

African-Americans of any circuit in the nation. In our circuit, twenty-three percent of our population is African-American. Yet not one of the judges on the Fourth Circuit is African-American. Mr. President, it's time for a change. In fact, it's past time.

There have been several efforts in the past to integrate this circuit, but these efforts have been blocked. The Administration has tried since 1995 to integrate this circuit, but the "blue slips" for these nominees simply weren't returned, effectively thwarting those nominees.

I have argued for years that Virginia deserves another seat on the bench. Finally late last fall, we in Virginia were given an opportunity to fill one of the vacancies. We seized the opportunity and after an extensive and thorough search and vetting process—including time-consuming ABA screenings and FBI background checks—Roger Gregory was nominated by the Administration. We now have a chance to correct this gross inequity on the Fourth Circuit. Roger Gregory has the support of both Senators from Virginia.

There is time to move this nominee. Immediately before we began our August recess, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing and three judges were voted out of the Committee just six days after they were nominated. Of the last 12 judges confirmed by the Senate, 11 were confirmed within three months of nomination.

In 1992, another presidential election year in which the White House was controlled by one party and the Senate by another, Senate Democrats confirmed 66 nominees to the federal bench. Eleven of those were Circuit Court judges, and six of the Circuit Court judges were confirmed later than July of that year. Three were confirmed in August, two in September, and one in October.

And presidential candidate George W. Bush has called on the Senate to approve judicial nominees within 60 days. The sixty days for Roger Gregory passed on August 30. It is time to grant Mr. Gregory the courtesy of a hearing.

The late, renowned Judge Spotswood Robinson integrated the D.C. Circuit in 1966. He, too, came from Richmond, Virginia. It is time for another Richmonder, Roger Gregory, to break another barrier. We have already waited too long.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to move the nomination of Roger Gregory, and grant him a hearing.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:18 p.m.; whereupon, the

Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ENZI).

TO AUTHORIZE EXTENSION OF NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the postcloture debate on H.R. 4444, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A motion to proceed to the bill (H.R. 4444) to authorize extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the People's Republic of China, and to establish a framework for relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Chair recognizes the Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, with deep respect, I ask unanimous consent to yield first to the distinguished chairman, Mr. ROTH.

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

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from North Carolina for his usual courtesy.

Mr. President, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to support the motion to proceed to H.R. 4444 and to pass this legislation without amendment. Our vote on normalizing trade relations with China will mark the most significant vote we take in this Congress. Indeed, it will be one of the most important votes we will take during our time in the Senate.

At the outset, I want to be clear—because of PNTR's significance and because we have so little time left before the 106th Congress adjourns, I will oppose all amendments to PNTR, regardless of their merit.

The House bill takes the one essential step that we must take to ensure that American workers, American farmers and American businesses reap the benefits of China's market access commitments.

There is nothing that we can add to this bill that will improve upon its guarantee that our exporters benefit from the agreement it took three Presidents of both parties 13 years to negotiate with the Chinese.

I ask my colleagues to join me in adopting this approach because the risks of going to conference on this bill, in this political season, are too great. Bluntly, a vote to amend is a vote to kill this bill and, with it, any chance that U.S. workers, farmers, and businesses will benefit from China's accession to the WTO.

The significance of this vote is due both to the economic benefits that will flow from opening China's market to

our exports and the broader impact that normalizing our trade will have on our relationship with China. I want to address each of those points in turn.

Let me clarify, first, what this debate is about. The vote on PNTR is not a vote about whether China will get into the World Trade Organization, as some have said. I assure you that China will get into the WTO whether we vote to normalize our trade relations with China or not.

What this vote is about, as I indicated at the outset, is whether American manufacturers, farmers, service providers, and workers will get the benefits of a deal that American negotiators under three Presidents of both parties fought for 13 years to achieve. Or, will we simply concede the benefits of that deal to their European and Japanese competitors for the Chinese market?

As I explained just prior to the August recess, my reason for supporting this legislation is first and foremost because of the benefits that normalizing trade with China will offer my constituents back home in Delaware.

China is already an important market for firms, farmers, and workers located in my state. Delaware's exports to China in many product categories nearly doubled between 1993 and 1998. Delaware's trade with China now exceeds \$70 million.

What China's accession to the WTO means to Delaware is a dramatic further opening of China's markets to goods and services that are critical to Delaware's economy. China, for example, is already the second leading market for American poultry products worldwide.

Poultry producers in Delaware and elsewhere have built that market in the face of both quotas and high tariffs. China's accession to the WTO will mean that the tariffs Delaware poultry producers face will be cut in half, from 20 to 10 percent, and quotas that now limit their access to the Chinese market will be eliminated.

Normalizing our trade relations with China will also make a huge difference to the chemical and pharmaceutical industries which make up a significant share of my state's manufacturing base.

In the chemical sector alone, China has agreed to eliminate quotas on chemical products by 2002 and will cut its tariffs on American chemical exports by more than one-half.

Delaware is also home to two automobile manufacturing plants, one Chrysler and one Saturn. Once in the WTO, China will be obliged to cut tariffs on automobiles by up to 70 percent and on auto parts by more than one-half.

The agreement also ensures that U.S. automobile manufacturers will be able to sell directly to consumers in China and finance those sales directly as our

auto companies do here in the United States.

What holds true for Delaware holds true for the country as a whole. Independent economic analysis by Goldman Sachs suggests that the package may mean an increase of as much as \$13 billion annually in U.S. exports to China. That's right—\$13 billion annually.

What that figure reflects is that China's accession to the WTO will benefit every sector of the U.S. economy from agriculture to manufacturing to services.

Agriculture tariffs will be cut by more than half on priority products like beef, pork, and poultry. China will also eliminate many of the barriers to sales of bulk commodities such as wheat, corn, and rice.

Industrial tariffs would be slashed across the board by more than one-half—from an average rate of 24 percent to 9 percent. Equally important, American exporters will be able to sell directly to Chinese consumers and avoid the restrictions imposed on their sales by the state-owned enterprises they must currently use to distribute their products in China.

The deal will create broad new access for Americans services like telecommunications, banking and insurance. In particular, I want to stress that China not only agreed to open its market to new ventures in the banking and insurance areas but agreed to grandfather the existing hard-won market access that American financial service firms have already achieved. I expect those obligations to be met fully by the Chinese.

The agreement also provides unprecedented safeguards to American manufacturers here at home. The agreement reached this past November permits the United States to invoke a country-specific safeguard against imports from China that may disrupt our markets. In addition, the agreement allows the United States to apply special rules regarding unfair pricing practices by Chinese firms for 15 years after the agreement goes into force.

The agreement even addresses a concern that has been raised by many concerned with the efforts of China to convert U.S. technology to military uses. The WTO agreement specifically obliges China to end the practice of demanding that American firms cough up their manufacturing technology as a condition of exporting to or investing in the Chinese market.

Significantly, the agreement and China's accession to the WTO gives the United States rights against Chinese trade practices that we do not currently enjoy. It also ensures that the United States has a forum in which it will benefit from the support of the rest of China's WTO trading partners should disputes over China's obligations arise.

In the Finance Committee we devoted many hours to consultations

with the President and his representatives as the negotiations proceeded.

We devoted an equal number of hours to a review of the agreement finally reached this past November. I believe I can speak for my colleagues on the committee in saying that there was overwhelming support for the agreement so ably negotiated by Ambassador Barshefsky.

That support is warranted not only by the terms of the agreement but by the testimony we heard and the support expressed from a broad and diverse spectrum of U.S. interests.

The agreement was supported not only by U.S. businesses, American farmers, and groups representing virtually every sector of the U.S. economy. The agreement garnered the support of Presidents from Gerald Ford to George Bush, former Secretaries of State and Treasury, and an impressive array of national security specialists from Richard Perle to General Colin Powell all of whom underscored the importance of China's accession to the WTO and normalizing our trade relations with China as good not only in economic terms but in strategic terms as well.

The testimony before the Finance Committee left little doubt that China's reemergence as a world power presents challenges to the world community and to U.S. interests. But, the testimony before the committee was unequivocal on one point—that our interests are best served by drawing China into that community of nations, rather than isolating China from that community through restrictions on trade.

General Powell said it best in his public statement on PNTR, indicating that—

*** from every standpoint—from the strategic standpoint, from the standpoint of our national interests, from the standpoint of our trading and economic interests—it serves all of our purposes to grant permanent normal trading relations to China.

Opponents of this legislation have often tried to downplay the importance of normalizing our trade relations with China. They argued that we are entitled to the benefit of the WTO agreement based on our bilateral trade arrangements with China dating back to 1979. They argue that we will suffer no competitive disadvantage if we fail to take the steps necessary on our end to comply with our own WTO obligations.

I want to lay that argument to rest. That argument was contradicted by Ambassador Barshefsky, by our own legal counsel, and by every trade expert consulted by the Finance Committee.

However, just to make sure, my distinguished colleague and the ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator MOYNIHAN and I, together with the chairman and ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, specifically put that question to the General Accounting Office.

The GAO has had a team following the WTO negotiations with the Chinese closely for several years. We asked them for their assessment of the terms of the agreement and whether we could rely on our 1979 agreement to obtain the benefits of China's accession to the WTO.

The GAO, in testimony before the committee and in a report it released prior to House passage of PNTR, concluded that the 1979 bilateral arrangement would not guarantee the rights three Presidents of both parties spent 13 years negotiating with the Chinese.

According to the GAO, the essential step in obtaining the benefits of China's accession to the WTO was the passage of PNTR. Indeed, the GAO emphasized that failure to approve PNTR would "put U.S. business interests at a considerable competitive disadvantage" in the Chinese market.

In other words, the single step we must take to obtain the benefits of the Chinese agreement to open their markets is the passage of H.R. 4444.

In light of that fact, let me turn briefly to an explanation of the legislation before us. The bill authorizes the President to normalize our trade relations with China when China has completed the WTO accession process provided that the terms of China's accession are equivalent to those negotiated this past November.

That action will assure that American firms, farmers, and workers will receive the benefit of the bargain Ambassador Barshefsky struck with China.

But, the House bill does considerably more to ensure that we get the benefit of our bargain and more to address many of the concerns that opponents of this legislation have raised regarding China's human rights practices and more to encourage the development of political pluralism in China.

On the trade front, the House bill provides for the aggressive monitoring of China's compliance with its WTO obligations and the enforcement of U.S. rights under the WTO agreement.

The bill would offer particular help to small- and medium-size businesses, and to workers, in making use of the remedies available under U.S. law to address any violations of U.S. WTO rights or to address any unfair Chinese trade practices.

In addition, the House bill implements the special safeguard mechanism that was a part of the November agreement. In effect, the bill provides the counterpart in domestic law to the provisions of the bilateral agreement that offer import-sensitive industries in the United States protection in any dramatic surge in imports from China that disrupt U.S. markets.

The bill also addresses a concern that I am sure all of us share with respect to Taiwan's economic future. Taiwan has applied for admission to the World

Trade Organization and its accession process is essentially complete.

The House bill expresses the sense of Congress that the WTO should approve Taiwan's accession to the WTO at the same time that it approves China's. As a matter of WTO rules, there is no need to debate Taiwan's designation or its relationship to China. The WTO rules permit the accession of Taiwan regardless of its designation.

China has long provided assurances that it would not stand in the way of Taiwan's accession at the same time China itself enters the WTO, and I expect China to live up to those assurances, just as the House bill makes clear.

Apart from securing the trade benefits of China's accession to the WTO, the House bill represents an important step forward on the issues of human rights, internationally-agreed labor standards, and religious freedom.

In an innovative approach, the bill would create a commission made up of members of both the Congress and the executive branch, modeled on the successful domestic counterpart to the Helsinki Commission on human rights, to monitor Chinese practices in those areas, as well as the development of the rule of law and democracy.

One of the significant advantages of the approach adopted by the House bill is that it ensures a constructive, ongoing review of China's practices throughout the year, rather than what has become an unproductive once-a-year effort tied to a congressional vote.

More fundamentally, the commission will ensure that the United States' concerns and our message to the Chinese leadership regarding Chinese human rights practices is undiluted by a debate over whether to renew China's trade status.

