

BURMA MILITARY PURCHASES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the illegitimate regime in Rangoon has once again shown its true colors. On this bright, sunny morning in Washington, I want to draw the attention of my colleagues to gathering storm clouds in Southeast Asia.

According to Jane's Defence Weekly, Burma's State Peace and Development Council, SPDC, has signed a contract to purchase 10 MiG-29 fighter aircraft from the Russian Aircraft-building Corporation. These fighters were built in the early 1990s and are being stored at the Lukhovitsy machine-building plant. The total cost of the 10 MiGs to the SPDC is \$130 million, 30 percent of which will be paid up front and the balance settled over the next decade.

This purchase is troubling for several reasons, and underscores that despite its name the SPDC is neither committed to peace nor the development of Burma. Thailand—and the United States—should be concerned with the acquisition of these aircraft, which boosts the junta's capabilities well beyond the 42 Chengdu F-7M and Nanchang A-5C currently sitting on Burmese runways. Tensions between the Thais and the junta have already spilled over into exchanges of gunfire and mortars; an escalation to an air war would be destabilizing to the entire region. China may be the only country to view the sale in a positive light, as it strengthens the military capability of one its staunchest allies in the region.

From drug dealing to the forced use of child soldiers, the Burmese military has distinguished itself as a world's leading violator of human rights and dignity. This purchase serves as evidence that the regime is committed to remaining in power at any and all costs. The international community must now double its efforts to ensure that even greater human rights abuses are not waged against the innocent people of Burma by the military, which is corrupt to the core.

The acquisition of MiG fighters adds 10 more reasons why the United States should view skeptically the discussions between Rangoon's thugs and thieves and Burma's legitimate leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The contract with Russia sends a signal that despite all the rhetoric and few prisoner releases, the talks may be hollow. What meaningful concessions can the generals make to Suu Kyi if they are arming themselves?

The \$130 million contract—and where is that money coming from, Mr. President?—demonstrates yet again that the junta has not made the welfare of the people of Burma a priority. From an escalating HIV/AIDS crisis to forced labor practices, the junta has yet to demonstrate the political will to tackle the hardships the Burmese face every day.

Finally, the sale is an indication that the Russians are willing to sell military hardware to anyone, anywhere. We can add Burma to the growing list, which includes Iran and North Korea, of Russian client countries.

RACISM

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, today I rise to call attention to racism in our society.

There are certain moments when we are reminded that it exists, and that it is a very ugly thing. Recently, the Committee of 100, a group of prominent Chinese-Americans, published a survey that measured attitudes toward Asian-Americans, especially those of Chinese descent. It was the first such comprehensive survey—the group wanted to establish a baseline that can be compared to future studies so that we can determine whether racist attitudes against Chinese-Americans are rising or falling.

The result of this first survey was distressing. Apparently, one-quarter of Americans hold "very negative attitudes" toward Chinese-Americans, and one-third think that Chinese-Americans are more likely to be loyal to China than to the United States. Stop and think about that: a charge of disloyalty is a sensational accusation when it is leveled by one American against another. This survey suggests that 90 million people in this country accuse millions of their fellow Americans of disloyalty.

The same poll also tested attitudes toward Asian-Americans in general, with similar results. Twenty-four percent of Americans would be upset if someone in their family married an Asian-American; 23 percent would be uncomfortable voting for an Asian-American president; and 17 percent would be disappointed if an Asian-American moved into their neighborhood.

Prejudice toward Chinese-Americans, and toward Asian-Americans in general, is not unique. Immigrants from all parts of the world have been stereotyped and reviled at some point in our history, and many groups continue to face these attitudes today. I chose to focus on Chinese-Americans today only because the survey so surprised and concerned me.

Chinese immigrants began entering the country in large numbers in the 1850's. They were initially welcomed in the tight labor market of the rapidly expanding West. In fact, American industry brought many of the immigrants from China as contract laborers. Some of these immigrants toiled in gold mines and on the transcontinental railroad. Others worked in vegetable and fruit farms in California or on sugar plantations in Hawaii. Still others opened grocery stores, laundries, and other businesses.

But as labor became more plentiful and the gold rush petered out, public sentiment toward these new Americans turned. A campaign to drive the Chinese out of the country was fueled by racist slogans and developed, at times, into all-out hysteria. Discriminatory laws and boycotts against Chinese labor resulted, along with lynchings and beatings. In 1882, the federal government put an official stamp on this racism by passing the Chinese Exclusion Act, which made it illegal for Chinese people to emigrate to this country. This unprecedented and embarrassing law stayed on the books until 1943.

Another indignity that immigrants faced was the system of "anti-miscegenation" laws against intermarriage. In 1880, California passed a statute forbidding marriage of a white person to a "Negro, Mulatto, or Mongolian." The federal government passed the Cable Act in 1922, revoking the citizenship of any American woman who married an Asian man. It wasn't until 1967 that the Supreme Court struck down these laws.

I am sorry to report that my own state of Montana was not immune to anti-immigrant action. Census data show that in 1870, the Chinese accounted for the largest foreign-born population in the state—larger even than the Irish. Chinese workers made a particularly significant contribution to the mining town of Butte, but by the 1880's they faced discrimination and hate attacks. Ads in newspapers appeared with the slogan "Chinese need not apply." Anti-peddling ordinances were enacted against Chinese grocers. In fact, the town's fourth mayor rode to victory on the slogan "The Chinese must go."

There is no single description of a Chinese-American. Some Chinese-Americans were already wealthy and well-educated when they arrived here. Others arrived in penury and followed the American path to education and success. Some Chinese-Americans continue to celebrate their Chinese origin. Others deny, or have forgotten completely, the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Yet all are Americans.

Cruz Reynoso, the first Mexican-American to serve on California's Supreme Court, put it this way:

Americans are not now, and never have been, one people linguistically or ethnically. America is a political union—not a cultural, linguistic, religious, or racial union. It is acceptance of our constitutional ideals of democracy, equality, and freedom which acts as a unifier for us as Americans.

Political scientist Carl Friedrich made a similar point when he wrote in 1935: "To be an American is an ideal, while to be a Frenchman is a fact." An individual is an American if he or she embraces the founding political ideals of our Nation.

It is the responsibility of all of us, as the elected representatives of the