

my colleague from Nevada speaking about the need for a visitors center. I would like to add my support for his calling for us to resolve whatever difficulties there may be and try to get this visitors center constructed for all the good reasons he outlined.

There are millions and millions of young people and adults who come to this beautiful building. This really is the people's house. There really is no place for them to rest and to have a refreshment and to get someplace away from the hot Sun. The lines are quite long.

For all the reasons he laid out in his few minutes, I add my voice to how important I think it is for us to get on with the business of a visitors center for this Capitol.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND AVERY C. ALEXANDER, STATE HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE FROM LOUISIANA

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to rise for a moment of personal privilege on behalf of myself and Senator JOHN BREAUX to note with great sadness the passing of a leading citizen of my hometown, New Orleans, LA, our State representative, Rev. Avery C. Alexander, a community and civil rights leader for many decades who passed away in New Orleans last Friday at the age of 88.

Reverend Alexander, or "the Rev," as he was referred to by all of his many, many, many friends, was the son of a sharecropper from Houma, LA, and rose to prominence in the 1960s civil rights struggle. From the streets of New Orleans where he "shouted out" for the voiceless, to the halls of Baton Rouge where he fought for better schools, civil rights, and a more inclusive economy, "the Rev" stood tall.

When I was considering running for the legislature many, many years ago at the ripe old age of 23, my father rightfully advised me to meet with a small group of leaders to ask for their input and their ideas and their counsel.

The first person to show up at our home on that day was "the Rev." Once I was elected to the legislature, he helped me understand the political process from the inside as well as the outside. I will always be grateful for his early advice and counsel, and so will the thousands of others who have benefited from his encouraging words, his fighting spirit and determination to make this world a better place for all.

Reverend Alexander was a person who always managed somehow to rise above the man-made limitations placed on him, and he succeeded triumphantly.

It was Margaret Mead who said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world." In fact, she said, it has never been done any other way. "The Rev" knew that and lived that

until the day he passed. Many times, he alone was that small group, and he did, in fact, change our world for the better.

He worked as a laborer and a longshoreman—before he was a member of the legislature—while continuing his education at night. When he witnessed the unfair treatment of dock workers, he became active in the labor movement on the waterfront in New Orleans.

As a lifelong member of the NAACP, he championed the cause of anti-discrimination, voter registration, and citizen review of police brutality and misconduct.

He participated in the now famous march from Selma to Montgomery alongside the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1956, Reverend Alexander was arrested and dragged up the steps from the basement of city hall while attempting to integrate the public cafeteria in that building.

In 1992, he established a non-denominational ministry founded on the principle of "helping all people." Reverend Alexander was elected to the House of Representatives in 1975 and remained an active and effective member until his recent death.

As dedicated as he was to advocating civil rights for African Americans, he was equally dedicated to standing up for the rights of women. His words of encouragement throughout the years were in no small part responsible for helping me become the first elected woman Senator from Louisiana.

As a strong believer in higher education, he continued his own personal education at Xavier University, Southern University, Tulane University and the Union Theological Seminary and the University of New Orleans. Reverend Alexander also served as chaplain for many, many years of the Louisiana legislative black caucus, on the National Board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was a delegate on three separate occasions to the National Democratic Convention.

Mr. President, the citizens of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana have lost a dear friend. Many young leaders in our State and throughout the country have lost a great mentor, and the American people have lost a great civil rights leader. He will be missed. God bless his family, especially his daughter Cheryl, his brother Lymon and all the grandchildren and great grandchildren. We today commend him to you, dear Lord, in your eternal care.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield back the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 617 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, I come to the floor today because I believe that the time has come for a thoughtful and critical re-examination of United States policy towards the People's Republic of China.

There had been encouraging developments in China in the past two years. China has begun tackling the staggering job of reforming an antiquated command economy and opening it to private enterprise; and have begun to move the military out of the private sector. They've taken this difficult step even though they know it will result in the displacement and unemployment of literally millions of people. In addition, the government has greatly increased the number of democratic elections taking place at the village level throughout China. And Beijing has, for the most part, avoided interfering in Hong Kong affairs now that it is again a part of the PRC.

