Kaohsiung with its new industries, some of them highly sophisticated, and we have noted the emphasis you give to encouragement of private initiative and to investment from abroad. The enthusiasm and efficiency which you are making and displaying are an obvious mark of this project and these things provide a striking illustration of what can be achieved in a free country where effective planning goes hand in hand with the provision of suitable incentives to private initiative.

As for the growing trade between us, we hope and confidently expect that this will steadily expand. We've watched with interest and admiration what the Republic of China is doing to assist less developed countries, particularly in Africa, and particularly in the field of technical skill. Your approach to the provision of training in agriculture is obviously sound as is shown by your achievement in raising productivity by as much as ten times per hectare in some cases in the countries you've assisted. We fully endorse your conviction that the only sure way of instilling efficient and modern techniques is by sending out experts who are practical men and women and who are willing to prove the effectiveness of these techniques by their own physical efforts, whether knee deep in mud in a rice field, or covered in grease underneath a bus. We have ourselves, found that our best successes in the field of technical aid have been gained by experts who were able to teach by their own example instead of merely by oral or written explanation.

Finally, I have had the pleasure this afternoon, as has Mrs. Holt and others of our party, of examining some of China's most ancient and precious treasures, and this has been a fascinating experience, even though necessarily a short one. There are many of my fellow countrymen who would give a great deal to be able to share this experience Mr. Vice President. I know there would be practical problems, but is there the possibility of mounting at some time an exhibition of some of these magnificent pieces in some of our Australian cities? It would be assured of very great interest and applause from my countrymen.

This tour I have been making, Mr. Vice President, has been in the nature of an educational process for me. I believe that education broadens knowledge - that knowledge in turn encourages understanding, and that understanding builds friendship, and I am sure that this particular visit not only has added by way of education to my knowledge and has increased my understanding of your people and your problems, I am sure it has also given new warmth, or added warmth, and greater depth to the friendship between our two countries and between those of us who have the responsibility of leading these two countries.

And because I value so greatly this process and the contribution that you and your colleagues have made to it, and in that spirit that I do ask you to rise and join with me first in honouring the toast of your great President Chiang Kai-Shek and Madame Chiang, and then the toast to the Vice President and Mrs. Yen, and all your colleagues of the government, and finally, the people of Taiwan - may they go on in security, prosperity and happiness and may the friendship of the Australian people contribute to those felicitous purposes. I give you the toast.

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