There are some who have suggested that the bill should have gone farther. They suggest that the bill should have empowered the proposed commission to address national security concerns as well.

Those concerns, however, have been mooted by the recent action taken by the Senate in the context of the Defense authorization bill. I congratulate my distinguished colleagues, Senators WARNER, LEVIN, and BYRD, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the committee's ranking member, and one of the most senior members of that panel, for proposing the creation of a separate commission to look at precisely those issues of national security and the link between those issues and our expanding trade relationship with China.

In sum, the House bill preserves what we in the Finance Committee sought to do in the bill we reported out, which was to ensure that American firms, farmers, and workers gain the benefits of the agreement reached this past November, and take additional steps to

secure those trade benefits and offers a new approach to addressing U.S. concerns regarding human rights practices in China.

I believe that H.R. 4444 not only merits our support, but that it strikes a careful and appropriate balance of the interests we have in our broader relationship with China.

For that reason, I intend not only to support the legislation as drafted, but, as I said at the outset, I will oppose any amendment to the House bill no matter how meritorious the amendment might be standing on its own.

That brings me to my final point. There are a number of my colleagues that see this vote as an opportunity to link other issues to our trading relationship with China.

I am certain that we will have the opportunity to debate amendments on everything from the release of political prisoners to China's implementation of a one-child policy to its recurring threats against Taiwan to issuers of weapons proliferation. I respect my colleagues' point of view and recognize that these are serious issues that should remain a part of the broader dialog with China on our bilateral relations.

What I fundamentally disagree with is the approach of linking progress in those areas to our trade with China.

I do so for three reasons. First, the approach of linking progress to our trading relations with China has proved to be a failure. We have tried the approach of linking progress in other areas, such as human rights, to trade and it simply has not worked. It is time to try a different approach.

Second, the threat of economic sanctions would only work if the target country believes that there is something fundamental at risk. Here, I want us to think through the logic of voting "no" on PNTR. The net effect of a "no" vote on PNTR would be to cut off U.S. exports to China.

China already has access to our market. We do not enjoy reciprocal access to China's market. That is what the WTO agreement provides. In voting "no" on PNTR, we would only be voting to deny ourselves the benefits of the WTO agreement to American firms, farmers, and workers.

Denying ourselves the benefit of the WTO agreement is simply no threat to the Chinese. They will simply obtain the goods, services, and technology they want from other WTO members.

In other words, even if you accepted the logic of economic sanctions, voting "no" on PNTR does not serve the objective of modifying China's behavior or the views of its leadership.

Finally, there are some who decry the pursuit of profit when issues of human rights and human freedoms are at stake. While I share their concerns for human rights conditions in China, I feel compelled to say that they are

wrong and their criticisms are misplaced.

In the end, human freedom is indivisible. It is not neatly divided between political freedom and economic freedom, as some suggest. Economic freedom is freedom, pure and unadulterated. The reason is that, absent economic freedom, no person has the wherewithal to defend their political rights.

What that means in practical terms in the context of modern China is that we should do whatever we can to empower the Chinese people to pursue their own course toward freedom.

One essential step toward that goal is to ensure that the Chinese people are free to pursue their own economic destiny free from the heavy hand of the state. That is because the roots of political pluralism lie in economic interests that differ from those of the Chinese Communist Government and those of the Chinese leadership.

The noted Chinese human rights activist Fu Shen, active in defense of Chinese human rights and political freedoms since the 1979 Democracy Wall Movement, has made this point more eloquently than I can.

In a public statement on PNTR, Fu emphasized that:

The annual argument over NTR renewal exerts no genuine pressure on the Chinese Communists and performs absolutely no role in compelling them to improve the human rights situation. . . . [I]mprovement of the human rights situation and advancement of democracy in China must mainly depend on the greatness of the Chinese people, in the process of economic modernization, gradually creating the popular citizen consciousness and democratic conscience and struggling for them. It will not be achieved through the action of the U.S. Congress in debating Normal Trade Relations. . . .