But Mr. President, despite these improvements, I cannot ignore the fact that for every step China has taken forward, it appears to have also taken one or two back. And a bilateral relationship that 10 months ago looked as though it were showing improvement is instead, I believe, headed down a rocky road.

FOR EXAMPLE: NUCLEAR AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Recent press reports have indicated that over the span of the last several years there have been damaging leaks to the Chinese of sensitive United States nuclear technology which has enabled them to advance their own nuclear program. The exact facts of the case are still unclear, and I am sure will be the subject of intense Congressional scrutiny in the months ahead, but what is clear to me is that there is a credible foundation for the accusations and that they are not, as the Chinese would have us believe, the figment of some supposed "anti-China" media bias. My examination of the Cox report leads me to the identical conclusion with regards to the transfer and acquisition of satellite technology.

Now it would be naive to deny that espionage is a fact of geopolitical life, or that countries act in their own best interests; we should neither be shocked nor appalled that it goes on. But still, China's willingness to systematically circumvent our laws and acquire over

the last several years—by stealth or otherwise—nuclear and computer technology is troubling to me, and demonstrates a willingness to take advantage of our relationship when possible.

TAIWAN

After a long-standing chill in relations across the Taiwan Straits, during which the two sides failed to carry on even basic dialog, things had begun looking up lately. The two sides resumed direct meetings last year, and the head of the Taiwanese department that oversees cross-strait affairs visited Beijing a few months ago; his PRC counterpart, Wang Daohan, has agreed to a return visit to Taipei in the near future.

Recently though, there have been some signs that things might turn chilly again. In the last several months, the PRC has relocated a number of its missiles from the interior of the country to Fujian, Zhejiang, and Guangdong Provinces—the three provinces directly across the Straits from Taiwan. Moving so many missiles into these coastal provinces is clearly meant, and understood, to send one signal to Taiwan. Remember, Mr. President, that it was from these provinces that China launched a series of “missile tests” just north and south of Taiwan during its 1996 presidential elections which effectively blockaded the ports of Kaoshiung and Taipei and which we felt were threatening enough to require the movement of part of the 7th Fleet to the Straits.

The movement of those missiles, and the not so veiled threat that accompanies them, can only prove to be another destabilizing effect in the region. Accompanied by rather bellicose statements in the last two weeks by PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan which pointedly omitted any promise to rule out the use of military force to achieve the reunification of Taiwan with the PRC, Taiwan cannot be faulted for feeling that the threat against it from the mainland has increased; nor can it be faulted for feeling the only way to protect themselves from that threat is to explore participating in the discussions about establishing a theater missile defense (TMD) system in East Asia.

In reaction to the TMD discussions, last week Beijing started a media blitz charging that any Taiwanese participation in a TMD “would be the absolute last straw” is US-PRC relations, and have threatened a series of serious—albeit unspecified—retaliatory steps. Yet China completely overlooks the fact that their missile movements have, in great measure, precipitated Taiwan’s interest.

TIBET

Yesterday was the 40th anniversary of the beginning of a failed Tibetan uprising against Chinese occupation of their country—an uprising that was brutally suppressed. And which resulted in the death, arrest, or impris-

onment of more than 87,000 Tibetans. It is unfortunate that since that time, the core position that China has vis-à-vis Tibet has changed very little.

Despite a sincere ongoing effort on the part of the Dalai Lama to engage the PRC in a dialog about the future of Tibet, the Chinese have repeatedly refused to meet with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to discuss the issue. Each time Beijing has placed preconditions on the commencement of those talks, and the Dalai Lama has acceded to those conditions despite their unpopularity among his people, the Chinese have effectively moved the goalposts. For example, the Dalai Lama has agreed to negotiate within the framework enunciated by Deng Xiaoping in 1979; namely, that he does not seek independence for Tibet but rather the opportunity for Tibetans to handle their domestic affairs and freely determine their social, economic, and cultural development. Once he acquiesced to that position, however, Beijing apparently decided that Deng’s framework was no longer sufficient.

Most recently, during his meeting with President Clinton last year, Jiang Zemin suggested he would meet with the Dalai Lama if the latter would recognize that Tibet and Taiwan are a part of China. His Holiness subsequently made a statement to that effect. But then the Chinese said that “he is not sincere” in his statement—that the Dalai Lama is lying—and therefore still refuse to negotiate with him.

