

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MFN FOR CHINA

A NUMBER OF SENATORS MET THIS MORNING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH, TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE OF MFN FOR CHINA. I KNOW THAT, AT THE SAME TIME, A NUMBER OF SENATORS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AISLE, INCLUDING THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER, TOOK TO THE FLOOR TO CRITICIZE THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION.

SO OUR DEBATE ON THIS VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE HAS BEGUN.

IT'S A TOUGH CALL. IT WAS A TOUGH CALL FOR THE PRESIDENT, AND IT WILL BE A TOUGH CALL FOR THE SENATE.

THE RIGHT CALL

BUT I BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE THE RIGHT CALL, AND I AM HOPEFUL THAT -- WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, AND ALL THE VOTES ARE CAST -- THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION, AND PROBABLY THE PRESIDENT'S VETO, WILL BE SUSTAINED BY THE SENATE.

LET'S BE CLEAR ABOUT ONE THING. THIS IS NOT A DISPUTE ABOUT THE GOALS OF OUR POLICY TOWARD THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

100 SENATORS AGREE

HOW MANY SENATORS WERE DISGUSTED AND SICKENED BY THE IMAGES OF TIENANMEN? 100 SENATORS -- EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US -- REACTED THAT WAY.

HOW MANY SENATORS BELIEVE OUR POLICY TOWARD CHINA SHOULD AIM TO ENCOURAGE THAT GOVERNMENT TO END SUCH DISGUSTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, AND RESUME A MARCH TOWARD GREATER DEMOCRACY? 100 SENATORS BELIEVE THAT.

HOW MANY SENATORS BELIEVE OUR POLICY SHOULD BE CRAFTED TO ENCOURAGE CHINA TOWARD FREE MARKET REFORM, RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC NORMS SUCH AS COPYRIGHTS AND PATENTS, AND AN END TO THE HIDEOUS PRACTICE OF SLAVE LABOR? 100 SENATORS BELIEVE THAT.

HOW MANY SENATORS BELIEVE WE NEED TO PUSH BEIJING AS HARD AS WE CAN TO IMPLEMENT MORE RESPONSIBLE ARMS PROLIFERATION POLICIES, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO ADVANCE WEAPONS SUCH AS MISSILES? 100 SENATORS BELIEVE THAT.

THERE IS NO -- REPEAT NO -- DISPUTE ABOUT WHAT OUR POLICY TOWARD CHINA SHOULD TRY TO ACCOMPLISH. WE ALL AGREE ON THE GOALS.

"FEEL GOOD" VS. DO GOOD

BUT THERE IS A BIG, BIG DISAGREEMENT ABOUT HOW WE BEST ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS WE ALL AGREE UPON.

THE DISTINGUISHED MAJORITY LEADER AND SOME OF HIS DEMOCRATIC COLLEAGUES HAVE SAID HOW THEY BELIEVE WE CAN BEST ACCOMPLISH OUR GOALS. WITH ALL DUE RESPECT FOR THEIR CONVICTION AND ADMIRATION FOR THE ENERGY WITH WHICH THEY HAVE STATED THEIR VIEWS, I BELIEVE THEY ARE DEAD WRONG.

THEY ARE WRONG FOR THREE BASIC REASONS.

FIRST, WHAT THEY PROPOSE WILL NOT WORK. IT WILL NOT ACHIEVE WHAT WE ALL WANT TO ACHIEVE.

IT MIGHT "FEEL GOOD." BUT IT WON'T DO ANY GOOD.

TERMINATING MFN, OR ATTACHING CONDITIONS WE KNOW THE CHINESE WILL NOT MEET IN THE TIME FRAME THEY ARE ALLOTTED, WILL NOT FREE ONE POLITICAL PRISONER; WILL NOT PUT CHINA BACK ON THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY AND A FREE MARKET ECONOMY; WILL NOT END CHINA'S IRRESPONSIBLE ARMS SALES POLICIES.

