

John Chambers' Address to China's Leaders

Cisco's chairman and CEO delivers the opening session at the Government Leader Training Program in Beijing, China.

John Chambers

Bin Jong is doing something every day that I will do when I retire from Cisco. And that is to teach. I believe teaching isn't about giving a lecture, it's about challenging what is possible, and getting us to think out of box. If everything I talk about over the next hour you agree with, I have failed miserably.

I want to make you uncomfortable. I want to challenge you, because the leadership from government will never be more challenged than you are at the present time, and in the future. Nor will the stakes be higher, whether it's economic challenge, job creation, and allowing all society, first in China, and then the rest of the world, to participate in economic well-being. So, as we go through this, I encourage you to interact. When we ask questions, you can challenge me on any question you want. And, as you get to know me better, I will challenge you on the questions, as well.

If you think about the future of a country, there are five pillars. And this is true whether it's Germany, whether it's India, whether it's China, or whether it's Saudi Arabia.

The first pillar is the quality of your education system. A large part of that is the preparation for college degrees, but the colleges and universities themselves.

The second pillar is infrastructure. And while we think about that as highways, and electrical, and, if you will, transportation, the real highway of the future will be broadband. And I'm not talking about one meg or two meg, I'm talking about what Singapore's doing with one gig to the home. It will literally change how you deliver healthcare, education, how you participate in government, how quickly you can react to scenarios.

The third area that is very key is, "How do you identify market transitions and how do you use innovation on those market transitions?"

The fourth area, and this is hard for me, coming out of the United States, from a decade ago, is supportive government. There was almost the attitude, "Let's leave government a little bit further away and we'll do better." And that was very wrong. I realize that without government working together with education and business, we can't achieve the joint goals, in terms of society, or in terms of standard of living increase.

And it is this collaboration that is new. It's not easy. The future's about how you collaborate together. And when you think about it, one challenge that I will give first, how we might do this together, in China, but then candidly take the concepts learned, take it to the rest of the world, there is no reason that 3 billion people in the world should be making less than three dollars a day. There's no reason that people on the eastern seaboard, I'm sorry, the seaboard of China, make, on average, almost \$10,000. It's how do we allow everyone's standard of living to grow? And, if we do it right together here, it's a model I think will, absolutely, go around the world.

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