And in the meantime, China continues to do all it can to squelch the Tibetan identity. Large numbers of ethnic Han Chinese are still being moved into Tibet in an apparent effort to make Tibetans a minority in their own land. Buddhist monks and nuns are imprisoned, and monasteries closed or their populations severely reduced. The government continues to manipulate and direct the selection of religious leaders more agreeable to the party line.

When confronted with these facts, the Chinese are fond of sidestepping them and noting that the life of the average Tibetan—from a health and economic standpoint—is better than it was before they took over. That may be. But that isn’t the issue. The issue is whether the Tibetan people are free to worship as they please. Whether they are free to express their cultural and ethnic identity. Whether they are free to determine their futures for themselves. And at present, the answer to those questions is a simple no.

HUMAN RIGHTS

There has been a disturbing increase in the last six months in government crackdowns on the freedom of expression, as evidenced by a sharp increase in the number of arrests and convictions of prodemocracy advocates. In addition, the government has shut

down fledgling prodemocracy organizations, and sought to curb Internet use and access.

I believe I understand, although I certainly in no way condone, the impetus behind the crackdown. As I noted earlier, China has recently embarked on a program to restructure its economy along free-market lines and to open itself more to the world around it. These changes could be viewed as potentially destabilizing for a communist regime which controls over 1.2 billion people. President Jiang admitted as much at the end of last year when he characterized government actions as necessary “to nip those factors that undermine social stability in the bud.”

As with other campaigns in China’s recent past, such as the “Let 100 Flowers Bloom” campaign, when this latest openness campaign took hold and began to accelerate, the central authorities got overly anxious about their ability to control the pace of reforms and about it getting out from underneath them and unleashing democracy. They have thus, true to form, begun slamming on the brakes and stifling any dissent, real or perceived.

But in doing so, the Chinese are blatantly flouting international norms and agreements to which they had previously pledged to adhere among them the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights. And in doing so, the Chinese are turning their backs on us and an issue that is of central importance to us.

NORTH KOREA

As a participant in the Four Party Talks in Geneva, China has helped facilitate getting North Korea to the negotiating table in an attempt to stabilize the Korean peninsula. But while purporting to assist us on the one hand, despite United States requests the Chinese are still not doing all they could—or in their own best interests should—do to defuse the potential powder keg that is North Korea.

Beijing’s initial response is to say, as Foreign Minister Tang did this week, that we are overestimating the potential threat North Korea poses to the region. But to anyone with even a passing familiarity with the issue, North Korea is probably the number one threat to peace and stability in all of East Asia. The Chinese fall-back position then is to say that they have no influence over the North that could be used to help us effectuate change. But China continues to supply the North, a country that is literally starving its own people to death to maintain its military and its political elite, with food and technical goods, and serves as its only source of aviation fuel. In fact, it was reported last week that China has supplied the North with missile technology. All those seem to me to be

potent incentives that could be used to influence the actions of the North, but which are pointedly not being taken advantage of by the Chinese.

Mr. President, we have had a policy of "engagement" with China now for a number of years. I have, since I came to the Senate, generally supported the concept as the best way—in my view—to effectuate change in China. But as a supporter of the concept, I now have to look at the facts and ask what the payoff has been to us. Mr. President, this is what engagement has gotten us lately: a military buildup that seriously threatens Taiwan, a Chinese veto last month in the UN of a proposed peace-keeping operation in the Balkans, an upswing in the harsh suppression of internationally recognized human and political rights, a continuing refusal to address the question of Tibet, the undermining of United States efforts to deal with North Korea, a continuing effort to purchase or steal sensitive computer and nuclear technology from us, and a trade deficit that hit an all-time high this year.

At times, it has seemed to me that this Administration—one that ironically accused its predecessor of "coddling Beijing"—has been more interested in the concept of engagement than in what results, if any, the application of that concept is achieving. Call it "engagement for engagement's sake."

