

The following is an edited transcript of the Inaugural Oksenberg Lecture delivered May 6, 2002 at Stanford University by President Carter.

**THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA
A President's Perspective**

**An Address by
The Honorable Jimmy Carter
39th President of the United States**

Remarks delivered at the Walter H. Shorenstein Forum Asia/Pacific Research Center,
Stanford University

ABOUT THE OKSENBERG LECTURES

The Oksenberg Lectures honor the legacy of Professor Michel Oksenberg (1938-2001), Senior Fellow at the Asia/Pacific Research Center, Professor of Political Science, and a foremost authority on China.

After receiving degrees from Swarthmore and Columbia, Professor Oksenberg began his academic career at Stanford in 1967, departing for Columbia in 1969, then the University of Michigan in 1973. He became President of the East-West Center in Honolulu in 1992, before returning to Stanford in 1995.

As a senior advisor on the National Security Council from 1977 to 1980, Professor Oksenberg played a crucial role in the decision that led to full diplomatic relations between Beijing and Washington. He then advised every subsequent President on China policy.

Distinguished scholar, beloved mentor to generations of students, senior government official, and a prominent force shaping American attitudes toward China, Professor Oksenberg was consistently outspoken about the need for the United States to be more thoughtful in its engagement of Asia. In tribute, the Oksenberg Lectures will recognize, annually, a distinguished practitioner of America's dealings with the nations of the Asia-Pacific region.

President John Hennessy

I'm delighted to be here today and to add my welcome to this inaugural event for the Mike Oksenberg lecture series. This year, our lecturer is former President Jimmy Carter, and as one who has long admired his moral leadership and continued engagement in world affairs, I'm looking forward to his remarks today.

I would like to add my thanks to Walter Shorenstein for his support of this activity, and my delight in seeing the Oksenberg family here at this event. I'd also like to thank

Russell Hancock and all the members of the Asia/Pacific Research Center and the Shorenstein Forum for their efforts in making this wonderful event occur, as well as their ongoing efforts in support of this important research center.

It is my great privilege and honor to introduce President Jimmy Carter today. As Professor Walder mentioned, Mike Oksenberg was a leading authority in the field of China studies, and a member of President Carter's National Security Council in 1978, when full diplomatic relationships between Washington and Beijing were being reestablished. We are particularly pleased that Professor Carter agreed to join us as the first Mike Oksenberg lecturer, certainly a perfect choice.

James Earl Carter Junior, the man known as Jimmy Carter—at least to those of us over 40 who were old enough to vote in 1976—was elected the 39th President of the United States after a meteoric rise on the national political scene. Born in Plains, Georgia, and the eldest of four children, Jimmy Carter graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1946. After his father's death in 1953, he resigned his commission, and returned to Plains to run the family business.

After establishing himself as a successful businessman and farmer, Jimmy Carter embarked on a career in public service, first as the Chairman of the Sumter County Schoolboard and President of the Plains Development Corporation, and then through a host of other positions, until he was elected Governor of the state of Georgia. In his inaugural speech as governor he gained national attention by calling for an end to racial discrimination.

Immediately following his term as governor, he began a long presidential campaign, with an election that was still almost two years away. It was a challenging time for our country. The Nixon resignation had occurred only four months earlier, and like many young people in our country, I felt personally disillusioned. It was clear that new leadership was desperately needed. As Mr. Carter made his way around the country, he was initially greeted with the question, "Jimmy who?" But he answered that question with his now-famous Carter smile, a handshake, and a promise to give the public "a government as good, and as competent, and as compassionate, as the American people."

After President Carter took his oath of office, he took everyone by surprise, by walking from the Capitol to the White House, something that had never been done before. He was a different kind of politician, one who promised to always tell the truth, who spoke of his faith in almost every speech he gave, and continues to be deeply committed to the cause of social justice and human rights. He remarked on this critical topic in his inaugural address, when he said, "And I join in the hope that when my time as your president has ended, people might say about our nation, that we had torn down the barriers that separated those of us of different race, and region, and religion, and where there had been mistrust, built unity, with respect for diversity; that we had found productive work for those able to perform it; that we had strengthened the American family, which is the basis of our society; that we had ensured respect for law, and equal treatment under the law, for the weak and the powerful, for the rich and the poor; and that

we had enabled our people to be proud of their own government once again.” He concluded with, “I would hope that the nations of the world might say that we had built a lasting peace, built not on weapons of war, but on international policies that reflect our own, most precious values.”

True to his word, the Carter presidency was notable for its efforts in support of human rights and peace throughout the world. In foreign policy, US and China relations entered a new era when the United States established full diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China in 1979. Although later defeated by the Senate, Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev and President Carter were able to work through their differences, and to sign the Strategic Arms Limitation – the SALT II treaty. The Carter administration condemned the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, suspended technology and grain sales to the Soviet Union, and boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. And in 1978, the landmark Camp David peace accord led to a treaty between Israel and Egypt.

In his farewell address, President Carter said, “In a few days, I will lay down my official responsibilities in this office, to take up once more the only title in our democracy superior to that of President: the title of Citizen.” Since leaving office citizen Jimmy Carter has worked for peace and human rights throughout the world. In the mid-1980s, the Carter Presidential Center was established in Atlanta. Its objectives include: working for peace by reducing hunger, controlling disease, helping to resolve conflicts, and promoting free and fair elections. These efforts have been undertaken in Africa, Asia, and throughout the world.

President Carter continues to be a frequent visitor to China; in fact, a few minutes ago he told me about a marvelous, unescorted bike ride that he and Mike Oksenberg had taken through the city of Beijing. I imagine it must have been the first unescorted bike ride by westerners in quite some time.

In 2000, the Carter Center hosted a delegation from China’s Ministry of Civil Affairs, and last year President Carter visited China once again, to discuss the election of local officials in villages throughout the country. It is with great pleasure and anticipation that I look forward to his talk today, on the United States and China: A President’s Perspective. Please join me in giving a warm Stanford welcome to President Jimmy Carter.

[sustained ovation and applause]

President Jimmy Carter:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much

Well, to Lois and the Oksenberg family, to Walter Shorenstein, to former President Don Kennedy, to President Hennessy, and to those others that are assembled here, I am delighted to be part of the Stanford program once again. The last time I made a speech on this campus was when Don was president. I came to give the inaugural address for the

beginning of a conflict resolution program. It seems that my inaugural addresses are the only time I'm invited to campus.

[laughter]

I never was invited to come back, but I'm glad to have this opportunity today.

We were talking earlier about a trip that I took with Mike Oksenberg in 1981, and I'm going to get a little ahead of schedule, because that was the first trip that I took after I left the White House, after I was prematurely retired from my position by another Californian in the 1980 election.

[laughter]

But we were welcomed there as royal guests by Deng Xiao-Ping, with whom we had negotiated that agreement, and we traveled through China, and then as a respite we stopped briefly in Japan. Mike and I went together to a small village—a small college near Osaka in southern Japan—and I was asked to give the speech at the graduation exercises at that college, I might say without any fee.

[laughter]

And as you probably know, it takes longer to say things in Japanese than it does in English. So I was going to make a brief speech, but when I got ready to make my speech, it was obvious that the entire audience—including the students, the professors, and their parents—were really uptight, because I had just recently been president of the United States, and there I was in this little tiny college in Japan. So I decided to put the audience at ease by telling a joke. Now, instead of telling my best joke, I chose my shortest joke, which the interpreter then delivered for me. But I noticed that when he told it, it was much shorter, and that the audience dissolved in laughter. It was the best response I have ever gotten in my life to any joke I've ever told! So I couldn't wait for my speech to get over, so I could ask the interpreter, how did he tell my joke? And when I asked him that, he was very evasive.

[Laughter]

But I finally insisted, "How did you tell my joke? It's so wonderful I want to tell it that way myself when I get back home!" And he finally lowered his head and said, "I just told the audience, 'President Carter told a joke; so everyone please laugh.'"

[laughter]

So that had a dampening effect on my esteem.

Well, today I have been asked to come and honor a great man, and to make personal recollections about China, before and after Mike Oksenberg changed my life—and

changed the life of this country, and to some degree changed the life of every citizen of China.

I first became aware of China as a little boy, maybe four or five years old, because in our Baptist church in Plains, Georgia, the preeminent and most exalted people on earth were missionaries serving in China. I gave five cents a week, to build schools and hospitals in China. And I looked with favor on that country from that time on, and with a great deal of interest.

Later, as President Hennessy has said, I went to the Naval Academy, and after graduation I became a submarine officer. I made my first official visit to China in 1949, as a young submarine officer. And it was a propitious and interesting historical moment: in April of that year, the Nationalist Chinese (Kuomintang), under Chiang Kai-shek, had been forced by the Communists out of the mainland, but they were permitted by Mao Tse-Tung's forces to stay in a few seaports. My submarine operated from one seaport to another, with ships at sea. Every night we tied up after turning our submarine around, so that we could very quickly go to sea if the Communists decided to take that seaport. All around the periphery of the seaports we could see the campfires of the Communist forces. Later that year, on October the first, the Nationalist Chinese left the mainland, and moved to Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China was born. That was a significant date, October the first—it was the date I was born. Later, when I negotiated with the Chinese leaders, they looked with great favor on fate that had made my birthday and the birthday of their regime one and the same.

Well, you all know what happened after the Nationalists left the mainland. There was an altercation between Chinese experts—like Mike Oksenberg and others—and the United States government, about why the revolution had been successful. The US government insisted, for more than a quarter of a century, that the people of China really preferred Chiang Kai-shek, and that the Chinese Communists were in power only because they dominated the people there. And Joseph Mcarthy became famous because he persecuted anyone who questioned that premise. So our country evolved its policy toward that powerful nation—the largest in population on earth—under a false premise, that Taiwan was really China.

In 1972, as all of you would remember, Richard Nixon went to China. And he went to Shanghai, and they issued a communiqué declaring there was just one China. But they didn't say which one! On his return, although I felt that he had done a heroic thing, the so-called Taiwan lobby was so powerful that Nixon avoided any further responsibility for the process of normalizing relations. And when Gerald Ford came into power as President, he took the same position.

I went to Washington in January of 1977, as some of you may remember, determined to establish full diplomatic relations with China. I was blessed, personally and as a president, to have Mike Oksenberg as my chief advisor in the White House on Chinese affairs. Within a few months, I sent Mike Oksenberg and the Secretary of State, Cy Vance, to China to explore the possibilities of negotiating the myriad details that had to

be resolved before we could have diplomatic relations. It was an unsuccessful visit, because Cy Vance, a wonderful man, was very cautious, and he had no rapport or friendship with the Chinese leaders of that time.

The next year I sent Mike Oksenberg back with Brzezinski—Zbigniew Brzezinski—and that was a totally different visit. There was an instant rapport between Brzezinski and Oksenberg and the Chinese leaders under Deng, a rapport filled with humor, friendship and understanding. So we decided to negotiate full diplomatic relations.

I chose Leonard Woodcock, the head of the automobile workers' union—who was a negotiator, not a foreign diplomat—to be my representative, because I wanted a tough negotiator. This was still a very sensitive issue and Mike and I agreed that if our efforts became public, the furor aroused would abort what we were trying to accomplish. I also knew that in the State Department there *are* no secrets—there's a pipeline between the Washington Post and the State Department. So we never sent Leonard Woodcock any negotiating instructions from the State Department. Not a single message. They all went from the White House—Mike and Brzezinski and Vance would come over—directly to Woodcock, and we were eventually successful.

On the fifteenth of December 1978, simultaneously in Beijing and the United States, we announced that we had finally established diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China, to be effective the first day of 1979, fifteen days later.

I'm sure that all of you know about the US Constitution, which grants this prerogative to the President unilaterally. The President can declare diplomatic relations with any country on earth, and the Congress has nothing to say about it. It's a constitutional right, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of our country's history, our founding fathers were wise enough to recognize existing governments, or de-facto governments, without all the nuances of "Do you please me, or do you not please me?" But in the last century we departed from that practice. But I simply decided that we should recognize the Chinese government.

We invited Deng Xiao-Ping to come to the United States sometime in 1979. He responded immediately, and said "How about January?" So we invited him to come in a hurry to the United States.

The trip started out in a very embarrassing way. The plane bringing him over here—the Chinese plane—stopped in Alaska, and his wife decided to go to the restroom. When she got in the restroom, she locked the door, and when she was ready to come out she could not unlock that door. The US ambassador was there, with his wife, and finally, in desperation, the ambassador's wife lay on her back under the restroom door, somehow got the door unlocked, and saved our government from a break in diplomatic relations with China.

[laughter]

So it's hard for me to say who was more responsible for our success, Mike Oksenberg or the ambassador's wife.

[laughter]

But Deng Xiao-Ping came to Washington, and we had a delightful visit with him. My daughter was a little girl, and Deng Xiao-Ping was her same height, and they became instant friends.

[laughter]

He had a great sense of humor.

