

## Speech delivered by the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, to the Koerber Foundation

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*Transcript based on simultaneous translation*

**Former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker,  
Former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt,  
Vice President Klaus Wehmeier,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,**

Guten Tag,  
Good afternoon,

It gives me great pleasure to meet you and speak to you on the invitation of former President von Weizsäcker and the Koerber Foundation. Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the Koerber Foundation for its commitment to promoting mutual understanding between Europe and China.

I visited Germany five years ago. Back then the international financial crisis was unfolding, the European debt issue just emerged, and the global economy was overshadowed by dark clouds of uncertainty and anxiety. Against such a backdrop, China and Germany agreed during my visit to lift the bilateral cooperation in various issues to a higher level and overcome difficulties with joint actions.

Five years on, I am glad to see the progress Europe has made in addressing the soaring debt issue, and also clear signs of economic recovery. Germany as the anchor of European economy and champion of European integration has played a key role in this endeavour, and gained international applause. We are heartened by the progress made in the joint efforts of China and Germany and Europe to fight the international financial crisis.

China's and Germany's relationship is never so strong as it is today with bilateral exchanges and the cooperation reaching unprecedented depth and breath and warmth. All this shows that by enjoying each other's strength, we can not only achieve common development to the benefit of both countries and peoples, but also contribute significantly to promoting world peace and development.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

What has made it possible for China and Germany to make such good progress in exchanges and corporation? A key factor in my view is that through mutual efforts made over the years, our two sides have come to appreciate that countries different in history, culture, national condition, and the social system, need to deepen mutual understanding, treat each other with sincerity, be ready to listen to the other's views, and put oneself in the other's position in addressing related issues.

Mutual understanding is the foundation of state to state relations. Deeper mutual understanding will cement and broaden the foundation of our exchanges and cooperation. Thanks to over 30 years of rapid growth achieved through reform and opening up, China's GDP now ranks the second place in the world. As China continues to grow, some people start to worry. Some view China through coloured glasses and believe that China will inevitably become a threat, as it develops further. They even portray China as being the terrifying Mephisto who would someday suck the soul of the world. Absurdity as such couldn't be more ridiculous. Yet some people regrettably are never tired of preaching it. This shows that prejudice is indeed hard to overcome. A review of human history tells us that what keeps people apart are not mountains, rivers or oceans, but a lack of mutual understanding, as a Lebanese once observed, only the sharing of all our talents will light the lamp of wisdom.

Let me take this opportunity to talk to you about China's reform and development focusing on China's commitment to peaceful developments. I hope this will help you gain a better understanding of China.

China made the solemn declaration to the world long ago that it is committed to pursuing peaceful development. It strives to develop itself by upholding world peace, and to maintain world peace through its development. Pursuing peaceful development is China's response to international concerns about the direction of China's development. Moreover it demonstrates the Chinese People's confidence and the commitment to realise its development and growth. Such confidence and commitment are rooted in the rich heritage of the Chinese civilisation, your understanding of conditions for achieving the goals of China's development, and our key appreciation of the great trends of global development.

The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation. And the most profound pursuit of a nation has its origin in the national character formed through generations. The Chinese civilisation with a history of over 5,000 years has always cherished the peace. The pursuit of peace, amity and harmony is an integral part of the Chinese character, which grounds deep in the blood of the Chinese people.

In ancient times, the following axioms were already popular in China. A warlike state, however big it may be, will eventually parish. Peace is of paramount importance, seek harmony without uniformity, replace weapons of war with gifts of jade and silk, bring prosperity to the nation and security to the people, force their friendship with neighbours, achieve universal peace. These axioms have been passed on in China from generation to generation. China was long one of the most powerful countries in the world. Yet it never engaged in colonialism or aggression. The pursuit of peaceful development represents the peace-loving cultural tradition of the Chinese nation over the past several thousand years, a tradition that we have inherited and carried forward.

