

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 16, 1994

Contact: Clarkson Hine
(202) 224-5358

CHRISTOPHER'S CHINA TRIP

WASHINGTON -- Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole made the following statement late yesterday urging the Clinton Administration to use non-trade means to signal U.S. displeasure with China's human rights policy.

Secretary of State Christopher has just returned from Asia. The first thing he needs to do is get a handle on what the U.S. is agreeing to in the United Nations -- once again it appears that "lowest common denominator" U.N. politics are leading the U.S. down the wrong foreign policy road. The Secretary ought to tell U.N. Ambassador Albright that she has the leverage to negotiate a resolution on the Middle East that does not call Jerusalem part of the occupied territories. That's been U.S. policy, and that's been endorsed by the Senate in 1990. If she can't do it, the U.S. should veto the resolution.

The Asia trip did not go well. The Secretary met with his Russian counterpart in Valdivostok, after the Russians inserted themselves into the Middle East peace process. It does not look like the latest Russian foreign policy muscle flexing will do anything to put the peace process back on track.

But if the Russia stop was a problem, the China stop was worse. Secretary Christopher was, in columnist Jim Hoagland's words, "Battered in Beijing." I am not sure why the Secretary went to China, or why he went at this time. Whatever the reason, the results are clear: U.S. foreign policy credibility has taken another body blow.

This Administration made detailed progress on human rights and condition for the granting of MFN to China. At the same time, this Administration claims expanding American exports is a "pillar" of their foreign policy. The Chinese completely rebuffed Secretary Christopher on every human rights issue he raised -- and they detained many dissidents on the eve of his visit. Clearly, this visit makes the Administration's decision on MFN more difficult.

No doubt about it, granting MFN to China is in the American interest. And the Administration has created its own box by laying out detailed conditions which were never likely to be met through public blandishments. Now, however, we have the worst of all worlds. China will hardly be inclined to work with the U.S. on halting North Korea's nuclear program, or on slowing exports of military equipment and technology. The human rights situation got much worse because of the Secretary's visit. What sounded good in a political campaign becomes a little more complicated when American jobs are at stake.

The Administration is faced with a dilemma: grant MFN and confirm that bullying the Administration works, or deny MFN out of embarrassment and lose billions of dollars of U.S. exports and tens of thousands of U.S. jobs. There is another way: remove China's MFN status from the annual political theater, and use other non-trade means, to express our displeasure over the pace and scope of democratization. America cannot afford a trade policy that opens Vietnam and shuts down China.

###