Some of you may remember the so-called Jackson-Vanik Amendment on establishing Most Favored Nations. It was designed to guarantee that we could not have favored nations in trade with the Soviet Union because they were restricting Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union to the US. So before I could have most favored relations with any country, we had to comply with this ruling, that they do nothing to impede people who wanted to emigrate. I told Deng Xiao-Ping that this was one of the requirements. He said, "You mean that I can't keep people from moving to the United States?" I said "That's correct," and he said, "I will send you five million Chinese next week." And I said, "Okay, if you do, I'll send you twenty thousand lawyers." And he said, "I'll keep my Chinese if you'll keep the lawyers."

[laughter]

Well, we had a wonderful visit, and as a result of that, we established diplomatic relations.

Next came the question of Taiwan, and that was very serious. The Taiwanese had been our friends, and they had been *the* China up until that month. And the Congress was constrained to comply with my wishes to a major degree, because the legislation that was passed—the Taiwan Trade Act—had to be designed to continue our relationships with Taiwan (with the Chinese on Taiwan), absent any diplomatic relations. You see, we don't have an ambassador, and haven't had, to Taiwan. But we wanted to continue trade relationships with the people of Taiwan, and they have escalated since then. So have cultural relationships.

And then, immediately after I left the White House, the first trip I took was to China. I told you about that trip a minute ago. When Deng Xiao-Ping was here, we had a very pleasant personal relationship, and that existed until the end of his life. I think he was 93 years old when he died. On this trip he asked me if there was anything he could do of a special nature for me, and I said, "Well, yes." I told him about my weekly five cent donation for missionaries, and added, "I know you don't have freedom of religion in China. I wish that you would change the constitution to guarantee freedom of religion.

And I know you prohibit Bibles from coming into China; I wish you'd let Bibles come back. And you don't permit foreign missionaries; I wish you'd let missionaries come in. I wish you'd let people in your country begin to have a free vote to choose their leaders."

He said, "Well, I promise you that the constitution will be changed to guarantee freedom of worship, and we'll remove all the restraints on the Bibles. We don't want foreign missionaries, and I won't mention free votes at this point." So in 1982, at the National Congress, they changed the constitution, and the constitution calls for freedom of worship. When I went there in 1981 we were completely free to hand out Bibles. In fact, they were printing Bibles, in the Christian churches, and they ran out of paper—you know the flimsy kind of paper?—and so the government of China provided all the flimsy paper they needed to print Bibles.

Also in '82, to my surprise, they modified the constitution to authorize democratic elections in small villages.

Later that same year we founded the Carter Center—it's twenty years old this year—and I wanted to do something for the Chinese people. They didn't permit grants from outside to come to the Chinese people, but we organized two programs, which Deng Xiao-Ping approved for handicapped people. His son Deng Pu Fang was handicapped when he was pushed out of a third-story window during the Cultural Revolution. He was *severely* crippled. So, we had two programs. In one we trained 900 elementary teachers in China to teach deaf and or blind students. In the other program we helped design and build an enormous factory for the production of prostheses for people who had lost limbs.

Later, the Chinese became, and continued to be my friends. In 1994 there was a very serious crisis—and I'll just give this as a quick example—in North Korea. The North Koreans, under Kim Il Sung, had refused to let international inspectors observe their handling of spent nuclear fuel rods from old graphite-moderated reactors, and Kim Il Sung asked me to come over and establish some sort of communication between Pyongyang, North Korea, and Washington. This was prohibited by U.S. law, even, passed under President Reagan. I wanted to go, but for three years I couldn't go. I always get permission from the White House to go to a sensitive area, and I couldn't get permission from the Reagan White House. The Chinese came down to Plains, Georgia, where I live, and told me, unequivocally, that if the United States imposed economic sanctions on North Korea, the North Koreans would go to war. They would invade South Korea because they could not bear, in their somewhat paranoid state, to lose face. They felt they would lose face if the U.S. was successful in getting the Security Council of the United Nations to brand their government as an outlaw government, and their revered—even worshipped—leader as a criminal. They would have to resort to military attack. So I went to North Korea, my wife and I, and we crossed the DMZ from Seoul, and went to Pyongyang, and got complete agreement with Kim Il Sung. Then we came back. It was the first time in forty-three years that anyone had made that round trip. The Chinese continued to help me, at the Carter Center, understand things that were happening in the Far East.

