But until we get to the business of legislating, of actually proposing amendments and working with that kind of energy, we are never going to know if we can reach that kind of consensus, and that is what this fight is about.

So I hope no one confuses it as somehow surrogate or secret opposition to ISTEA. It is not. It is about the unwillingness of the Republicans at this point in time to set a date certain for campaign finance reform and to permit us to come back and do the business of the Senate. I yield the floor.

Mr. WELLSTONE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Might I ask colleagues whether or not there would be an opportunity to speak 5 minutes in morning business? Is that all right with my colleagues?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Minnesota for 5 minutes.

UNITED STATES-CHINA SUPPORT

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise to address the direction of our country's relationship with China. Right now, the Clinton administration is busy with the state visit of Chinese President Jiang Zemin. A state visit is the highest, most formal diplomatic event hosted by the United States. The champagne will flow, and flattering toasts will be made.

I disagree with this red carpet treatment, Mr. President. There is no question that United States-Chinese relations are crucial and important for both countries. It is wrong, however, for the United States to host a state visit for President Jiang Zemin until we see significant progress made on human rights in China. Instead of a ceremonial visit, we should be holding a working visit with the Chinese leadership, focusing on the critical issues that exist between our two nation, like human rights, weapons proliferation, and trade.

China continues to wage a war against individual freedoms and human rights. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of dissidents and advocates of political reform were detained just last year. They included human rights and pro-democracy activists, and members of religious groups. Many have been sentenced to long prison terms where they have been beaten, tortured, and denied medical care.

Scores of Roman Catholics and Protestants were arrested. A crackdown in Tibet was carried out during the ''Strike Hard'' campaign. Authorities ordered the closure of monasteries in Tibet and banned the Dalai Lama's image. At one monastery which was closed, over 90 monks and novices were detained or disappeared.

Harry Wu, a man of extraordinary courage and character, has documented China's extensive forced labor system. His research has identified more than 1,100 labor camps across China, many of which produce products for export to dozens of countries around the world, including the United States.

Because he criticized his government, Harry Wu was also imprisoned in these camps. For 19 years in 12 different forced labor camps across China, Harry was forced to mine coal, manufacture chemicals, and build roads. He survived beatings, torture, and starvation. He witnessed the death of many of his fellow prisoners from brutality, disease, starvation, and suicide.

According to Amnesty International, throughout China, mass summary executions continue to be carried out. At least 6,000 death sentences and 3,500 executions were officially recorded last year. The real figures are believed to be much higher.

Our own State Department reported that in 1996: ''All public dissent against the party and government was effectively silenced by intimidation, exile, the imposition of prison terms, administration detention, or house arrest. No dissidents were known to be active at year's end.''

Mr. President, that is a chilling, deeply disturbing statement. It cuts to the core values of our Nation. And it was made by our own Government, and this administration. Yet, this week, the administration will welcome President Jiang with pomp and circumstance. These actions indicate that, where China is concerned, what we have is not a policy of constructive engagement, but one of unconditional engagement.

Let us put some names and human faces to the statistics and generalities we have all heard with regards to China.

In May 1996, Wang Hui was detained. She was the wife of a jailed labor activist. While detained, she was denied water and other liquids. She tried to kill herself by hanging. According to Human Rights Watch, after being cut down by police, she was punished with severe beating.

Ngawang Choephel is a Fulbright Scholar from Middlebury College. He studied music, and returned to his homeland to document the ancient music and culture of Tibet. It is disappearing under the heel of the Chinese Government. As a result of his work, he was convicted in February, and sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for espionage. His crime—sending videotapes of ethnic Tibetan music and dancing out of China.

Last year, Wang Dan was sentenced to 11 years in prison on charges of conspiring to subvert the Chinese Government. Prior to sentencing, Wang had already been held 17 months in incommunicado detention. His crime: He was a leader of the Tiananmen movement.

Two years ago, Beijing sentenced Wei Jingsheng to 14 more years of incarceration for the crime of peacefully advocating democracy and political reform. Wei had been arrested and sentenced after he wrote wall posters on the Democracy Wall outside Beijing. They argued for true democracy and denounced Deng Xiaoping.

I have read Mr. Wei's work and his letter from prison. I can't tell you how impressed and moved I was by them. As a political scientist, I seldom, if ever, have read such an eloquent and intelligent espousal of democracy and human rights. Making the letters all the more remarkable is the fact that they were written while Wei was in prison or labor camps, mostly in solitary confinement. He has been jailed for all but 6 months of the last 18 years.

Wei Jingshen is not only China's most prominent dissident and prisoner of conscience, but ranks with the greatest fighters for democracy and human rights of this century. He brings to mind Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and, of course, Alexander Solzhenitsyn. I was honored to join many of my colleagues in nominating Wei for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Last week, Mr. Wei's sister came to the United States to tell the administration that he is dying in jail, and that this summit may be his last chance of emerging from detention alive. It is urgent that the Chinese Government release Wei and that he be given the medical care that he desperately needs, but has been denied.

By agreeing to this state visit without any significant concessions on human rights, like the release of Wei Jingsheng, the Clinton administration squandered its strongest source of leverage with Beijing.

This is not to say that all dialog between the United States and China or that working level visits are wrong. Instead, I believe that the symbolism of a state level visit is inappropriate given our strong disagreement with China over its human rights record. That is why I cosponsored a resolution with Senators FEINGOLD and HELMS to urge the President to downgrade this event from a state visit to working visit.

The Chinese have said they do not welcome American advice on what they view as a ''purely internal affair.'' Welcome or not, President Clinton must insist that China's leaders take specific actions on human rights.

