

December 3, 1975

TEXT OF REMARKS
WITH MRS. FORD
AND REPORTERS

PEKING, CHINA

QUESTION: How did you like meeting with Chairman Mao last night? Was it exciting? I mean, was it a surprise?

MRS. FORD: It was a surprise.

QUESTION: What impressed you most about him?

MRS. FORD: His strength and his health.

QUESTION: Really?

MRS. FORD: Yes.

QUESTION: In what way? Did he look like his pictures, for one thing?

MRS. FORD: He looked exactly like his pictures.

QUESTION: Did he say anything to you through an interpreter?

MRS. FORD: Yes. He greeted us, and then they had a conference.

QUESTION: Did he speak at all in English?

MRS. FORD: No, he did not speak in English. He spoke through an interpreter.

QUESTION: Did he ask you to sit down for a while, or was it just a brief greeting?

MRS. FORD: It was a brief greeting.

QUESTION: Were political things discussed or was it mostly --

MRS. FORD: As far as Susan and I were concerned, it was a greeting, and then we left and the political things were discussed after that.

QUESTION: About how long were you in there with him, Mrs. Ford?

MRS. FORD: I would say we were in there about 15 minutes.

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QUESTION: Mrs. Ford, you said you were surprised at his health. Can you give us some ideas of how strongly or how good his conversation was? How did he seem?

MRS. FORD: He seemed very well and he looked very well.

QUESTION: Did he speak clearly, because we had heard that he had not been speaking clearly?

MRS. FORD: Some of it was very clear, and then some of it is perhaps hard to understand.

QUESTION: Mrs. Ford, do you have a different feeling about your visit this time than you did in 1972, aside from the fact that you are the First Lady?

MRS. FORD: Yes, I have quite a different feeling. I realize how many improvements, how many new buildings -- I see many trees planted and much progress made.

QUESTION: Do you have any feeling about the women in China? They are so often used by our women's liberation groups as a sign of what can be accomplished in equality.

MRS. FORD: I think the women have a very outstanding position here, but of course they did when we were here before. I think perhaps it is even stronger now.

QUESTION: Mrs. Ford, you say that you were with Chairman Mao for about 15 minutes. What was your discussion about? What types of things did you talk about?

MRS. FORD: There were several of us going through. I naturally told him it was a great honor for him to receive us, and Susan was behind me, and I think that he is quite alert because his eyes lighted up quite brightly when he saw Susan.

QUESTION: What did he say to her, do you recall?

MRS. FORD: He was very pleased to meet Susan.

QUESTION: Mrs. Ford, how does the warmth of your reception this time compare with the warmth of your reception when you and the President were here before?

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MRS. FORD: I would say it was equal. We have been very happy both times. I know we had a longer stay before, so we had more opportunity to be with the people.

QUESTION: Do you know what Susan's reaction was?

MRS. FORD: I found out.

QUESTION: Did you take any pictures?

MRS. FORD: She is taking pictures, yes, as a school project.

QUESTION: Did she take a picture of the Chairman?

MRS. FORD: No.

QUESTION: Mrs. Ford, when your husband came out from this meeting, or perhaps last night, did he make any comments to you about his meeting with Chairman Mao?

MRS. FORD: No, because we were very busy to get on to dinner and on to the ballet.

QUESTION: This morning, did he say anything at all to you about it?

MRS. FORD: I did not ask him.

QUESTION: We asked you a number of questions about the Chairman's health. Were you surprised? Did he appear to be in very good health?

MRS. FORD: Yes, he seemed to be in very good health. He was standing and greeting us. He stood for quite a while because there were quite a few of us. He was shaking hands.

QUESTION: Why does the President seem so subdued? He isn't smiling as much.

MRS. FORD: The President isn't smiling?

QUESTION: No.

MRS. FORD: He has been smiling at me.

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