

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF'S TRIP TO TIBET

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 1997

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD two articles from the Washington Post about my Republican colleague FRANK WOLF's recent trip to Tibet. Gaining admittance only by concealing his identity as a Member of Congress, Representative WOLF observed first hand the repression of human rights that stands in sharp contrast to all that America stands for.

The time has come for President Clinton to join with Representative WOLF and me in encouraging the new Chinese leadership to move toward a freer and more open Tibet, where individuals can worship without fear and unleash their creativity and talents in ways that will bring increased prosperity not only to Tibet, but to China as well. As the world's beacon of hope and freedom, America must do her part to encourage this transition.

[From the Washington Post, Aug. 22, 1997]

REPRESENTATIVE WOLF'S TRIP TO TIBET

Northern Virginia Rep. Frank Wolf has never been one for the typical junket. His advocacy of human rights and religious freedom in other countries has taken him to the Siberian gulag, to Ceausescu's Romania and to war-ravaged Chechnya. Now he is just back from Tibet—the first House member to visit that oppressed land, he says, since Chinese forces moved in nearly 40 years ago.

What Mr. Wolf found will not shock anyone who has followed Beijing's brutal repression of Tibetan culture, religion, language and people—a repression applied with what Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan has called "Stalinoid dementia." We hope, though, that Mr. Wolf's report will awaken some Americans who haven't paid sufficient attention to Tibet's slow suffocation.

A vast land along the Himalayan top of the world, Tibet is home to only 6 million people—no conceivable threat to China's billion-plus. But China has virtually sealed Tibet off, keeping reporters and human rights observers out and even barring California Rep. Christopher Cox, a member of the Republican leadership. Mr. Wolf gained access, along with an aide and a Tibetan-speaker, by joining a tour group and not advertising his profession. (He dressed in "traditional tourist garb," Mr. Wolf says.)

What he found, Mr. Wolf says, is repression more brutal than he witnessed in Soviet Russia or Communist Romania. While Chinese in Beijing have won some measure of liberty, at least in economic affairs, he says, "there is no freedom in Tibet, period." People are watched and afraid—yet, when they realized Mr. Wolf and his associates were from America, they were willing to risk imprisonment to describe their plight. Like their leader in exile, the Dalai Lama, most Tibetans are not seeking independence but only the freedom to speak their language and practice their Buddhism without being thrown in jail or having their children taken away.

Mr. Wolf, like many members of Congress of both parties, urges the Clinton adminis-

tration to make Tibet—and the hundreds of Tibetan prisoners of conscience—an important part of U.S.-China dialogue leading up to and during a planned presidential summit this fall. He also urges U.S. churches, synagogues and citizens to mount the kind of letter-writing, prisoner-adopting campaigns that helped sustain Soviet dissidents. Tibetans don't have the kind of diaspora that kept Soviet Jewry, Armenia, Poland and other captive nations on the U.S. agenda during the Cold War. But they have an equal claim on America's conscience, and their treatment provides a useful measure of the true nature of the Chinese regime.

[From the Washington Post, August 3, 1997]

THE MAN WHO WON'T GIVE UP

(By Mary McGrory)

Frank Wolf, the Republican congressman from Northern Virginia, has a conscience. He assumes that his fellow Americans do too, and that if he tells them how bad things are in countries they seldom hear about, they will do something about it. He is inevitably considered naive. He doesn't mind. His faith in his fellow man comes from his faith in God. He is a devout Presbyterian who believes passionately in good works and has raised his five children to volunteer on behalf of the unfortunate.

Wolf is just back from another of his trips to difficult, dangerous places. This time it was Tibet, which has been groaning under the Chinese yoke. He slipped in on an ordinary tourist visa, which did not identify him as a member of Congress. Tibetans risked their lives to tell him about the oppression and religious persecution they are suffering. His press conference afterwards at the National Press Club was packed—perhaps because it is August, and the news drought is severe. He told an international audience that "China is squeezing the life out of Tibet. . . . It is unspeakably brutal."

Wolf's success in rousing the American people is still to be seen, but he got China's attention. The New China News Agency issued a statement of outrage from a Tibetan official who accused Wolf of being a troublemaker and a bad reporter: There is no religious persecution and all is well with happy Tibetans. Wolf was, of course, delighted with additional notice to his cause.

Some reporters may have been goaded into attendance at the press conference by one of Wolf's typically reproachful, guilt-producing letters calling on the recipient to fulfill a moral obligation by spreading the word about whatever ghastly situation he has just observed. Last January, Wolf went to East Timor in Indonesia and brought back an account of killing that he thought President Clinton should do something about. He later wrote to him in terms that show he has heeded the counsel of the 15th-century German mystic Thomas a Kempis: "Fawn not upon the great." In Wolf's letter of May 29, he told the president that he better shape up on East Timor because people are making connections between U.S. inaction in that wretched land and the campaign scandal of the White House raking in millions from Asians with axes to grind.

"Respectfully but with candor, Mr. President, many believe your administration has adopted or changed its policy with regard to Indonesia and East Timor because of influence exerted by the Riadys and as a result of

the for profit relationship which developed between the Lippo Group and Mr. Web Hubble (sic). Press reports of Mr. Hubble's personal visit to East Timor have only fueled this belief. I do not know if this is true. . . . I do know, however, that we have no effective policy . . . in East Timor."

Wolf gives himself a missionary's license to speak truth to the mighty. The appalling conditions he describes vindicate his frankness and his importunities. His Northern Virginia constituency may not relate to his anguish over such places as El Salvador, Burma, Sudan, Bosnia, Chechnya and Ethiopia. But Wolf keeps both feet on the ground—or rather on the highway—at all times. He is chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on transportation, a post that gives him great power. And his constituent service—watching over the rights of the many federal workers who live in Virginia's 10th District—is famous.

His evolution from "pothole politician" to watchman on the ramps of world freedom happened gradually. First, he went to Ethiopia in 1984 with Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio), a crusader against hunger who is Wolf's best friend in Congress and a fellow member of a House Bible study group. They went to Romania together and saw misery that made them come home and promote a bill against Most Favored Nation (MFN) treatment for the Ceausescu government. Since then, Wolf has never looked back or lost hope.

At his press conference, he urged Americans to write letters to Tibetan political prisoners. Based on the experience with Soviet prisoners of conscience, he says the Tibetans might not get the letters, but wardens made conscious of outside observation might give better treatment. He wants more congressional delegations in Tibet so that Chinese overlords will know the world has not forgotten. And he can see the day, when MFN will be denied to China. The American people are way ahead of Congress, their president and the business community, according to polls. One showed overwhelming opposition to MFN for China, 67 percent to 18 percent.

Wolf's inspiration is William Wilberforce, a prominent 19th-century British politician who spent his life working to abolish the slave trade. It took 34 years for Parliament to outlaw it, a month after Wilberforce's death. "It just takes time," says Wolf.

HAPPY 30TH BAY COUNTY HOME BUILDERS

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 9, 1997

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done at the end of a very long day, we look forward to going home for some rest from our days' efforts. When we arrive at our own private refuge, it is because of the great care taken by professional home builders in the construction and remodeling of this most important place that we can truly relax.

Today, the Bay County Home Builders Association is celebrating its 30th anniversary as

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