CHINA'S COCOON

IF OUR LONG RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA -- INCLUDING THOSE DECADES WHEN WE PRETENDED WE COULD GET ALONG WITHOUT ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA -- IF THOSE LONG YEARS YIELD ANY LESSON, IT IS THIS: CHINA'S REACTION TO BLATANT AND PUBLIC PRESSURE FROM ANY FOREIGN POWER WILL NOT BE CONCESSION OR COMPROMISE, BUT A NEW CRACKDOWN AT HOME AND A RETURN TO THE COCOON OF SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION INTERNATIONALLY.

(MORE)

PUNISHING THE WRONG PEOPLE

SECOND, TERMINATING MFN WILL PUNISH THE VERY CHINESE WE DON'T WANT TO PUNISH: THE YOUNG, LOOKING FOR EDUCATIONAL AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES; THE REFORMERS, STARVING FOR MORE -- NOT LESS -- CONTACT WITH THE DEMOCRATIC WORLD; THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS, THE REAL ENGINE OF LONG TERM ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORM; THOSE LIVING IN SOUTHERN CHINA, WHERE BOTH THE REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE THE BEST ESTABLISHED; THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, THE DEMOCRATIC AND FREE MARKET ENCLAVE THAT CHINA WILL SWALLOW UP LATER THIS DECADE.

THE DECAYING PARTY LEADERSHIP, THE AGING MILITARY LEADERS, THE OLDEST GENERATIONS STILL CLINGING TO A DYING SYSTEM -- THEY WILL HARDLY FEEL THE STING.

AND LET'S NOT FORGET: AMONG THOSE PUNISHED, TOO, WILL BE THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN WORKERS -- AND MILLIONS OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS -- WHO RELY ON GOODS AND MATERIAL FROM CHINA.

GERMS OF FREEDOM

THIRD, TERMINATING MFN WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY SPARK A DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF ACTION AND REACTION IN U.S.-CHINESE RELATIONS, AT THE END OF WHICH WE WILL FACE A NEW "BAMBOO CURTAIN" AROUND CHINA; A CURTAIN AIMED AT KEEPING CHINA "QUARANTINED" FROM ALL OF THE TERRIBLE "GERMS" WHICH OUR PRESENCE -- OUR DIPLOMACY, OUR COMMERCE, OUR TOURISM -- SPREADS SO EFFECTIVELY: THE "GERMS" OF FREEDOM OF THINKING, AND FREEDOM OF SPEAKING, AND FREEDOM OF ACTING. THOSE GERMS WHICH HAVE PROVEN TERMINAL TO THE COMMUNIST REGIMES OF EASTERN EUROPE; THOSE GERMS WHICH HAVE SOVIET COMMUNISM ON ITS DEATH BED; THOSE GERMS WHICH THE SICK OLD MEN IN BEIJING FEAR SO MUCH, AND FOR SUCH GOOD REASON.

ENDING MFN MAY FEEL GOOD FOR A WHILE. BUT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH EMOTIONAL ANESTHESIA THAT KIND OF ACT WOULD PRODUCE, SOONER OR LATER SHOOTING YOURSELF IN THE FOOT STARTS TO HURT.

IN THIS CASE, IT WOULD HURT EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING WE DON'T WANT TO HURT.

CHINESE DISSIDENT SAYS YES TO MFN

IN CONCLUSION, I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO INCLUDE IN THE RECORD AN OP ED FROM TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST ENTITLED, "FAVORED TRADE WITH CHINA? YES. USE IT AS LEVERAGE." THE OP-ED IS NOTABLE NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF ITS UNCOMMON COMMON SENSE ON THIS EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED ISSUE; BUT ALSO BECAUSE ITS AUTHOR GOT HIS CREDIBILITY THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY: HE EARNED IT -- BY SIX MONTHS IN A CHINESE COMMUNIST JAIL. I HOPE ALL SENATORS WILL READ THIS PERSUASIVE ARTICLE, AND WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER THE ARGUMENTS IT MAKES TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION: