

know their roles and the dialogue, and indeed you know the outcome all before the movie even starts. With each cry of wolf we make by threatening to withdraw most-favored-nation status and then do not, the credibility of an already tenuous threat declines.

Yet, without a responsible alternative, Members of Congress are forced to face the Hobson's choice between voting to revoke MFN or doing nothing. Many, with no constructive way to vent their policy frustrations, choose revocation.

I am convinced it is time to rethink the United States-China policy and come up with a workable way to get China to act as a responsible member of the international community and to live up both to the letter and the spirit of the agreements they have reached with us. In addition, I believe the United States has to be more prepared to say what it means and mean what it says.

On March 22, in my subcommittee, we held a hearing on exactly this topic. It was the opinion of every panelist, save one, that we need a workable alternative to most-favored-nation as a tool of American foreign policy. I hope that in the next year policymakers, both in the Government and outside it, can recognize that the old policy has failed and move on to try and formulate a new one. It will not be a quick or simple process, but the sooner it begins the better off we will be and the better for the health of our bilateral relationship.

In closing, Mr. President, let me reiterate that I strongly support most-favored-nation renewal. But at the same time, I equally strongly urge this administration to pursue a clear, more consistent and effective foreign policy towards China. Frankly, the latter will do more toward setting our countries down the path of a strong relationship. I yield the floor.

Mr. HUTCHINSON addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 10 minutes in the morning hour.

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

OPPOSITION TO MOST-FAVORED-NATION STATUS FOR CHINA

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I rise in opposition to extending most-favored-nation status to China. I was deeply, deeply dismayed at the recent revelation that a State Department report on religious persecution in China and human rights conditions in China, originally scheduled for release back in January, was postponed, originally until June, and then it was announced that it would again be delayed and postponed until after the vote on most-favored-nation status, that vote that would take place now in the House next week.

I think it is unconscionable, when we consider the seriousness and the im-

port of this vote, for a report from the State Department that has relevant and pertinent information regarding what is going on in China today in regard to human rights and in regard to religious persecution, that that report should not be made available to the American public and to Members of the House of Representatives and to the U.S. Senate prior to our vote on MFN.

Yesterday, I wrote the President and Secretary of State Albright, asking them for an immediate release of that State Department report so that Members of the House who are yet undecided on how they are going to vote on MFN will have that very important report at their disposal.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that that letter to the President printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, June 18, 1997.

Hon. WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON,
The President,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are writing to express our grave concern regarding the recent reports that suggest the U.S. Department of State is deliberately delaying the release of its findings on religious persecution throughout the world. This report places specific focus on the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities around the world, and singles out China for especially tough criticism.

As the Congress begins to debate whether to renew Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status for China, it is vital that all information critical to the debate be in the public domain. It is our understanding that the report was to be released January 15, 1997. However, it has been brought to our attention that it will not be released until after the Congress votes on MFN. Furthermore, State Department officials have said that the report is being held up to broaden its findings.

The oppression and persecution of religious minorities around the world, specifically in China, have emerged as one of the most compelling human rights issues of the day. In particular, the world-wide persecution of Christians persists at alarming levels. This is an affront to the morality of the international community and to all people of conscience.

The 1996 Department of State's Human Rights report on China revealed that the Chinese authorities had effectively stepped up efforts to suppress expressions of criticism and protest. The report also states that all public dissent was effectively silenced by exile, imposition of prison terms, and intimidation.

As the original co-sponsors of the resolution of disapproval on MFN for China, it is our view, and that of many others, that serious human rights abuses persist in all areas of China and that the delay of this year's report on religious persecution demonstrates the Administration's unwillingness to engage in an open discussion of the effect of U.S. policy on human rights in China. We strongly urge that the State Department report be delivered in a timely manner to ensure its full disclosure and debate prior to a vote on the extension of MFN to China.

Sincerely,

TIM HUTCHINSON,
U.S. Senator.

RUSSELL FEINGOLD,
U.S. Senator.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I think to postpone the release of that report indicates that the likelihood that conditions in China have improved over the course of the last year are remote.

The last State Department report, the China country report issued in 1996, was a blistering condemnation of the Chinese Government's repression of their own people and the new wave of the religious persecution that has spread across the country inflicted by this current regime:

The administration continues to coddle China despite its continuing crackdown on democratic reform, its brutal subjugation of Tibet, its irresponsibility in nuclear missile technology.

Mr. President, those are not my words. Those were the words of then Candidate Bill Clinton in a speech to Georgetown University in December 1991. Then Candidate Clinton was exactly right, and those very words are equally applicable to the policy of appeasement that has been promoted by the Clinton administration.

President Clinton, then Candidate Clinton, went on a few months later in March 1992 and said:

I don't believe we should extend most favored nation status to China unless they make significant progress in human rights, arms proliferation and fair trade.

He was right then. He is wrong now. They have not made significant progress in any of those categories, human rights, arms proliferation or fair trade.

And then in August 1992, then Candidate Clinton said:

We will link China's trading privileges to its human rights records and its conduct of trade weapon sales.

Of course, we all know that that strong position taken as a candidate was repudiated after he was elected President. What a difference an election makes.

So today, Mr. President, I called for the immediate release of this State Department report so that an intelligent and informed decision can be made by this Congress when they vote in the House and, hopefully, when a vote yet in the future, in the coming weeks, in the Senate takes place.

I believe that the change that occurred by this administration was ill-advised and has led to both a failed and flawed policy toward China.

Not long ago, in the last hour, I had a conversation with former Secretary of State Eagleburger, who is an advocate of most-favored-nation status, favors extending that trading status to China once again. I said, "Things are worse in China since we adopted this constructive engagement policy." He said, "In what regards?" And I said, "In every regard." Whether it is human rights, whether it is religious persecution, whether it is military expansionism or the export of weapons of mass destruction, you name the measure, you name the standard, and conditions

and situations in China are worse today than they were when we adopted this policy of so-called constructive engagement.

