

Not when duty officers suffer chronic fatigue because staffing constraints permit only four hours of sleep at night. Not when the Commandant testifies before Congress that there's not enough fuel to power his boats and planes.

And not when Coast Guard radio communications units are 30 years old, like the one described in a recent news account that began this way:

If you dial 911, say the word 'fire' and run outside, a fire engine will show up at your driveway. If you pick up the handset on your VHF-FM radio, say the work 'Mayday' and jump overboard, you could very well drown or die of hypothermia.

Study after study has documented these hazards. A recent Interagency Task Force concluded that "block obsolescence . . . presents a threat that [the Coast Guard] could soon be overwhelmed by a mismatch between its missions and the quantity and quality of the assets to carry them out."

A 1997 General Accounting Office review was even more blunt. It projected \$90 million annual reductions in operating expenses just to bridge the gap. GAO was alarmed by "the sheer size of the gap and the dwindling number of available efficiency-related options."

Where I'm from, a marine distress call is an urgent plea for emergency law enforcement and rescue personnel. When oil spills jeopardize economic as well as environmental resources; when frozen rivers trap heating oil barges; when the well-being of both fish and fishermen are threatened; when offshore danger strikes, we know were to turn.

That's why when the ink dried on the House DOT appropriation, there was reason for new and genuine hope. Like having Pedro Martinez in the starting rotation, it felt like this really could be the year.

The DOT bill approved recently for next year increases Coast Guard accounts by nearly \$600 million, a 15 percent boost. It also includes \$125 million to help modernize aging airplanes, helicopters and motor lifeboats—and upgrade, rather than abandon, Coast Guard stations and the communities they serve.

Years from now, the 395 House colleagues who voted for the DOT bill can look back and take satisfaction from the knowledge that they helped saved a life, a coastal community, an international alliance—or maybe even a marine species or two.

But that old curse still hovers over the Coast Guard. Just this week, the Senate Subcommittee came in \$200 million lower.

The timing could not be worse. The Senate action followed two rounds of Coast Guard cutbacks for the current fiscal year, reducing cutter days and flight hours by 10 percent.

Why? Because the Coast Guard responded to natural disasters, but the Congress failed to pass emergency supplemental funding. And because a variety of overdue personnel benefits, for everything from housing to health care, were mandated by the 2000 Defense Authorization—but with no money to pay for them.

There's more. The good news is a new effort, through the pending Military Construction bill, to restore \$800 million in supplemental funding. But since only a third of that is designated as "emergency expenses," the base-

line for future Coast Guard budgets, next year and beyond, would be seriously compromised.

So I express gratitude for the progress made in this chamber thus far. But also to raise a warning flag about the two challenges immediately ahead.

Specifically, I urge my colleagues to hold firm in conference on the House-approved allocation in the Transportation Appropriation bill. And then to recede to Senate conferees regarding the \$800 million in the MilCon measure.

That's what it will take for the Coast Guard to do the job we have assigned it to do. To contain oil spills. To catch smugglers. And, most important of all, to save lives.

CHINA PNTR

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 2000

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, we have recently voted to establish permanent normal trade relations with China, which I believe will provide economic opportunities for us and further advance reforms that will promote democratization and hopefully improve human rights in that region.

China recently negotiated to become a member of the World Trade Organization, a union of 135 nations who will require China to follow established trade rules. China has agreed to lower tariffs and duties on many products imported from foreign countries including the United States. These lowered tariffs will increase American exports, expand opportunities for our businesses, and create new jobs. If we had not granted permanent normal trade relations with China, we would have lost these economic benefits to other countries that would trade with China.

Increased trade with China will create new jobs and stimulate the economy in my district. Lowered tariffs will apply to California's Central Valley agricultural products, such as almonds, oranges, grapes, and cotton. In a few years, China will reduce its tariff on almonds from 30 to 10 percent, on oranges from 40 to 12 percent, and on grapes from 40 to 13 percent. China will also import millions of additional tons of cotton at a low duty. These lowered tariffs and duties will lead to lower prices for Chinese citizens who will demand more products, necessitating increased production in the Valley. New agricultural jobs will support this increased production.

We are already reaping abundant benefits from trade with other countries. Since July of 1999, Kern County alone has shipped over 220,000 tons of cotton to Mexico. Production, transportation, and marketing of cotton for Mexico have generated numerous jobs in the Central Valley. Because China's population is significantly greater than that in the other countries with whom we trade, the amount of products we will export there will also be significantly greater.

Not only will increased trade benefit our economy, but it will also help further the expansion of freedoms in China. In any nation, this process takes time. Our own nation's his-

tory attests to this fact. The rights guaranteed in our Constitution have not always been granted to everyone. For example, slavery, with all of its abuses, we practiced for 78 years after the ratification of the Constitution. Eighty-three years after the Constitution, the Fifteenth Amendment theoretically granted suffrage to all people, regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," but these rights continued to be denied to people of color. Our country progressed over time to expand and guarantee equal protection of rights under the law.

Just as the expansion of freedoms has progressed over time throughout the history of the United States, so it will take time for China to extend more freedoms to its citizens. China is just starting the process we have been pursuing for over two centuries, and they are in a different situation than was the United States at its foundation. Chinese leaders do not regard the individual as, in the words of our Declaration of Independence, "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." Their government does not derive its "just Power from the Consent of the Governed." The Chinese have still to develop a real understanding of the value of the individual.

Communist Party control over the financial future of Chinese citizens is weakening. Millions of people are migrating away from state-owned enterprises to work in private businesses. At these businesses, they experience improved working conditions and higher wages. They are less dependent on the government, can make their own choices, and thereby have more personal control over their lives. As this movement into the private sector continues, more people will come to expect and demand the reforms necessary to guarantee individual rights.

Exposure to international trade rules will enable the Chinese to appreciate establishing rule of law within their country. Increased trade with all nations will acquaint Chinese citizens with innovation and new technology from sources outside their government. These ideas will increase their awareness of the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled. Chinese citizens may in time pressure their leaders for reforms that will guarantee these rights and freedoms. Our trade relations will allow us to support the Chinese people if they choose to push for these reforms.

For all of these reasons, I am pleased that the House has voted for permanent normal trade relations with China. The bill is now in the Senate, where I am hopeful it will pass so that the United States and China together can secure the benefits of a more open trade relationship.

TRIBUTE TO MATT LINWONG

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 19, 2000

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to commend Matt Linwong, a freshman at Mt. Vernon Township High School in Mt. Vernon, IL, for his academic achievement.