Fu's point was echoed by the China Democracy Party, founded 2 years ago, in its public statement on PNTR. In declaring its support for China's accession to the WTO and for the normalization of our trade relations with China, the Democracy Party stated:

We believe the closer the economic relationship between the United States and China, the more chances to politically influence China, the more chances to monitor human rights, and the more effective the United States to push China to launch political reforms.

The Democracy Party's statement went on to say that the Communist leadership's power in China is "planted in state ownership." A vote for PNTR is a vote to end the Communist leadership's monopoly on power within Chinese society. A vote against PNTR would condemn the Chinese people to work for the state-owned enterprises that are the Communist leadership's most effective means of political control.

That is why, beyond the economic benefits for my home state of Delaware and for our nation as a whole, I support normalizing our trade relations with

China. It is a vote for freedom and that is where I will cast my lot every time.

I thank my colleagues and urge their support for the motion to proceed and for passage of this essential legislation.

Once again, I thank my distinguished colleague from North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). Under the previous order, the Senator from North Carolina is recognized for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, I say to my distinguished and long-time friend from Delaware that I seldom disagree with him, but this time I do, and it is a doozy.

Madam President, the pending bill, H.R. 4444, which proposes to give permanent most-favored-nation trading status to Communist China, is perhaps the most ill-advised piece of legislation to come to the Senate floor in my 28 years as a Senator.

As the Senate considers this issue, the ultimate question is an ominous one: Will granting permanent most-favored-nation status to Communist China advance the foreign policy interests of the United States?

My genuine conclusion is that by doing so, the United States Senate will be making a mockery of common sense.

Now, there is no question that giving permanent most-favored-nation trade status to China may advance the business interests of various sectors of the U.S. corporate community. But the Senate, amidst all the high pressure tactics, must not confuse business interests with the national interest of the American people.

America's principal national interest, vis-a-vis mainland China, is to seek to democratize China, hoping that China will conduct its foreign relations in a civilized fashion, and stop behaving in a rogue fashion, as the Chinese Communists have done for the past 50 years.

We must dare to ponder the most realistic of questions—for example: Will granting permanent most-favored-nation trade status to Communist China persuade its rulers to retreat from their threats to invade Taiwan if Taiwan does not negotiate reunification with the Communist mainland?

Will China all of a sudden cease its relentless military buildup in the Taiwan Strait?

Will China halt its brazen land grabs in the Spratly Islands?

Will China stop its reckless proliferation of weapons among its fellow criminal regimes around the world?

Any Senator answering any such questions in the affirmative should wait around until the Sugar Plum Fairy dances down Lollipop Lane. The fact is, the United States has had normal trade relations with Communist China for the past 20 years. Yet Communist China's behavior has not improved one iota; it has worsened dra-

matically on every one of these fronts during those two decades of normal trade.

Communist China has become more, not less, threatening to Taiwan during the past 20 years. Twenty years ago Communist China was not making incursions across the maritime boundaries of the Philippines, but today it is arrogantly doing so.

Two reports delivered to Congress by the CIA this year make crystal clear that China's weapons proliferation continues apace—flatly contradicting testimony by the Clinton State Department in 1999 before the Foreign Relations Committee of which I happen to be chairman.

Let's examine further this exotic pig in a poke.

As everyone knows—with the possible exception of anybody on a trip to the Moon for the past few years—Communist China dramatically lowered its threshold for using military force against Taiwan in its notorious White Paper this past February. For years, China has assured that it would invade Taiwan only if Taiwan declared independence. That was preposterous on its face—but now, China says it will invade Taiwan if Taiwan merely delays reunification talks with China for too long.

That is not progress to me, Mr. President; it is instead clearly dangerous regression in China's policy toward Taiwan. And guess what. It happened just 3 weeks before the President sent this legislation to Capitol Hill.

Angry threats against Taiwan have become more frequent and increasingly venomous, both in the Chinese press and from the mouths of Chinese leaders. Recent headlines in Chinese newspapers have talked of smashing Taiwan and drowning Taiwan in a sea of fire. In a March 28 article in the South China Morning Post, Chinese President Jiang Zemin was quoted as saying "If we were to take military action, it should be sooner rather than later."