One might argue that denial of most-favored-nation status is a blunt instrument and is not the best way to achieve our goals, as Senator THOMAS argued a few moments ago. One might argue that. One might argue that we should look at other options, that we should seek other tools, other instruments to convey this message to the Chinese Government. But few, I believe, can stand and say that the current policy of this administration has been anything other than an abject failure.

Some will say that it will be worse if we deny MFN. A person can argue that, but you cannot prove that. What can be demonstrated in all these now many years of MFN is that, rather than responding by expanding trade opportunities and trade relationships with the United States, rather than responding by improving the conditions of the Chinese people, they have responded by a new wave, an unprecedented wave, of repression upon those who would dare to express their own political opinion or their own religious faith. The logic behind the administration's policy of engagement is, No. 1, that it will improve conditions in China. It clearly has not. According to the State Department report, this administration's own report, it has not improved conditions. They have become more deplorable.

Then the administration argues that if we link human rights conditions in China with trade, the result will be that China will be isolated and the United States companies will lose markets and trade opportunities. I think that is interesting. In fact, Bill Clinton, in November 1993, said, "Well, I think, first of all, I think anybody should be reluctant to isolate a country as big as China with the potential China has for good, not only for the 1.2 billion people of China who are enjoying unprecedented and economic growth, but good in the region and good throughout the world. So our reluctance to isolate them is the right reluctance."

So this administration argues that if we link what is going on within China to our trade opportunities with this Nation, this vast nation, that we will isolate them, and that American companies will lose this opportunity for this huge bargain.

Now, how do they argue that? They say that other countries, European countries, for instance, will rush in and fill the vacuum that is left when we pull out. They are probably right. But there is a non sequitur, there is a self-contradiction, in the argument of the administration that we somehow will isolate China and at the same time the other nations will come in and take the trade opportunities that otherwise would be afforded to our companies.

The fact is, and everyone knows it, that less than 2 percent of our world

trade goes to China. Being removed from China will in no way isolate this great vast nation. In fact, it is impossible for us, today, to isolate China. There will be other nations who go in, just as we will find other markets for our products.

But what is just as certain is that denying the privilege of MFN to this Nation, which is so repressive toward its own people and so expansionist in their military policy, by denying MFN, we can send a powerful and meaningful message to the tyrants in Beijing. I know of no other way that we can send that powerful message, and those who favor the extension of MFN, to me, have not yet offered a significant and meaningful alternative.

Now, let me just return to my call for the administration to release this report. I think it is absolutely critical that the House of Representatives have before them that report before they are asked to cast this very important vote next week. The coming MFN vote is not just a vote on trade, Mr. President. It is not just a vote on what we stand for as a nation, though it is very much that kind of a vote. Are we going to stand for anything? Are we still going to represent the last best hope for freedom-loving people in this world, or are we not?

But it is not just a vote on that. It is not just a vote on Chinese military expansionism, though if we have a great national security threat in the decades to come, it will be from China, and it is a vote as to our concern about that expansionism. It is not just a vote on religious persecution in China, though that ought to concern every freedom-loving American. But, Mr. President, it is also a vote on this administration's China policy, a policy that is, I believe, by every measure, flawed and failed.

Mr. President, I believe this administration deserves a vote of no confidence on their China policy. That can best be given by a no vote on extending MFN to China.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, we are going to be taking up hopefully today our DOD authorization bill, I believe at 1 o'clock. Sometimes it is important to look beyond the bill itself.

There are several provisions of this bill that were very critical which were taken out, and one of them was taken out because I think it is certain that the President would have vetoed it, and

it has to do with Bosnia and with our withdrawal from Bosnia. I think it is important that we talk about that a little bit because, while we are taking up our Department of Defense reauthorization bill, I can tell you right now it is not adequate. It is the very best that we could come up with, with the resources we had to work with, but as chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I can assure you that it is not adequate. We are really at a critical time right now, and, quite frankly, I hang this one on the administration. This has been a very non-military, nondefense administration. We have had a difficult time getting any attention to our military, for the duties that they are trained to perform.

I would like just for a moment to cover a couple of things and how this is going to affect our DOD authorization bill for this year and probably next year, too.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness, we have jurisdiction over training, over military construction, over all readiness issues including the BRAC process. As I have traveled around to various installations, I have found that we are really in serious trouble. I have never been so proud of our troops for doing what they are doing under adverse conditions.

I was a product of the draft many years ago. I came here believing in compulsory service, and I still think it is a good idea for our Nation. However, I am so impressed with the quality of troops we have in this all-voluntary military. However, I wonder how long they can hold on the way they are going right now with this "Optempo" rate. "Optempo" is a term that is used in the military that refers to the number of deployment days, the number of days that these troops are away from their wives, husbands, and families, and it has gone up now in some areas double the amount that is considered to be the optimum. For example, we normally talk about approximately 115 days a year, and it is up now to well over 200 in many areas. While seemingly they are holding on, they are dedicated, you cannot expect it to continue indefinitely because our divorce rate is starting to go up right now and our retention rate is starting to drop right now.

The quality-of-life issues are really a very serious problem. I think both the chairman and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Personnel—Senator DIRK KEMPTHORNE and Senator MAX CLELAND—are doing a great job, but I assure you when you are talking about readiness, the personnel issues and the quality-of-life issues are very, very significant.

Going back in time just a little bit, I can remember being here on the Senate floor back in November 1995 when we found out that the President of our country, Bill Clinton, was proposing to send troops over to Bosnia. I got to