

Coach Kemper's Opening Remarks

Xie xie and Huān yíng!¹ Thank you, Minister Xie and welcome to all.

Ambassador Zhou, on behalf of the Institute for Education, thank you for welcoming all of us in your breathtaking new IM Pei designed embassy. It is an architectural marvel. This building reminds me of being in Beijing for the 29th Olympics. It is precise and purposeful architecture and aligns with Chinese principals, just as the Birds Nest and Water Cube did. Beauty, Harmony, balance, peace. It is an honor to be a part of its historic debut here in our capitol city.

We are here tonight to celebrate and honor Zhou Wenzhong, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the United States, with the 2009 IFE Civility Award. It is the highest honor that IFE confers upon leaders in the world community. We celebrate China's extraordinary performance in the 29th Olympiad and embrace its leadership in the world community.

Secretary Eagleburger, welcome to you. Secretary Eagleburger, I am a tennis coach and in sports parlance, you are an extraordinary champ to travel from Charlottesville, Virginia, on the heels of major surgery to commemorate this special evening. You are one of the great statesmen of our country and we are all honored and grateful to have you with us this evening.

First, I want thank IFE's leaders: George Vradenburg, Civility Chairman, Trustees, Morton Kondracke, Robert Shapiro, Shane Green, and Chair of IFE Board of Stewards, Marci Robinson. I want to thank IFE investors, Chris Caine, Mercator.....

Next, I extend my gratitude to our distinguished opinion leaders, who will be leading discussions this evening:

And last, I want to show off our IFE Youth Global Leaders standing in back. Many of these intern/students from local public and private schools have traveled to China for community service work and explored 'best practices' for water and

¹ "Huān yíng" means "Welcome" in Mandarin.

climate perseverance from Chinese students. IFE educates not only grownups, but youth for effective and responsible world citizenship...

Now, what makes this evening historical is twofold. Never before has IFE awarded our civility prize to an international leader. Ambassador Zhou congratulations on being the first!

And second, never before have so many esteemed opinion leaders been assembled to moderate a vibrant discussion on China and the US: A vital Partnership.

On that note, we have specific goals in mind for the evening: first, to provide an outstanding opportunity for you – leaders in government, business, and media – to share ideas with one another; second, to cultivate enduring friendships between all of you in the spirit of civility; and third, to highlight IFE's ongoing work in promoting civility – the politics of common ground – throughout the world.

IFE believes that camaraderie, civility and dialogue, sharing meals, hospitality, and laughter can be the anchor our two countries' need to meet the challenges that confront the world. As the relationship between China and the United States grows more important, I cannot think of a better way to pay tribute to it than to have one of America's most distinguished statesmen, the 62d US Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, present Ambassador Zhou with this year's Civility Award.

Now please all enjoy fabulous Chinese hospitality, and friendship! Laugh in the in spirit of CIVILITY and finding common ground.