The Chinese have also directed those threats at us. China has repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons against American cities if the U.S. comes to Taiwan's defense. As recently as April 11, an article appeared in another Hong Kong paper entitled: "Nuclear War Will Certainly Break Out If The United States Gets Involved"—that is to say, Taiwan.

If that attitude is the fruit of normal trade relations with China, then by all means, it is indeed bitter fruit.

Lest anyone think that China is merely engaging in bluster, consider this: the year 2000 will mark the 11th straight year that China's military budget will increase by double digits. What is China doing with all that money?

Well, one thing is a pair of Russian destroyers armed with the Sunburn missile, which skims the sea at Mach

2.5—about 2,000 miles per hour—and has an effective range of 65 miles and can carry nuclear warheads. In answer to a question I asked at a Foreign Relations Committee hearing in February, the Secretary of State replied: "The terminal flight path of the Sunburn makes it very difficult for any U.S. defense system, including Aegis, to track and shoot down the Sunburn."

China began shopping for this missile just after we sent carriers near Taiwan in 1996; China has spent over \$2 billion for two destroyers and at least thirty-two missiles.

Madam President, I doubt that the American people will be heartened to know that our \$68 billion trade deficit with China helped pay for this latest Chinese threat to American sailors.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Other Chinese weapons purchases (that the American taxpayers are financing through our trade policies) include Russian advanced fighters, air-to-air missiles, and submarines. Most, if not all, of this weaponry is designed for a Taiwan scenario, helping to tip the balance of power in that region further and further away from democratic Taiwan and toward the Communists in Beijing.

This is yet another product of our let's trade-at-any-cost policy with China.

That is the reason I am here today to speak against this piece of legislation. It may pass, but it will never do it with my vote or my support.

Madam President, I earlier mentioned increased Chinese aggression in the Spratly Islands. We must bear in mind that, in 1995, China seized some small islands called Mischief Reef in the South China Sea. Mischief Reef is just 100 miles off the coast of the Philippines and over 1,000 miles from the Chinese mainland. With this brazen land grab having gone unopposed, even verbally, by anyone other than our Philippine allies, China reached out again in late 1998.

In October of that year, China began a crash construction project and by January of 1999, had replaced some ramshackle huts on Mischief Reef with permanent structures that have been frequented by Chinese warships and are deemed as dual-use capable by military experts.

Twenty years of annual trade favors to China were not enough to ward off these blatant violations of international norms, but I, for one, await with bated breath the day when China withdraws from Mischief Reef because of pressure from the World Trade Organization.

Don't hold your breath, Madam President; it's not going to happen.

We can also see the absurdity of U.S. policy toward China by taking a look at China's proliferation record. In 1998, President Clinton certified that China could be trusted—let me repeat that.

He certified that China could be trusted with our nuclear materials, paving the way for the longstanding desire of some U.S. companies to export nuclear reactors to China. Then, in testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee in March 1999, Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth gave China a clean bill of health on proliferation.

I am not kidding. That is so.

Mr. Roth stated that China had actually become part of the solution to proliferation problems.

It didn't take long for Assistant Secretary Roth's testimony to be exposed as—let me find a gentle word—maybe "incomplete" is the nicest word I can find. In April 1999, the Washington Times reported that China was continuing its secret transfer of missile and weapons technology to the Middle East and South Asia. A follow-up story in July detailed China's continuing shipments of missile materials to North Korea. These press reports were verified twice this year by none other than the Central Intelligence Agency in its semi-annual proliferation reports to Congress.

But I guess we are supposed to believe that more trade will solve that sort of problem.

But I am not convinced—not by my distinguished friend from Delaware, not by all of the businessmen who have called on me, not by anybody.

In sum, Communist China's foreign policy behavior has become increasingly antithetical to U.S. national interests during the past 20 years of so-called "normal" trade relations. It is difficult to see how making the status quo permanent will cause any improvement whatsoever.

Of course, the direction of China's foreign policy will hinge largely on whether the Chinese government democratizes and begins to treat its own people better than under the existing Communist regime.

All of us know the horror stories of things perpetuated against the Chinese people by their own government. But here again, the record of engagement—or shall I state it more clearly, appeasement—has yielded miserable results.

