

March 9, 1982
Bush's Press Conference at Beijing Airport on 9 May
[1982]

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Summary:

Selected questions and answers from George H.W. Bush on arms sales to Taiwan.

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WENT ON, AS TO HOW THIS MATTER WOULD BE RESOLVED. AND I BELIEVE THAT THE MATTER CAN BE RESOLVED, AND WILL BE.

Q. THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE SUSPENSION OF ARMS DEALS WITH TAIWAN WHILE THE TALKS ARE GOING ON. HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THE TALKS ARE LIKELY TO GO ON? HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THE SUSPENSION CAN HOLD?

A. I THINK THE TALKS WILL BEGIN OR CONTINUE -- I DON'T WANT TO PUT WORDS INTO AMBASSADOR HUMMEL'S MOUTH IN TERMS OF THE DISCUSSIONS GOING ON HERE -- BUT I GATHER HE'S AVAILABLE AND HIS PEOPLE AVAILABLE TO CONTINUE DISCUSSING THE MINUTE I LEAVE. IS THAT CORRECT? I DON'T THINK,

HOUGH, THAT IT'S POSSIBLE TO PUT A TIME FRAME AROUND A MATTER OF THIS KIND.

Q. YOU KEEP ON KICKING THE BALL BACK TO CHINA ON A LOT OF QUESTIONS WE'VE ASKED YOU, BUT THERE IS AN ISSUE HERE OF AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN AT STAKE, AS WELL. DO YOU SEE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT, OR ARE YOU THINKING IN TERMS OF SOME MODIFICATION OF THAT DOWN THE LINE?

A. THAT GETS INTO NEGOTIATIONS. I THINK THIS PRESIDENT IS BOUND TO UPHOLD THE LAW OF THE LAND AND EVERYBODY, I THINK, STANDS THAT FULLY.

Q. YOU SAY YOU ARE BRINGING BACK A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING TO PRESIDENT REAGAN. WHAT WERE THE OBSTACLES AND UNDERSTANDING BEHIND THE OPPOSITION THAT HE COULDN'T HAVE TALKS WITH PEKING AND WASHINGTON? WHY DID HE HAVE TO SEND YOU FOR A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING?

A. I'VE FOUND, AND WITH SOME BACKGROUND IN DIPLOMACY, THAT IT'S A GOOD IDEA FOR TOP LEVEL LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENTS TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THINGS. YOU CAN GET EMPHASIS, YOU CAN GET CERTAIN NUANCES YOU CAN DISCUSS A WIDE ARRAY OF THINGS THAT RELATE TO A PROBLEM, SOME OF THE THINGS THAT ARE IN COMMON. RELATIONSHIPS

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