

Cooperation Or Confrontation?

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As I look back in history, there were many important events that occurred 50 years ago. One major event that's often overlooked in the year of Watergate, was President Richard M. Nixon's visit to China in February 1972. This visit officially reopened the doors to U.S./China relationships. It was important to me personally, militarily and diplomatically.

I visited China for the first time in 1973, and befriended the Chinese General Xu Xin, who had been wounded by American fire during the Korean War. In 1982, I became the first American general to serve in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, as Defense Attaché. At the time, I thought peaceful relationships had been established.

At this moment there are leaders in both the United States and China who feel that in the future our nations may confront each other, not across a diplomatic table, but on the battlefield. I am worried. I have children. I want them to grow up in a world safe from war. The fate of the world

depends to a large extent on how Chinese and Americans behave towards each other.

We Have An Opportunity To Grow Peace

A group of us, former military and former diplomats in both the U.S. and China, have created "The 50- Mile Run" to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of U.S. China Relations. For more than 18 years after the Korean War, Americans were forbidden to shake hands with Chinese diplomats. When President Nixon visited China in 1972, he shook hands with Chinese officials. This ended a tense period of hostilities between our countries.

It Was A Beautiful Sunny Day

One morning in June, ten lifeguards in Hollywood, Florida completed their five-mile runs on the beach. We will be sending these times to China inviting Chinese lifeguards to join us in friendly competition. The 50-mile run can be done by anyone who wishes to participate. It does not have to be a run. It can be a walk. The goal is for ten individuals to each run/walk five miles for a total of 50 miles per team. Participants receive a certificate that shows that they contributed in creating better relations between our countries.

The Sickest Club In Town

Walking and running (if you still can) have been very important in my life. I was studying in Hong Kong when I met the Chinese doctor who ran a health clinic for heart patients. One of his requirements was that patients complete a 26.2 mile (marathon distance) run/walk within a year after their heart attack. The lessons learned from that doctor have stayed with me for a lifetime. Now in my 80s, I go to the beach daily to swim, run and do aerobic exercises.



Lifeguards from Hollywood, FL participated in the 50-mile relay run in commemoration of the 50 year anniversary of the opening of China to the United States.

The Importance Of Healthy Living And Regular Exercise

I recently read that if we did just three things it would make a big difference in our lives. What are they? **1. Exercise moderately; 2. Eat the right foods; 3. Do not smoke.**

Ninety-seven percent of our population do not qualify. More disturbing is that our suicide rate has been increasing in the past decade. We are told that we are sadder today than we have been in many years.

What can we do? We need a purpose to make our lives meaningful. For me growing peace is the answer. Form a team of ten and complete 50 miles. Help celebrate the 50th anniversary, and join the common citizens of our two great countries who demand peace in our lifetimes and beyond.

Go to www.helpingotherstoday.com and click on the video "A General's Dream" to see the many ways friendships are built. You can sign up your team of ten runners/walkers by going to the contact page at www.helpingotherstoday.com and email your desire to join the effort. We will follow up with more information.

Bernard "Burn" Loeffke is a retired Major General of the United States Army and frequent contributor to The Gazette. He fought and was wounded in the Vietnam War. In four years of combat as a Lt. Captain, Major and Lt. Colonel, he was awarded several valor honors including the silver star, bronze star and others. He later served as the commanding general of U.S. Army South. In the 1980s, he was the first American Army General to serve as Defense Attaché in the Peoples Republic of China and was also Army Attaché in Moscow. In 1992, he retired and was called back four months later to head a year-long delegation looking for POWs in the former USSR. He retired again in 1993, and immediately started his second career in medicine. He finished his medical studies in 1997, and participated in medical missions in war-torn or impoverished areas such as Bosnia, Haiti, Kenya, Iraq, Niger, Darfur and the Amazon jungles.