The most glaring, and disturbing, illustration of that tendency may involve the allegations of leaks of nuclear technology from our facility at Los Alamos to the Chinese which came to light this week. Regardless of when the leaks occurred, initial reports suggest to me that this Administration knew of the problem but soft-peddled it so as to avoid calling its China policy into question. A NSC spokesman recently refuted that allegation by saying that the Administration has kept the relevant committees of Congress closely informed of the problem over the last 18 months, and of what was being done to address it. Mr. President, I have been Chairman of the East Asia Subcommittee for more than four years now. No one from the Administration has ever mentioned it to me, or to my staff. Nor has anyone contacted the staff of the full Foreign Relations Committee, or Chairman HELMS' Asia advisors.

I believe it is time to take a step back—on both sides of the aisle—and give our China policy a very long, hard, critical look. Congress needs to take the lead in examining whether, in the Administration's eagerness to engage China, we have overlooked the fact that our return—an improvement in China's domestic or international behavior—has been negligible at best.

I am not advocating isolating China, or shutting off our contacts or dialog. I do not believe that we can bully or

badger the Chinese into accepting our view of the world as the only one that is correct. Instead, I agree that we need to communicate with Beijing on a whole variety of fronts, to engage in open and frank dialog, and that because of its size, its economy, and its geopolitical importance we cannot, and should not, ignore them. But we need to take a look at the level at which that interaction takes place, and what we are willing to give up in exchange for that relationship. And we also need to look at what we want or expect in return.

Mr. President, our relationship with them should be grounded in reality, not in wishful thinking. And it should be a two-way street, not a one-way to a dead-end.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, today, March 15th, is the Ides of March for 1999. Like Caesar, Congress and the Administration are ignoring the one thing that has the potential to cripple our nation by crippling the booming U.S. economy—I am speaking of the Federal Debt.

While the political debate addresses the budget surplus, the balanced budget, and Social Security, it ignores the larger and lingering problem of the federal debt, and the lurking interest on the federal debt. Essentially, Mr. President, the forest cannot be seen for the trees.

Well, Mr. President, I am one who far prefers to examine to see the whole picture. If we continue to ignore the escalating debt and its enormous interest growing almost one billion dollars daily—just to pay the interest, mind you—then we will continue to risk economic bedlam down the road.

With these thoughts in mind, Mr. President, I begin where I left off Friday:

At the close of business, Friday, March 12, 1999, the federal debt stood at 5,653,581,734,840.04 (Five trillion, six hundred fifty-three billion, five hundred eighty-one million, seven hundred thirty-four thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and four cents).

One year ago, March 12, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,529,750,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-nine billion, seven hundred fifty million).

Fifteen years ago, March 12, 1984, the federal debt stood at \$1,464,623,000,000 (One trillion, four hundred sixty-four billion, six hundred twenty-three million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 12, 1974, the federal debt stood at \$469,792,000,000 (Four hundred sixty-nine billion, seven hundred ninety-two million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,183,789,734,840.04 (Five trillion, one hundred eighty-three billion, seven hundred eighty-nine million, seven

hundred thirty-four thousand, eight hundred forty dollars and four cents) during the past 25 years.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Morning business is now closed.

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE ACT OF 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 257, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 257) to state the policy of the United States regarding the deployment of a missile defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Mr. COCHRAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi is recognized.

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, the National Missile Defense Act of 1999 will make it the policy of the United States to deploy an effective missile defense system to defend against a limited ballistic missile attack as soon as technologically possible. Today, American citizens are completely vulnerable to ballistic missile attack.

Last year, when the Senate debated similar legislation, some suggested that our bill was premature, that there was not yet any reason to suspect that we were confronted with a ballistic missile threat. Now, however, there is no disagreement about the nature of the threat. Consider these recent developments:

(1) In 1997, the Director of Central Intelligence said, "Gaps and uncertainties preclude a good projection of when 'rest of the world' countries will deploy ICBMs."

(2) Last year, both Pakistan and Iran successfully tested new medium-range missiles, each based in some degree on a newly deployed North Korean missile, the No Dong.

(3) Also last year, in July, the bipartisan commission headed by the former Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, reported its unanimous conclusions that foreign assistance to missile programs was a pervasive fact and that new ICBM threats to the United States might appear with "little or no warning."

(4) A few weeks after the Rumsfeld report, North Korea launched the Taepo Dong 1, successfully demonstrating a multiple-staging capability, and using a solid-fuel third stage. According to the National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Systems, instead of having the expected 2,000-kilometer range, the