



**ASIA FORUM
BEIJING**
FRIDAY 26 MARCH 2010

Address by Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi
At the Opening Session of the Asia Forum
Of the London School of Political Science

China World Hotel, 26 March 2010

Director Davies
Fellow LSE alumni
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to join you at this opening session of the fifth Asia Forum co-sponsored by LSE and the China Institute of International Studies. This is the first time that the Asia Forum is being held in China's mainland. Let me extend warm congratulations on its opening and sincere welcome to all the guests and LSE alumni here.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to go to Great Britain and pursue studies at the world renowned LSE in the 1970's. You can imagine that as a student, I had to study very hard, and yet I found my time at LSE most rewarding and memorable. It was not only my educational experience, but also an eye-opener for me, and it prepared me well for my diplomatic careers in the ensuing years. What I learned at LSE with the help of my teachers and fellow students is an invaluable asset for my whole life, and I feel a deep debt of gratitude to LSE and all the teachers who taught me so much. Let me tell you that each time I returned to Britain after leaving LSE, I would try to take some

time from my crowded schedule to retrace my steps back to LSE campus to feel like a student again and renew friendship with school professors and other faculty members. I am pleased to learn that the School has produced many outstanding talents over the years and the campus has expanded. That is not easy in London where I know land is incredibly expensive.

Time flies. More than 30 years have passed since I left LSE. The school has gone through many changes, but the world that we live in has gone through even bigger changes. This was particularly true in the last 10 years – the first decade of the 21st century. It was a decade of crisis and transformation, and of cooperation and development. A host of major events, including the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the war in Iraq, the international financial crisis, and the rise of the over all strength of developing countries, have brought about fundamental changes in the international landscape and hastened the arrival of a new era, an era marked by economic fluctuations, institutional overhaul, structural adjustments and above all, greater cooperation among countries.

In the face of unprecedented opportunities and challenges countries must help each other, live in harmony and join hands to build a better homeland for humanity. I think we can proceed from the following aspects.

First, adhere to multilateralism and promote democracy in international relations. The collective strength of developing countries has been growing in recent years. A number of big developing countries are rising rapidly with much bigger influence and stronger voice in world affairs. The balance of power is moving increasingly towards equilibrium, holding out a bright prospect for a multi-polar world. Multilateralism is an important approach to settle international disputes and an effective way to enhance international cooperation and address common challenges to mankind. China stands for mutual respect and equality in

developing state-to-state relations. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community. We must abide by the principles of democracy and ensure the right of equal participation by all countries in the efforts to safeguard world peace and promote common development. World affairs cannot be decided by only one or two countries. To adhere to multilateralism, we must first uphold and foremost respect the authority of the United Nations and uphold the collective security regime. China is ready to work tirelessly with all other countries to build a multi-polar world and promote democracy in international relations.

Second, strengthen cooperation to tackle global challenges and regional hotspot issues. We live in an era of globalisation. Globalisation brings with it not only opportunities but also difficulties and challenges. A case in point is the continued financial crisis and the structural and deep-seated problems it has laid bare in the world economy. The recent Dubai debt crisis and the European sovereign debt crisis remind us that the world economic upturn is far from being firmly established. At the same time, global issues such as climate change, food security, energy security and public health security have become more acute. Terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, communicable diseases and other non-traditional security threats still exist, while long-standing regional hotspot issues such as the Iranian nuclear issue, the Korean nuclear issue and Afghanistan remain unsolved. In short, we are confronted with severe challenges in our effort to achieve world peace and development. Global challenges call for a global response, and no one should stay indifferent. As a responsible member of the international community, China has taken an active part in the global effort to counter challenges and has made contributions commensurate with its capabilities. Here, I want to make a special mention of China's participation in peacekeeping operations. China sent its first group of peacekeepers to Timor-Leste in 2000. Since then, we have sent a total of 14,000 personnel to various UN peacekeeping missions. Today, China is the largest contributor of the

peacekeepers among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. Some of our peacekeepers even gave their lives while performing peacekeeping duties. I believe that as China's economic and overall national strength further grows, it will make even greater contribution to regional and world peace, stability and development within the realm of its capabilities.

Third, strengthen practical cooperation in pursuit of mutual benefit. The world economy faces new development opportunities, but it is also confronted with new uncertainties and destabilising factors brought about by the financial crisis. The overall trading environment has become more complicated and protectionist sentiments are on the rise. We must realise that globalisation has linked the interests of all countries together. The business ties among countries today are so close that if any country attempts to resort to the old practice of protectionism and erect trade barriers, it can only end up hurting the interests of not only others, but also its own. We must follow the trend of our time and seize the opportunities provided by globalisation to intensify practical cooperation and achieve mutual complementarity and win-win progress. China regards stronger cooperation with other countries as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. In the past 30 odd years since reform and opening-up, China's external trade has surged from a mere US\$20.6 billion to US\$2.2 trillion, and China has become the world's largest exporting and second largest importing country. In conducting cooperation with other countries, we lay emphasis on mutual benefit and seek to expand common interests, and we aim to promote world development through our own development. We have fulfilled our commitment under the UN Millennium Declaration, provided economic assistance to more than 120 developing countries, and cancelled debts owed by 49 heavily indebted poor countries and least developed countries. We are of the view that China cannot achieve development in isolation from the world and the world needs China for development and prosperity. China is ready to share global responsibilities and

development benefits with other countries and work together for a more balanced and inclusive economic globalisation.

Fourth, step up cultural and people-to-people exchanges to deepen mutual understanding. As a Chinese saying goes, "Amity between people holds the key to sound relations between states." There cannot be sound state-to-state relations in the absence of mutual understanding among the people. We live in a diverse world and we must view such diversity with an open and inclusive mind. We must treat each other as equals, respect the unique historical and cultural background of each and every country, and respect other countries' right to choose social systems and development paths suited to their national conditions. We should endeavour to find common ground and seek harmony in this diverse world, and push forward development through exchanges. Since reform and opening-up, China's cultural and educational exchanges with the rest of the world have flourished. We have received a total of more than 1.6 million students from over 180 countries and regions. Every year, the Chinese make over 50 million visits to different parts of the world and more and more people are choosing to study abroad. There are now about 200,000 Chinese students in Europe, and more than 100,000 of them studying in the UK. The UK has hence become home to the largest Chinese student community in the EU. I am gratified to note that as a top-notch institution of higher learning, LSE has attracted a large number of Chinese students. I want to stress here that China needs to learn more about the world and the world also needs to know more about China. We will continue to enhance cultural and people-to-people exchanges with other countries and encourage different civilisations to cast aside suspicions and misgivings and learn from each other with an inclusive spirit. Only in this way can our world become a better and more colourful place.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is true that China has achieved notable economic and social progress, but it is still at the initial stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time to come. China has a big population and weak economic foundation and its development is uneven. We are keenly aware of the realities we face and the difficulties we must overcome in order to achieve development in the 21st century. To ensure a better life for the 1.3 billion Chinese people, we must focus all our effort on development, follow a path of peaceful development, pursue a win-win strategy of opening-up and foster a peaceful and stable external environment. We want to join the rest of the world in an unrelenting effort to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Today, LSE graduates are active across the world. As a bridge, they have facilitated cooperation among countries and friendship among peoples. In my view, we should not only be a good bridge, but also build more bridges to further promote educational and cultural exchanges between countries. This Asia Forum has given us a platform and an opportunity to explore together ways to meet global challenges and open up new vistas for future development.

In conclusion, I wish this forum a crowning success.

Thank You

Thank you for electing me as an LSE honorary fellow. I see this not only as a great honour for me personally, but also as a sign of friendship of Director Davies and LSE towards the Chinese people. I wish to take this opportunity to express heartfelt appreciation to all the people who have been committed to friendship and cooperation between China and the UK, Europe and the world. I

hope that more Chinese young people will have the opportunity to study at LSE and contribute their share to exchanges between China and the world and to world peace, cooperation and development.