China has set the following goal for its future development: By 2020, China will double its 2010 GDP and the per capita income of urban and rural residents, and also finish the building of the society of initial prosperity in all respects. By the mid-21st century, China will have turned itself into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious. We refer to this goal as being the Chinese dream of the great renewal of the Chinese nation. We will quickly enhance China's overall prosperity and raise

its happiness index for over 1.3 billion Chinese people as long as we are on the right path.

Yet it will not be as easy to make this happen for every individual. Consider the difference between 8 people sharing one meal, and 80 or even 800 people sharing the meal. No matter how big the meal is, the individual share of it will differ dramatically for diners different in number. We are keen and aware that China will remain the world's largest developing country for a long time to come, and to make life better for the over 1.3 billion people calls for strenuous efforts.

Two things will enable China to focus on development; that is a harmonious and stable domestic environment, and a peaceful and stable international environment. History is the best teacher. It faithfully records the journey that every country has gone through, and offers guidance for its future development. In the over 100 years from the Opium War in 1840 prior to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China was ravaged by wars, turmoils and foreign aggressions. To the average Chinese, it was a period of ordeal too bitter to recall.

The war of aggression against China committed by Japanese militarism alone inflicted over 35 million Chinese military and civilian casualties. These atrocities are still fresh in our memory. We Chinese have long held the belief that we should not do onto others what we would not want others do to us. China needs peace as much as human beings need air and the plants need sunshine. Only by pursuing peaceful development and working together with all other countries to uphold world peace can China realise its goal and make even greater contribution to the world.

Dr Sun Yat-sen, the pioneer of China's democratic revolution, had this to say: The trend of the world is searching forward, those who follow the trend will prosper and those who go against it will perish. History shows that a country in order to achieve prosperity must recognise and follow the underlying trend of the changing world; otherwise it will be abandoned by history.

What is the trend of today's world? The answer is unequivocal. It is the trend of peace, development, cooperation and win-win progress. China does not subscribe to the outdated logic that a country will invariably seek hegemony when it grows in strength. Can the old practice of colonialism and hegemonism still work in today's world? Definitely no. It can only lead to a dead end. And those who stick to this beaten track will only hit a stonewall. The only alternative is peaceful development. That is why China is committed to it.

Facts speak louder than words. Over the past decades, China has consistently followed an independent foreign policy of peace, and made it abundantly clear: China's foreign policies are aimed at maintaining world peace and promoting a common development. China has stated on numerous occasions that it opposes hegemonism and power politics in all forms, does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and will never seek hegemony or expansion.

This is our guiding policy which underlies China's political system, and this is a policy we follow in practice. At the same time, China will firmly uphold its sovereignty, security and development interests. No country should expect China to swallow the bitter fruit that undermines its sovereignty, security and development interests. Insured China's pursuit of

peaceful development is not an act of expediency, still less diplomatic rhetoric, rather it is a conclusion we have reached based on an objective assessment of China's history's present and future. It represents confidence in thinking and readiness to practice it. As peaceful development benefits both China and the world, we cannot think of any reason why we should not pursue this approach that has proven so effective.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

Last November the third plenum of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China was held, at which a top-level decision of furthering China's reform and opening a programme was made, and a roadmap and timetable for carrying out the reform was adopted. The overarching goal is to improve and develop the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, advance the modernisation of national governance system and capabilities, and thus lay down a solid institutional foundation for China's long-term development. China is accelerating its efforts to promote a new type of industrialisation, application of IT technologies, organisation and agricultural modernisation, which will unleash tremendous demand in investment and consumption.

With a per capita GDP of close to US\$ 7,000, China is in a crucial stage of fast upgrading the mix of private consumption and industrial structure. In 2013 the service sector overtook industrial manufacturing for the first time as a bigger share of the Chinese economy, the share of the service sector and its importance in the Chinese economy will continue to rise, and so will high value-added high-tech industries. And new growth areas of consumption and drivers of growth will keep emerging. In the next five years China is projected to import over US\$ 10 trillion of goods and make over US\$ 500 billion of overseas investment, and over 500 million Chinese tourists will make overseas visits.

