April 5, 2001

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

5673

CSIS, which is based in Honolulu, recently published an insightful analysis in the International Herald Tribune entitled "Beijing Risks Flunking." I will ask unanimous consent that his article be printed in the RECORD following my remarks, and I urge my colleagues and Chinese officials to read carefully his article. A recent colleague of Mr. Cossa's at CSIS, James Kelly, has been nominated by President Bush to be the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies' Pacific Forum has a long history of both monitoring and working to improve relations between the United States and China. For this reason especially, Mr. Cossa's analysis of the current crisis in American-Chinese relations is particularly disturbing.

As Mr. Cossa points out, "Beijing's automatic reaction to any mishap is to quickly incite anti-American sentiments. This is contrary to China's stated desire to develop improved relations with Washington."

He makes the point that some in China in the past have accused the United States of a "Cold War mentality" but that today it is China "that is demonstrating such a mindset in the way it has reacted to this accident."

Yesterday, Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed regret for the death of the Chinese pilot and has made suggestions to the Chinese on how to resolve the current crisis and prevent further such incidents. Now it is time for China to respond with similar magnanimous gestures by releasing our airmen and women and returning our aircraft. Any further delay may damage American-Chinese relations in an irrevocable way.

I ask unanimous consent that the analysis to which I referred be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the International Herald Tribune, April 4, 2001]

SPY PLANE POSES TEST THAT BEIJING RISKS FLUNKING

(By Ralph A. Cossa)

HONOLULU—The collision between a Chinese fighter and an American reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace over the South China Sea is an unfortunate, unplanned event that could test the maturity of both the relationship between China and the United States. So far, Beijing appears to be flunking the test.

Senior Chinese military officials on Saturday said their country did not purposefully shoot down the plane to protest a U.S. spy plane's incursion into Chinese airspace. But they accused the U.S. of provoking the incident.

The planes went down just 50 miles south of Hainan Island. The Chinese plane was on a routine surveillance mission, while the American plane was flying over Hainan's sea area, a source said.

The Chinese jury of warplanes, including a fighter jet, intercepted the American EP-3 plane over the South China Sea on Monday and forced it to land on the Chinese island.

The Chinese military announced that the American EP-3 reconnaissance plane had been forced to land on the island of Hainan in the South China Sea. The plane is a modified DC-10 with four jet engines.

China's immediate handling of the incident—to publicly blame the United States even before the facts were known and to protest the U.S. spy plane's incursion into Chinese airspace—was reminiscent of Beijing's handling of the aftermath of the Belgrade bombing, which was immediately branded a "criminal act." It seems that the automatic reaction to any mishap is to quickly incite anti-American sentiments. This is contrary to China's stated desire to develop improved relations with the United States.

Equally disturbing was Chinese refusal to grant American diplomats immediate access to the crew or to the plane, which is loaded with sensitive surveillance equipment (although much of it was no doubt destroyed by the crew before landing at the Chinese airfield).

When China, the self-proclaimed defender of national sovereignty, treats the plane as the piece of American sovereign territory that it is, or—as it has already done, according to some reports—boarded the plane and attempted to exploit its sensitive equipment, how China behaves will be a sign of just how important maintaining good relations with the United States is.

Some elements in China have long accused the United States of harboring a Cold War mentality. But it is China today that is demonstrating such a mindset in the way it has reacted to this accident. In his recent meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Qian Qichen of China, President George W. Bush pledged to treat the Chinese with respect. But respect must work both ways. The longer the release of the crew members is delayed, the more one must conclude that Mr. Qian’s pledge to cooperate with Washington was an empty promise.

Continued Chinese heavy-handedness will certainly result in more calls for increased arms sales by Taiwan’s supporters in the United States. Any attempt by Beijing to trade the crew or aircraft’s release for a reduction in arms sales is sure to backfire.

Poor handling of this incident by either side could result in a serious setback in the broader relationship and would magnify the impact of other decisions. Instead of merely asserting that the other is to blame, both sides should agree to cooperate in a full inquiry into the accident, aimed first and foremost at ensuring that this type of tragedy does not occur again.

The Chinese government should also ensure that a full, fair, and objective accounting of what actually happened reaches the Chinese people.

UND HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. CONRAD, Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to recognize the University of North Dakota’s hockey team. As a native North Dakotan, I am very proud of the rich hockey tradition at the University of North Dakota. The defending NCAA Champion “Fighting Sioux” defeated Michigan State in NCAA hockey’s “frozen four” semi-final today in Albany, New York by a final score of 2-0. They will defend their title Saturday at 4 p.m. in the national championship game.

Dean Blais, the team’s coach, has done a fantastic job in continuing the UND hockey program’s tradition of excellence. The “Fighting Sioux” have