

Welcome Comment for US and Canadian Students attending the 2011 Summer In Taiwan Program

台美加暑期研究生研習計畫

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Dear students from United States and Canada:

It is really exciting for me to welcome many of you here from universities across United States and Canada. Having spent many decades in United States academic world, many of the universities you came from I know well.

So let me especially welcome Babila Tali of Rutgers University. Before all of you were born, I spent a summer at the Nuclear Physics Laboratory at your Livingston campus.

Also, I want to welcome the “hook’em horns” Christina Frederick of the University of Texas at Austin. I spent significant number of years as Vice President of Research at your sister campus, the University of Texas at Dallas. The phrase “I wasn’t born in Texas, but I came as soon as I can” is a phrase I will always fondly remember about that State. Also, I contribute real money to this university since my son did his undergraduate (as a Plan II) studies there.

Allow me also say hello to Maria Lopez of the University of California San Diego. My brother was on the teaching staff of this great university.

Let me also say hello to Charlene McCord of University of Chicago and Jonathan Claridge and Katie Derthick of the University of Washington. These two universities have special connections to me.

Finally, let me also say hello to Canadian friends. I must say I am a little disappointed that I noticed no students here represent the University of Toronto. We have good ties to that university.

Seriously, friends, it is really good to see “bright and bushy tailed” students from North America here in Hsinchu. I am confident that your eight weeks of in Taiwan will allow you to glimpse at how robust East Asia is today. This is a region full of innovations and contradictions.

Since you represent the ***best of the best*** from United States and Canada, you have added responsibility on your shoulder. As you know, the world class universities you represent became envy of the world in the first half of the 20th century. With the world engaged in two of the most brutal conflicts in that era, known as WWI and WWII, North America was like a castle protected by a moat known as Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean. Indeed, the moat protected North America from outside attacks. For example, the reason why Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and not San Francisco was simply because due to the vastness of the Pacific Ocean! So with the world turning upside down, the tranquility of North America attracted the best of the best from all corners of the world. Under that scenario, how could North American universities not become envy of the world?

Yet, the moat that protected you from WWI and WWII somehow became an albatross around your neck. Somehow in the 2nd half of the 20th century, North Americans felt that the rest of the world was either irrelevant, or unnecessary to get to know. This feeling of “closeness” could partially explain some of the horrendous challenges North America, especially United States, are facing today.

Today, like I said, Asia is undergoing monumental transformation. Just this morning, I had the pleasure of welcoming a delegation from Khalifa University of Abu Dhabi who are here to be trained to be competent in nuclear technologies. This is a new paradigm for East Asia (represented by Tsing Hua) and West Asia

(represented by Khalifa University) because not only a carbo-hydrate rich nation wanted to learn a technology beyond what they are so well endowed, but that they wanted to learn it from their East Asia brothers and sisters. This is an example of paradigm shift. I think it is a lesson that is well worth the while for North America to learn and to know.

From its backward state immediately after WWII, today East Asia as a region became a region which leads the world in economic development. It is with this in mind that I feel your presence here in East Asia makes you as “North American ambassadors” that much more crucial. I hope in these eight coming weeks, you will leverage your powerful intellect to learn, in fact to absorb, the ways and means of how people here view their surroundings, the ways and means how Asian societies operate and how nations co-exist and grow together. Bring back to your friends and your colleagues what you will be learning in these eight weeks. Let people know that for the betterment of humanity, Asia and North America must enter into a new paradigm, economically, culturally and even politically.

Karl Marx said that

“you have nothing to lose but your chains.”

For you I will say,

“you have nothing to lose but your albatross!”

Enjoy you stay.