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AN ADDRESS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.
REPUBLICAN LEADER, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BEFORE THE AMERICAN TRIAL LAWYER'S ASSOCIATION DINNER
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
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There is much blaring of horns as the few cars travelling the streets thread their way along the thoroughfares, because in China the bicycle is king.

The Chinese save for a bike much the way Americans save up for a car. A bike costs \$65 U.S. in China, and it takes the average Chinese five months or more to save that much money.

Theoretically, the ordinary Chinese citizen could buy a car. But, practically, it doesn't work out that way. Even a doctor in China makes only about \$75 a month at the most, and it costs nearly \$3,000 to buy a Chinese jeep. Any Chinese who tried to buy a car for his own private use would probably be in deep trouble. The guys at the top would want to know where he got the money.

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I had never before watched an operation being performed. And, of course, this was the first time in my life I had ever seen anesthesia administered in the form of acupuncture needles being twirled in somebody's flesh.

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Chou cautioned Boggs and me that everything he said that was sensitive should be off the record. I can therefore only report on the non-sensitive aspects of our conversation. In that connection, I can tell you that Chou is interested in finding bases for agreement with the United States, despite the fact our two systems are diametrically different. He also maintains that China has no expansionist ambitions. China, he says, has enough developmental problems to occupy it for many decades, if not for a century. Chou is interested in people-to-people and informational exchanges with the United States but only on a step-by-step basis.

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Another of the shocks in China is the extent to which China is still a developing--even a backward--society. I am sure the Chinese Communists showed us those aspects of their development they were proudest of--a jeep factory in Peking, three steel plants among the 60 mines and plants in the Iron and Steel Complex at An Shan, and a rice-growing commune near Shenyang. Yet in every case--although it was evident that Communist China has come a long way--the conclusion was inevitable that China has a long way to go.

The Chinese Communists know this. They themselves call their country backward. They cite their accomplishments, then engage in what Chairman Mao Tse-tung recommends as constructive self-criticism and talk of their shortcomings. They wind up by saying, in line with Mao's teachings, that through reliance on the people and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, they will ultimately erase their shortcomings. In years to come, we will increase our production, they say.

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The workers are on eight pay levels. Pay in the jeep factory ranged from \$15 to \$47 a month. In the steel mills it ranged from \$16.50 a month to \$48 a month and it averaged \$26. But what one must remember is that it doesn't cost the Chinese much to live. Their living standards are low. Much of the housing is of the subsistence level, by our standards. And the diet of the average Chinese is about 78 per cent starchy foods, very inexpensive. They spend about \$2 to \$3 a month for housing, and it costs a family of four about \$15 a month for food. The government provides factory workers with a clothing allowance, free haircuts and free medical care.

As one Chinese Communist official summed it up: "Ours is a low-wage society, but our life is guaranteed."

When you consider that in the Old China millions of Chinese were homeless and lived in grinding poverty, you have to conclude that the Chinese today feel themselves to be far better off than before the revolution.

Yet life in China is very hard. The Chinese are on a six-day week with no vacations--in the factories and on the farm. The children even go to school six days a week. And teachers have only one month of vacation a year--15 days in the winter and 15 days in summer.

Here is a society of some 800 million people--all being continuously indoctrinated and all laboring devotedly in line with the teachings of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, all being taught the glories of the People's Liberation Army and of world revolution.

There is only one word for it--scary.

The Chinese now are engaged in the diplomacy of friendship. Remember that Chairman Mao, for all of his denunciations of "American imperialism and its running dogs," has also declared that Communist China can and should live in peaceful co-existence with the United States. It's all in his little red book, the "Teachings of Chairman Mao."

Are the Chinese people contented under Communism? By their own standards, they are living far better lives, materially, than before the revolution. But the day after we left Red China, we read an account in a Hong Kong newspaper to the effect that large numbers of young Chinese refugees were fleeing from the Canton area to avoid working on the commune farms. Most of those who escaped over the barbed-wire border barricades to Hong Kong were young people sent from the urban areas to the countryside to help with the rice crop and other harvesting.

What will the future hold for Red China? What will happen in Communist China when Chairman Mao dies? This is a crucial question because at the present time all of life revolves around Chairman Mao in China. His portrait hangs everywhere, and every statement citing progress by the Chinese refers to the teachings of Chairman Mao. In fact, all song and dance performances are centered on Chairman Mao and the People's Liberation Army.

It is impossible to predict what may happen in Communist China after Mao's death. But perhaps some valid forecasting is possible regarding the immediate future of China.

China is going to continue to grow as a major political, military and--yes--even an economic power despite its backwardness as an industrial nation. In the meantime, we must never forget--regardless of the Chinese diplomacy of friendship--that the Chinese abhor the economic, social and political philosophies represented by the United States.

One of the most interesting aspects of Chinese Communist rule is the wooing of third countries by Chinese Communist leaders. Their goal is a world revolution. Even in nursery school they teach of revolutionary struggles in other countries.

In the summer of 1967 the Chinese advocated the armed overthrow of the governments of several countries they had cultivated assiduously only the year before. Now Red China is engaged in a "People's Diplomacy" offensive intended to improve its relations with as many countries as possible. But the goal of world revolution has not changed.

Currently the United States and China are talking about people-to-people and informational exchanges and about improved trade relations.

I think the greatest potential in exchanges is in the field of medicine. For the United States--acupuncture. We may see extensive use of acupuncture anesthesia in the United States within a year or two.

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China is primarily an agricultural nation--and its agriculture sorely needs mechanizing. I see a large potential in sales of agricultural equipment to China.

But just as in any other foreign market, American businessmen who hope to sell to the Chinese must be ready to beat the competition or lose out.

Because labor is so cheap in China, most of China's exports tend to be consumer goods. There may well be that initially imports from China will be in far greater magnitude than are exports from the U.S. to China.

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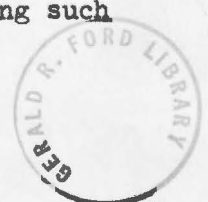
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