Indeed, I believe strongly that the administration has a moral duty to press a range of issues with the Chinese Government that it may not welcome, but that are of enormous important to the Chinese people, and the United States.

Specifically, I call on President Clinton to demand:

The immediate and unconditional release of Wei Jingsheng, Wang Dan, and other prisoners of conscience held in jails in China and Tibet.

Improvement in the conditions under which political, religious, and labor dissidents are detained in China and Tibet. This includes providing prisoners with adequate medical care and

allowing international humanitarian agencies access to detention facilities.

Significant progress in improving the overall human rights conditions in China and Tibet. The Chinese Government must take concrete steps to increase freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association, in order to comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which it signed in 1948.

Some say that we cannot influence what goes on in China, that the country is too proud, too large, and that changes take too long. I disagree. For years we have pressured the Chinese on human rights, and to let up now is tantamount to defeat for the cause of human justice. Dissidents who have been freed and come to the United States have thanked advocates for keeping them alive, by keeping the pressure on, and focusing attention on their plight.

As Americans, it is our duty and in our interest to make the extra effort required to promote freedom and democracy in China, and to bring it into compliance with international standards on human rights.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of the conference report accompanying H.R. 2107, which the clerk will now report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2107) making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses this report, signed by all of the conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 22, 1997.)

Mr. GORTON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The time under the conference report is controlled.

Who yields time?

Mr. GORTON. I yield myself such time as I may use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I am pleased to bring before the Senate the conference report on H.R. 2107, the fiscal year 1998 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The conference report provides $13.8 billion for programs under the jurisdiction of the Interior subcommittee, and incorporates a number of changes to House and Senate funding levels and legislative provisions in an effort to reconcile the differences between the two bodies, and to reconcile the differences between the Congress and the administration. I firmly believe the resulting conference agreement is worthy of my colleagues' support.

While at this time I will not go into great detail about the conference report, I want to stress the fact that the conferees on this bill have gone to extraordinary lengths to try to accommodate the concerns of the administration. I ask unanimous consent that a more detailed discussion of the modifications that have been made in response to administration concerns appear at the end of my statement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. GORTON. There are, however, a handful of issues in the conference agreement that I know are of great interest to all Senators. I will spend a little time discussing two of these issues: Land acquisition and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The budget agreement provided the Appropriations Committees with the option to appropriate $700 million for ''priority land acquisitions and land exchanges,'' with the appropriation being in addition to the subcommittee's 602(b) allocation. This reserve fund was requested by the administration in budget talks, in large part because of the administration's desire to finance two major land purchases that it negotiated shortly before the Presidential election: The Headwaters Forest in California and the New World Mine in Montana.

The administration originally had proposed to conduct these acquisitions administratively, exchanging oil and gas properties and revenue streams in ways that stretched existing exchange authorities to the limit, if not beyond. I and many others strongly objected to the proposed acquisitions at the time, in part because it was clear that the administration was trying to evade the requirements of the Budget Act and bypass Congress altogether on two major expenditures. In that sense, I am glad that the budget agreement provided an opportunity for these acquisitions to come before Congress, albeit not under ideal conditions.

The House Appropriations Committee chose not to provide the $700 million. Chairman REGULA not only doubted the value of the Headwaters and New World Mine acquisitions to the U.S. taxpayer, but also felt strongly that if $700 million were available in the context of the budget agreement, that money would be better spent reducing the multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog that exists in our parks, refuges, and public lands. I cannot honestly say that I disagree with him on either point.

I did, however, include the $700 million in the Senate bill, largely because I feel a personal commitment to the budget agreement and the broader benefits that it provides for the American taxpayer. $315 million of the funds provided in the Senate bill were for the Headwaters Forest and New World Mine acquisitions. But because of the complexity of the acquisitions, the many questions that had been raised about them, and their sheer magnitude, I agreed with Senator MURKOWSKI that the funds should be provided subject to enactment of subsequent authorizing legislation. Some have intimated that this was an attempt to kill the two deals, but I can assure you that on my part it was not. I also have no doubt that Senator MURKOWSKI was doing anything other than his job, part of which is to authorize land purchases of this nature. The notion that Congress should simply accept the administration's word as to the worth of these expensive and highly complex projects is not only an abandonment of congressional prerogatives, but of our duty.

Mr. President, the conference on the Interior bill was closed 3 weeks ago but for the very difficult question of land acquisition. The administration has continually insisted that the money for Headwaters and New World Mine must be included in any Interior bill that the President would sign, and that such money could not be subject to an authorizing requirement. Senator MURKOWSKI has continued to insist on an appropriate role for the authorizing committee. Congressman YOUNG, Congressman HILL, Congressman RIGGS, and Senator BURNS desired to make certain that the communities impacted by the two acquisitions were adequately compensated. Congressman REGULA has insisted that a portion of the $700 million be made available to reduce maintenance backlogs on our public lands, rather than require all the money to be used to increase the public land base, and I should not fail to mention that Congressman OBEY, among others, was greatly displeased that the budget resolution dictated to the penny the amount that the Appropriations Committee could provide for priority land acquisitions.

The negotiations among all of these parties over the past several weeks have been exceedingly difficult. The compromise included in the conference report provides $699 million for priority land acquisitions and land exchanges, and critical maintenance needs. Of this amount, up to $250 million is for Headwaters Forest and up to $65 million is for the New World Mine. Authorizations for both projects are included in the conference report, but the acquisitions cannot be made until 180 days after enactment, providing the authorizing committees time to review the acquisitions and possibly recommend changes to the authorizing language. The authorizing language itself is the product of lengthy discussions between House and Senate authorizing committees, the Appropriations Committees and the administration. I should note