Lao-tse, an ancient Chinese philosopher, observed that a big country should be like the lower reaches of a river, that means that a big country should be as inclusive as the lower reaches of a river that admit numerous tributaries.

China is eager to strengthen dialogue and exchange of views with the rest of the world, and listen to the voices of other countries with an open and inclusive mind. We hope that time will dispel prejudices and misunderstanding. We also hope that the world will view China in an objective historical and multi-dimensional light, and see the true and the full picture of a dynamic China.

China will never pursue development at the expense of other countries, interests or follow a beggar-thy-neighbour policy. With the lofty course of peace and development of the world in mind, we will contribute the Chinese vision to the management of contemporary international relations, offer the Chinese solution for improving global governance, and make our own contribution to the efforts of the mankind in meeting various challenges of the 21st century.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

The Chinese nation and the German nation are two great nations who have made important contribution to promoting the progress of human civilisation. Germany is famous for its advanced science, technology and developed manufacturing industries. It has also produced many luminaries with global renown in philosophy, literature, and music, and many of their works are popular in China. Poems and other literature works by von Goethe, Schiller, Heine, terms of philosophy by Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Max, Heidegger, Marcuse, and enchanting melodies by Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms, to name just a few.

Many Chinese including myself enjoy their works, marvel at the power of thinking, and have thus gained a deep understanding of the world and life. As a German saying goes, mountains never meet, but people do. The Chinese and Germans have a long history of exchanges and profound friendship. As I speak to you, we recall a German widely respected and loved in China, his name is John Rabe. Over 70 years ago, Japanese troops invaded the Chinese city of Nanjing and committed a heinous crime by killing more than 300 southern Chinese soldiers and civilians. When the killing continued, Mr Rabe contacted a dozen other foreigners in Nanjing and set up the Nanjing Safety Zone, sheltering over 200,000 Chinese. Mr Rabe kept a detailed record of the massacre in his diary, which has become an important evidence for study on this historical incident. In 1996, the John Rabe House was jointly opened by China and Germany in Nanjing. At the end of last year, renovation of the Rabe tomb in Berlin founded by the Nanjing municipal government was completed. We in China cherish the memory of Mr Rabe as a man who demonstrated great compassion for life and the love of peace.

Also think of another German friend, Mr Norbert Goerres, who was a grape grower. Between 2000 and 2009 he and his assistant Hans-Werner Beu went to Zaozhuang in the Chinese province of Shandong 17 times to help local farmers improve grape-growing and grafting. Norbert also granted a local winery free of charge the right to use the centuries-old brand of his family business. Norbert and Hans also paid the tuition of eight students from poor local families.

In 2007, Hans was suddenly diagnosed with cancer. Before he died, he asked Norbert to give 2,000 Yuan to two of the students he helped to enable them to finish senior high school. When Norbert gave the money to the two students on 1st August 2008, all those present were moved to tears.

These are just two of the many touching stories of friendship between Chinese and Germans. Over the years many Germans have contributed personally to the growth of China - German relations and the reform and opening up endeavours of China.

The 21st century is a century of cooperation. A broad vision will open up broad vista for our future cooperation. The next 5 to 10 years will be a crucial period of reform and development for both China and Germany. The deepening of such reform will expand our corporation to more areas and inject new impetus for it.

I am convinced that with the integration of "Made in Germany" and "Made in China" we will not only produce quality products together, but also make life better and more inspiring for our two peoples. China and Germany are respective the biggest economy in Asia and in Europe. Bringing closer our two economies, the two pillars of growth in Asia and Europe will

surely boost the world economy.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear friends,

This year marks the centenary of World War I and the 75th anniversary of World War II. Lessing said, "History should not encumber memory, it should enlighten common sense". Former Chancellor Willy Brandt said, "He who forgets the past, will get sick in his soul." And we Chinese often say, "History if not forgotten can serve as a guide for the future."

We in China have chosen a path of peaceful development based on what we have gone through. We sincerely hope that all other countries will follow the path of peaceful development and work together to build a harmonious world of enjoying peace and common prosperity.

Thank you.