

"USA TODAY hopes to serve as a forum for better understanding and unity to help make the USA truly one nation."

—Allen H. Neuharth  
Founder, Sept. 15, 1982



Peter S. Prichard  
Editor  
Karen Jurgensen  
Editor of the Editorial Page  
Thomas Curley  
President and Publisher

Today's debate is on **TRADE WITH CHINA**  
and Congress' attempts to aid Chinese democracy.

## Protest China's abuses; override trade bill veto

**OUR VIEW** A soft touch is not enough to push China's leaders toward democratic reforms.

Congress will try again this week to stop President Bush from sending roses to China's authoritarian leaders when their scandalous acts cry for outrage.

The Senate is expected to try to override a Bush veto and restrict trade with China, unless China:

▶ accounts for and releases dissidents imprisoned after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

▶ makes "significant progress" in improving human rights, slowing weapons sales and reducing trade barriers.

Those restrictions make sense. Doing less would put the USA's stamp of approval on continuing Chinese outrages.

So far, Bush's quiet diplomacy has failed to bring deep-seated change.

Requests for release of 800 Tiananmen Square activists have been rebuffed. Arrests of dissidents continue.

On weapons sales, recent reports suggest China has sold missiles to Pakistan, Syria and Iran, helping to destabilize the world's most dangerous region.

Chinese trade barriers persist, feeding a \$12 billion trade deficit, the USA's second largest after Japan.

Instead of condemning those actions, the president eased sanctions imposed after Tiananmen Square, such as limits on high level contact with Chinese officials and international lending to China.

The time to increase pressure is now, and Congress offers a sensible, middle-ground approach.

China would lose most-favored-nation trading status — an unfortunate term that really means "normal" status if the president says by July 3 that it has failed to meet Congress' conditions.

That would leave China facing tariffs damaging to its sales here.

China promises to do better. It even has made a few positive gestures — accepting missile and nuclear controls while agreeing to small requests for trade concessions. But they are not enough.

Congress was right all along. The House already has voted to override Bush's veto. The Senate should follow.

The USA cannot comfort China's leaders as they crush democracy. Congress and the president should speak with a unified voice of outrage.

## Wrong way to press China

**OPPOSING VIEW** Continuing China's most-favored-nation status is in the USA's national interest.

Some in Congress have again mounted their high moral perch to take partisan aim at George Bush on the issue of most-favored-nation status for China. As usual, they'll end up missing the president and shooting themselves in the foot.

The issue is not who deplores China's human rights, trade and arms-sales abuses. We all do. The real issue is whether MFN trading status is the right tool to do something about it.

Let's remember these basic facts:

▶ Despite its name, MFN is not some great benefit Uncle Sam bestows on others. We deny MFN to fewer than 10 countries. Even Iraq, Libya and Iran have MFN. We have legitimate concerns about China's arms sales, and we'll continue to take a hard line, but every

nation buying Chinese arms has MFN.

▶ Through a policy of engagement instead of isolation, we are making encouraging progress with China. The human rights situation has improved, we have new agreements to lower China's barriers to our exports, and China has now signed the most important international agreement regulating arms proliferation. Denying MFN would spark a backlash, jeopardizing all that progress.

▶ Denying MFN would actually be counterproductive. It would harm most the forces inside China which are the strongest advocates of reform — the younger, entrepreneurial class. Moreover, since no one else is contemplating sanctions, China would find other consumers for its goods. Who would suffer? The American consumer through higher prices on products such as shoes, apparel, toys and certain foodstuffs.

China also would retaliate by denying us its markets, costing billions in exports and, in this recession, wiping out hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

The fact is, we can "feel good" by denying MFN, or do some real good — continuing MFN in America's national interest.



By Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan.