

**A Global Chinese-U.S. Partnership
To Fulfill Norman Borlaug's Vision**

Remarks by

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At the Concluding Dinner of the
U.S.-China High-Level Agricultural Symposium

At the
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IT IS MOST FITTING that the concluding dinner of the historic U.S.-China High-Level Agricultural Symposium, being held here at the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines, is taking place in the magnificent Borlaug Ballroom. Named in honor of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution and the founder of the World Food Prize, this room has as its central feature this marvelous portrait of Dr. Borlaug here on the wall behind me. In this portrait, Dr. Borlaug has a slight smile.

But some people remark about how, when viewed from different parts of the room, sometimes his smile seems to be just a little bigger.

As I stand here and look at the portrait, I think I detect that bigger smile on Dr. Borlaug's face, because I feel certain that looking down upon what occurred here today, he has to be most pleased. Dr. Borlaug was one of the very first Americans to travel to China following the opening achieved by President Nixon. I remember him telling me about that 1974 experience and how limited those initial exchanges were between Chinese and U.S. scientists. He remarked that one Chinese expert with whom he had studied at the University of Minnesota could only acknowledge him with a wink of his eye.

How different it was today, three decades later. To have had the Vice President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Xi Jinping, speak about the importance he attaches to increased agricultural production for his country and the importance of the U.S.-Chinese relationship, was in itself a historic occasion. His visit to an Iowa farm following his remarks here added emphasis to agricultural production and food security as a significant agenda item for the political leadership of both countries.

Beyond that development, the signing of the U.S.-China strategic agreement on agriculture by Chinese Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack was a tangible manifestation of that increased emphasis. Again, it was a great point of pride for the World Food Prize to have such an important international agreement be ratified here in our Hall of Laureates.

I want to make a special acknowledgement of the critical role of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, who is with us this evening, in this historic achievement. Governor, it was your instinct back in 1985 when you agreed to receive at your office a group of relatively provincial Chinese officials that included Xi Jinping, which has led to this historic visit to Iowa by now Vice President Xi.

What is remarkable is that Vice President Xi was not the first member of his family to visit Iowa. In fact, as I welcomed the Vice President to our building this morning, I told him that I had had the somewhat unique distinction of having also greeted his father at the airport in Des Moines in October 1980, when he was visiting Iowa as part of a delegation of governors traveling here in the immediate aftermath of the normalization of relations between China and the United States.

Dr. Borlaug was a great believer in such people-to-people, farmer-to-farmer, and scientist-to-scientist exchange. That was a critical part of his legacy when he started the Green Revolution in Mexico and then brought it to India and Pakistan in the 1960s, as those two countries faced imminent famine and mass starvation that would have taken the lives of hundreds of millions of people. The tapestries arrayed across this room tell that story of Dr. Borlaug's work as well as his efforts to spread the Green Revolution to Africa in the remaining decades of his life.

Shortly before he passed away, one of the very last things Dr. Borlaug spoke about was Africa and the close to one billion people who still face chronic hunger on that continent and in South Asia. And one of the most pressing questions facing the international community in the 21st century is whether that dreaded scourge of hunger can be reduced, or possibly vanquished, from our planet.

And as I stand here tonight, I believe that this historic visit of Vice President Xi and the U.S.-China Agricultural Symposium could perhaps offer the inspiration for an even greater collaboration – an unprecedented bilateral initiative to address that global food insecurity challenge. I cannot help but think that today's U.S.-Chinese strategic agriculture agreement could be the basis for an even higher level partnership. Imagine, if the two largest and most significant agricultural producers in the world committed themselves to work together – to engage their best scientists and most effective companies – in a unique bilateral public-private partnership – with a goal to alleviate, diminish and eradicate hunger.

I do not believe that the United States working alone would have the capacity to achieve that goal. And while I am not from China and thus reluctant to offer a view about Chinese capabilities, I believe that most of you in this room would concur that China likely does not have that ability either. But together, maybe, just maybe, the great scientific and agribusiness capacity of our two countries could provide the engine and the commitment and the dedication and, to use one of Dr. Borlaug's favorite words – the "persistence" – to attain that goal, and that over the course of the next several decades China and America could confront and attack and diminish hunger.

And wouldn't it be marvelous if, in say 20 years, a Chinese citizen and an American citizen would together come to Des Moines to receive the "World Food Prize" as joint Laureates for leading this endeavor and for having, like Dr. Norman Borlaug, lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and hunger. And imagine, 20 years from now, senior leaders of the United States and China gathered again here in the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates, here in the Borlaug Ballroom, here before Dr. Borlaug's portrait, to report about their great accomplishment together in reducing hunger around the world (*at this point, one Chinese guest shouted out "10 years!"*). Yes, 10 years would be even better.

I am certain that were that to occur, there would indeed be an even bigger smile on Dr. Borlaug's face.