



GEORGE H. W. BUSH FOUNDATION
FOR U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

乔治布什美中关系基金会

Menu

The U.S.-China Relations Legacy of President George H. W. Bush

The Bicycling Ambassador

President George H. W. Bush had a special connection with China, one that is unique among U.S. presidents. As the director of the U.S. liaison office to the People's Republic of China from 1974 to 1975, President Bush was the United States' second envoy to the country. During the 15 months he lived and worked in Beijing, he engaged the Chinese people in a very deep and human way. He came to know not only the country's top leaders, but also a wide cross-section of average citizens. This experience of living in China and interacting daily with its people as "the bicycling ambassador," as he was known, shaped his views on China for the rest of his life.



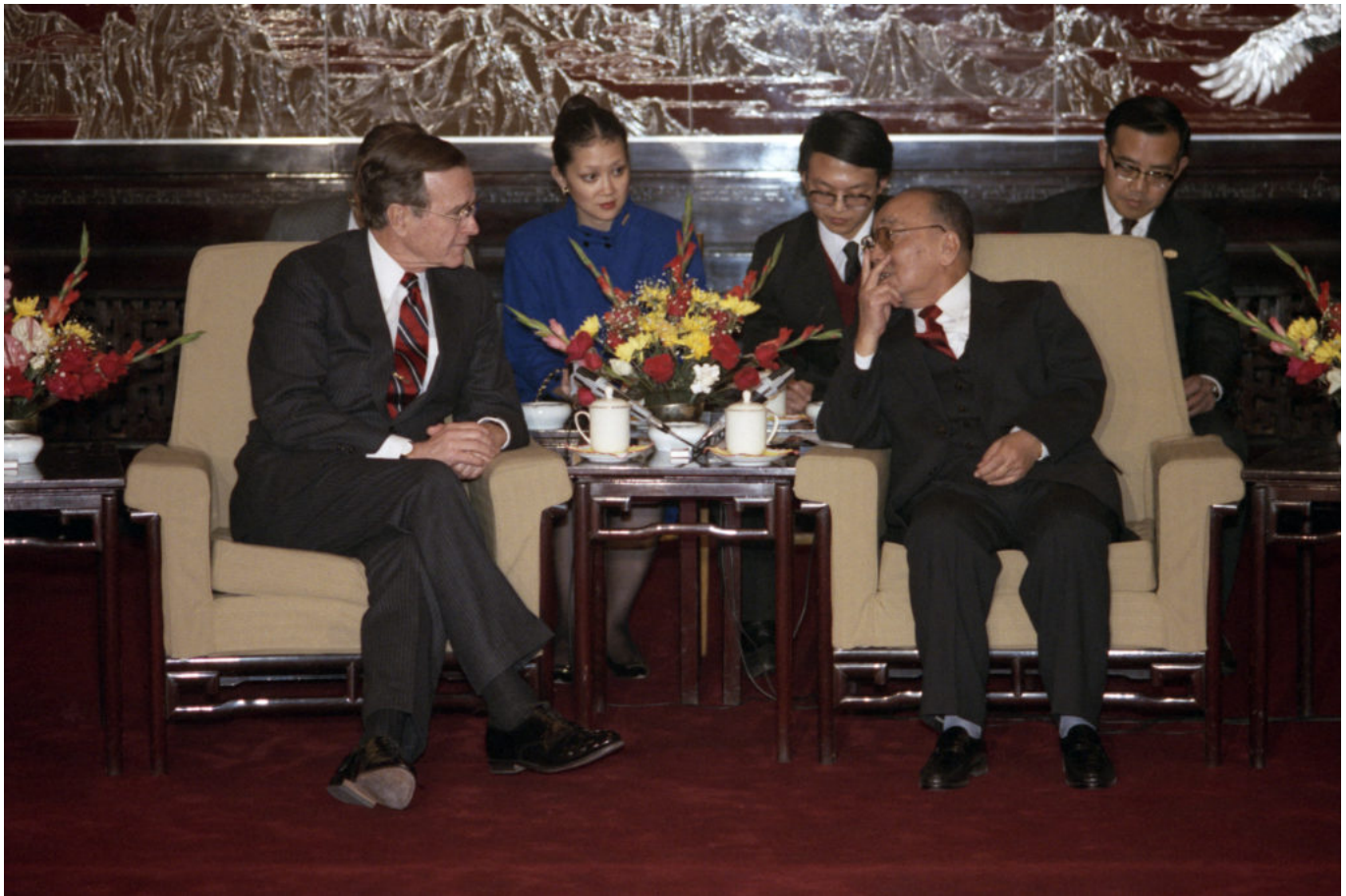
George H. W. and Barbara Bush in Beijing while he was chief of the U.S. Liaison Office, circa 1974. Photo Credit: George Bush Presidential Library and Museum



George H. W. Bush, Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in China, 1974-1976. Photo Credit: George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

Vision for U.S.-China Relations

President Bush regarded the U.S.-China relationship as the most important bilateral relationship in the world. He viewed China's development as beneficial, not harmful, to the United States, and he emphatically rejected the idea that China is an adversary of the U.S. and the zero-sum mindset that tends to accompany such an assessment. He firmly believed that only by working constructively with China can the United States realize its own full potential; and by the same token, only by working constructively with the United States can China realize its own full potential. President Bush's lifelong view was that a positive and constructive relationship between the two countries is in the best interest of both the United States and China as well as the entire global community.



President George H. W. Bush and President Yang Shangkun in Beijing, February 1989. Photo Credit: George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

President Bush was the first U.S. president to engage the People's Republic of China subsequent to the events of the summer of 1989 and thus was the first U.S. leader after the normalization of bilateral relations in 1979 to manage a vastly more textured,

complex, challenging and contentious relationship—in essence, the U.S.-China relationship in its contemporary form. President Bush’s extraordinarily wise, deft and steady handling of that 1989 crisis in U.S.-China relations—and indeed, his ability to give expression to American values without ever losing sight of American interests—paved the way for so many of the U.S.-China successes that followed his presidency.



President George H. W. Bush and Chairman Deng Xiaoping in Beijing, February 1989. Photo Credit: George Bush Presidential Library and Museum

Notwithstanding the real and significant challenges in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship, President Bush in 2007 articulated his vision: “One of my dreams for our world is that these two powerful giants will continue working toward a full partnership and friendship that will bring peace and prosperity to people everywhere.”

The Bush China Foundation seeks to honor President Bush’s U.S.-China relations legacy and to advance his dream for a positive and collaborative U.S.-China relationship that benefits the people of both countries as well as the world as a whole.

George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S.-China Relations

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