Well, this brings us down to the present time. There have been incredible changes in China. In 1981 Deng Xiao-Ping was very proud that he was opening up the economic system of China for the first time. The way he did it was interesting. He permitted small farmers to have 15 percent of the land available for them to grow crops and sell the produce. And of course, the other 85 percent was controlled by the Communist communes. And so the 15 percent were in the ditches, and the washed-away areas, and under the trees. Yet Deng told me later that almost as much was produced on the 15 percent under free enterprise, as there was under the 85 percent. And here's how Deng expressed it to me: he said that the Chinese farmers would stay up all night with a sick hog, if it was their hog, but if it belonged to the government, the hog would die. So he decided that year, also, to let some farm families—nobody that lived inside a town—have a little free enterprise. They could either make clay pots, or they could repair bicycles, or they could shoe horses, or they could grow as many as five pigs, or five sheep, and that was it. That was the first opening of the Chinese to what has now become one of the most successful and revolutionary economic developments in the world.

Well, I'm concerned about some things about China. My relationship with Deng Xiao-Ping was strained, to some degree, by Taiwan. We had a long-time treaty with Taiwan, and I told him that I would end that treaty arrangement after one year, which was what the treaty provided, and that we would no longer sell Taiwan offensive weapons. Instead, we would sell them defensive weapons. Deng agreed with that privately. I also told him I presumed that any differences between Taiwan and China would be resolved peacefully, and I said that publicly. He never agreed to that, but that was the presumption under which we proceeded.

My wife and I have not only visited the mainland of China often, we have also been to Tibet, and we have gotten to know the Dalai Lama well. I am very deeply concerned about the restraints on the people of Tibet, the preservation of their culture, their religion, their independence. And I am concerned about the Chinese official interpretation of "freedom of worship." When Mike and I went back to China in 1994 we spent a lot of time in a little county called Xioping, and we visited a church, and I gave them a brief warning message. It was a Christian church. The pastor there, who was an old man, said that they had formed 14 new Christian churches without impediment, but with the restraint that each congregation has to register with the central government. Some Christians, as you know, feel that this is an unwarranted and unacceptable intrusion of state on the church. So there is not really free religion there. Also, the Pope is not considered to be the head of the Catholics in China. There is still persecution in China; they have a way to go in honoring human rights, by our definition.

I think that in the years ahead, it is very likely that the most important bilateral relationship in the world will be between the United States and China. I don't know what the future will be. I've tried to outline briefly to you some of my recollections of the past. I hope that we'll continue to be friends, that we'll understand one another, that we'll respect each other. I do know one thing: the prospect for peace, and for progress—and for a better life for Americans and Chinese—would be much better if Mike Oksenberg were still here with us. I hope we can learn, from his writings and his

teachings and his influence on students and on former presidents, how we might realize his dream.

[sustained applause]

Russell Hancock

President Carter has agreed to answer a few questions from the audience. Before we begin, however, I want to stress that your questions must indeed be questions, and not statements, and they should be brief. We'll take the liberty of intervening if anything seems inappropriate. You, sir, may ask the first question.

Question and Answer Session:

Audience Question: Mr. Carter, to what extent do you think that Cuba is like China?

President Carter:

As some of you might know, next Sunday I'm going to Cuba, at the invitation of Fidel Castro, with the understanding that I'll have unimpeded access to the Cuban people. In fact, a week from tomorrow, at Castro's invitation, I'll be speaking to an audience like this, in a major university in Havana, and my speech will be telecast live throughout the country.

I think in many ways there's a similarity between Cuba and China. The relationship between America and China, I think, was ill advised during all those years before President Nixon went there, and before we normalized relations. And I think a most serious mistake is still being made between the United States and Cuba. I felt this way when I was President, many years ago. I had only been in office a few weeks, six weeks, when I opened up the right to all Americans to travel to and from Cuba, and I helped to establish an interest section in Havana and Washington, which has given us a semblance of diplomatic relations since that time.

Unfortunately, President Reagan and all of his successors have imposed a tight embargo on the people of Cuba, which is counter-productive. It has made 11 million Cubans suffer; it has turned them against us and created animosity; and it has tended to let Castro blame all his self-imposed economic and political problems on Washington. It has made a hero out of him in many countries in the world, which I don't think he deserves, and I hope that we can change that.

By the way, I think at this point a majority of members of the House and Senate are in favor of removing all travel restraints, and of starting to lift the embargo against Cuba. That has not yet been possible, so my visit to Cuba will be designed to help the Cuban people understand us, and vice-versa.

Another thing that China did first that Cuba has not yet done is have economic freedom, at least in the small, family-operated businesses. That happened in China in 1981, and has led to an enormous increase in prosperity, at least in China. So far, Castro has refused to do that. China still retains political control; there is incomplete freedom of speech in both countries; you can't form an opposition party in either country. But I see a lot of similarities between the two: faulty policy on the part of the US, and tight political control. Still, China has taken a move toward economic freedom, and Cuba has not yet done this. I don't know what the results of my visit next week will be.