In fact, China was somewhat more inclined toward reform 15 years ago than it is today. In the mid-and-late 1980s, China's leadership at least express some sympathy for reform, and for the students and others who were demanding it. But these reforms were ousted, replaced by hardline Stalinists who massacred the students and began a decade-long campaign of brutal repression. You can't describe it any way otherwise. Senator WELLSTONE and I will have more to say about human rights in China at a later time, but I believe the U.S. State Department's 1999 Human Rights Report says it all.

This is not JESSE HELMS. This is the State Department of the United States

of America. And the last time I checked it was under the purview of a fellow named Bill Clinton.

The State Department said:

The Chinese Government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the past year, as the Government intensified efforts to suppress dissent.

Do you want to hear that again?

The State Department of the United States said: "The Chinese Government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the past year, as the Government"—meaning the Chinese Government—"intensified efforts to suppress dissent."

Many supporters of this legislation, if not most, insist that the way to improve this miserable situation is to reward Communist China with permanent most-favored-nation trade status. Madam President, I find absolutely no evidence whatsoever to support such an assertion.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Idaho is recognized for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, thank you very much.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator MOYNIHAN follow me to make his opening statement on PNTR, and that he use such time as he may consume for that statement.

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

FOREST FIRES

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I asked for time in our schedule today so that I might be joined with other Western Senators and those Senators concerned about the catastrophic fires that have been sweeping across public lands in the West for the last month and a half.

Coincidentally, today is the first day of school across our Nation. Many of our children in elementary schools are going to be asked by their teachers: What did you do during your summer vacation? For the next few moments, I will suggest to you that this is my opening speech following my summer vacation. Let me tell you what I did during my summer vacation.

I went home to my beautiful State of Idaho and watched it burn—hundreds of thousands of acres of timberland, grassland, wild habitat, and environmentally sensitive land burned with catastrophic fires that were too dangerous, too hot, and too powerful to put firefighters in the face of to try to stop them and protect these beautiful natural resources.

In fact, I never thought I would return to Washington, DC, in search of clean air. But it is true. The air is cleaner over our Nation's Capital today than it is in my beautiful State of Idaho, or Montana, or those Great

Basin States of the West that are known for spaciousness, vistas, and clean air.

This year's fire season may well prove to be the worst in half a century. All of our 11 Western States, as well as Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, are reporting very high and extreme fire danger levels today.

As I speak, large fires are actively burning in California, Colorado, Florida—a little less so in Idaho today because it rained during the night, and it rained over the weekend. But it is true in Louisiana and Mississippi—a little less true in Montana because of that same rainstorm—Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

The map I have to my left demonstrates the character and the widespread nature of these fires. It isn't coincidental, nor is it unique, that most of these fires would be found on public lands—land managed by Federal land management agencies of this Government.

As of last week, the National Interagency Fire Center reports that 81 large fires are burning presently, covering nearly 1.7 million acres of land. The acres burned year to date exceed 6.5 million acres nationwide. That is over twice the 10-year average to date.

The reason I keep using the word "to date" is because we are now in the early days of September, and normal fire seasons will run late into September—and even later into October in California and other places down toward and including the Southwest. The total number of fires on public lands has surpassed 74,000. Let me repeat that: 74,000 fires on public lands. That is almost 13,000 fires higher than the 10-year average.

Nationally, wildfires this year have burned an area larger than our neighboring State to the District, Maryland. In other words, envision the entire State of Maryland charred by fire. That is how many acres have been consumed by fire in our Nation this year.

There are roughly 26,000 firefighters battling wildfires. We have run out of trained firefighters and are preparing 550 new Army troops to assist fire crews. This is in addition to over 2,000 soldiers already deployed to fire crews nationwide, as well as firefighters from 3 different foreign countries—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. All of the personnel fighting fires deserve our heartfelt thanks for their efforts and their dedication. And yes, we have also lost lives of firefighters.

Current estimates suggest that nearly \$120 million was spent in August alone fighting wildfires. The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise reports it is spending \$18 million a day on fire suppression and related efforts. Last week, the Federal Government reported that it has spent \$626 million so