Audience question: Mr. President, in your concluding remarks, you seemed concerned about future bilateral relations between the PRC and its Asian neighbors...

President Carter:

I think in many ways there are inclinations in Washington to maintain American dominance in the Far East, and obviously in nuclear power and naval power we are able to do that. But the challenge is to work harmoniously with China, to maintain stability, to promote peace for relationships with all the countries, and so forth, and I hope that's what we can do. I think there are challenges to the premise. For instance the present plans of the US government to have a nuclear missile defense is not designed against North Korea, who has no missiles and no nuclear capabilities; it is obviously designed against China. The Chinese see that as a way to further restrain their capabilities, and to make the United States more dominant.

I think the relations between the mainland and Taiwan are difficult, and could erupt into violence. I don't think the Chinese mainland government – the PRC – will permit Taiwan ever to be an independent nation without resorting first to military force. And my hope is that both the mainland and Taiwan will see a way for the issue to be resolved peacefully.

I think the massive financial investment of Taiwan in the mainland now, is one thing that will ensure the relationship will improve. When I was in Taiwan I visited the National Museum, which is possibly the best museum in the world, and the key exhibit there were recent findings from the Upper Yangtze River that the Chinese government had displayed briefly in the mainland and then felt generous enough to transfer to Taiwan for exhibition.

There are some good signs about how this relationship can be improved, and I think a good result with how Hong Kong fares under Chinese mainland domination will send good signals to Taiwan, if it is successful. The relationship with Tibet, in my opinion, will not precipitate a major confrontation between China and the United States, although we are very deeply concerned about the Tibetan culture and so forth, as I just said. I don't predict any military confrontation or crisis with China, but we need to be cautious and respect one another, and try to seek ways so that we can cooperate. This is how we must deal with the inevitable challenges that will arise in the western Pacific.

I see good times ahead if both governments are wise, and I believe that that will happen.

Audience question: Mr. President, looking back, how do you view your decision to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympics? Do you regret that?

President Carter:

I really have mixed emotions about that; if there was one decision in my administration that I would reconsider it might be that one. You'll have to remember that at Christmas time of 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan with massive military forces. Ten thousand troops moved into Afghanistan, and I felt that effort by the Soviet Union was a direct threat to the security of my country—one of the rare times that happens. Had the Soviets been able to consolidate their hold on Afghanistan, they could easily then have moved either through Iran, which was at war with itself, or through Pakistan. Then they would have achieved a long-time Soviet ambition, to have access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.

So I announced that this was a direct threat to the security of our country, and that we would not permit the Soviet Union to be successful in Afghanistan. We surreptitiously—and this was very secret then—gave maximum support to the so-called freedom fighters in Afghanistan. We channeled assistance for those freedom fighters through Saudi Arabia, through Egypt and other places, and at the same time I imposed economic sanctions against the Soviet Union to try to force them to withdraw.

But the debate about the Olympics is the one that was most memorable—you still remember it, obviously. Well, the Congress passed a resolution, with 330 votes in favor, that we boycott the Olympics. The US Olympic Committee, which is an independent agency—I had nothing to do with appointing members or anything else—voted overwhelmingly against participating in the Olympics in Moscow. I supported both those decisions. And I met, by the way, with the entire Olympic team, and expressed my regrets. At that time, most of them thought that the reasons were justified. But I've always regretted the—let me use my own word, the “necessity”—to put pressure on Moscow, because the Russians were then projecting participation in the Olympics as an imprimatur, or approval, not only of the Olympic Games, but also of the policies of the Soviet Union. I didn't think it was proper to do that. So the decision was made by the United States and, I think, fifty-three other nations, by the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. Olympic Committee, not to participate.

Let me say, in closing that I have really enjoyed being with you. I think the relationship between the United States and China is one of the most interesting and important relationships in the world, and I am particularly delighted to be here to honor a true American hero. Mike Oksenberg, better than anyone I have ever known, was able to combine an impeccable academic knowledge of a subject with a practical application of his knowledge for the well-being of two great nations.

Thank you.

[sustained ovation]

Russell Hancock:

President Carter, we thank you for your particular insight, and for these candid reflections. We also salute you for your dedicated service to our country. Ladies and gentlemen, these proceedings are closed. We thank you for coming, and look forward to welcoming you at the next Shorenstein event.