

As Zhang Yunling of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing explained to New York Times correspondent Elisabeth Rosenthal on March 20, "China was divided when it was weak, and now that it is getting strong again, people's nationalist feeling rises and they feel strongly it is time to reunite the country."

On the other hand, the people of China are beginning to form their own impressions of Taiwan, no longer content only to listen to the government's official propaganda demonizing the island. Some even admit publicly to a certain grudging admiration for Taiwan's accomplishments and hope their own government will do nothing to precipitate a crisis.

As one 22-year-old Beijing University physics major told Rosenthal, "I think both sides will have to make adjustments to their policies. After all Taiwan is democratic now, and the people have exercised their right to choose a president."

Let me read the words of that university student again, "... the people have exercised their right to choose a president."

In America, we take democratic transitions of power for granted. But in China, and until recently on Taiwan, it was a revolutionary concept. And yet that is precisely what the people of Taiwan did on March 18. They changed their leadership through a peaceful, orderly, democratic process. They did so, by all accounts, because they were frustrated with corruption, cronyism, campaign finance abuses, and bureaucratic inefficiency.

These are all faults that China's communist government has in spades. And with Internet use exploding in China, and with cross-straits commercial ties now in the tens of billions of dollars, there is no way that the people of China will not discover what is happening on Taiwan.

And they may become inspired not only by the island's prosperity, but also by its peaceful democratic revolution. I predict they will begin to ask themselves, "How come we don't enjoy the same standard of living and the same political rights here on the mainland?"

Taiwan's people are responsible for the island's miraculous transformation from authoritarian rule and poverty to democracy and prosperity. They deserve all of the credit. But the people of the United States have reason to feel a little bit of pride as well.

If Taiwan wins the Oscar for Best Actor, then we at least get a nomination for Best Supporting Actor. The United States commitment to Taiwan's security under the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act helped create the stable environment in which Taiwan has thrived.

The other critical component of cross-strait stability has been our adherence to a "One-China" policy, in which we maintain that disputes between the two sides of the Taiwan

Strait must be settled peacefully, and that the future relationship between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan must be determined in accordance with the wishes of the people of China and the people of Taiwan.

Maintaining a peaceful, stable environment in the Taiwan Strait has fostered economic growth throughout East Asia. It has also aided the emergence of democratic societies in the Philippines, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan.

In the past decade, more people have come under democratic rule in East Asia than were liberated in Europe by the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union. This remarkable accomplishment would not have been possible without United States leadership.

Given all that Taiwan has accomplished in such a short span, I look forward to the future with renewed hope that someday all people of China will enjoy the rights and standard of living enjoyed by those fortunate few who live on Taiwan.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 99) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 99

Whereas section 2(c) of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8) states "[t]he preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people on Taiwan" to be an objective of the United States;

Whereas Taiwan has become a multiparty democracy in which all citizens have the right to participate freely in the political process;

Whereas the people of Taiwan have, by their vigorous participation in electoral campaigns and public debate, strengthened the foundations of a free and democratic way of life;

Whereas Taiwan successfully conducted a presidential election on March 18, 2000;

Whereas President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan has actively supported the consolidation of democratic institutions and processes in Taiwan since 1988 when he became President;

Whereas this election represents the first such transition of national office from one elected leader to another in the history of Chinese societies;

Whereas the continued democratic development of Taiwan is a matter of fundamental importance to the advancement of United States interests in East Asia and is supported by the United States Congress and the American people;

Whereas a stable and peaceful security environment in East Asia is essential to the furtherance of democratic developments in Taiwan and other countries, as well as to the protection of human rights throughout the region;

Whereas since 1972 United States policy toward the People's Republic of China has been predicated upon, as stated in section 2(b)(3)

of the Taiwan Relations Act, "the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means";

Whereas section 2(b)(6) of the Taiwan Relations Act further pledges "to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan";

Whereas on June 9, 1998, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to adopt House Concurrent Resolution 270 that called upon the President of the United States to seek "a public renunciation by the People's Republic of China of any use of force, or threat to use force, against democratic Taiwan";

Whereas the People's Republic of China has consistently refused to renounce the use of force against Taiwan;

Whereas the State Council, an official organ at the highest level of the Government of the People's Republic of China, issued a "white paper" on February 21, 2000, which threatened "to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force", if Taiwan indefinitely delays entering into negotiations with the People's Republic of China on the issue of reunification; and

Whereas the February 21, 2000, statement by the State Council significantly escalates tensions across the Taiwan Straits and sets forth a new condition that has not heretofore been stated regarding the conditions that would prompt the People's Republic of China to use force against Taiwan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That—

(1) the people of Taiwan are to be congratulated for the successful conclusion of presidential elections on March 18, 2000, and for their continuing efforts in developing and sustaining a free, democratic society which respects human rights and embraces free markets;

(2) President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan is to be congratulated for his significant contributions to freedom and democracy on Taiwan;

(3) President-elect Chen Shui-bian and Vice President-elect Annette Hsiu-lien Lu of Taiwan are to be congratulated for their victory, and they have the strong support and best wishes of the Congress and the American people for a successful administration;

(4) it is the sense of Congress that the People's Republic of China should refrain from making provocative threats against Taiwan and should instead undertake steps that would lead to a substantive dialogue, including a renunciation of the use of force against Taiwan and progress toward democracy, the rule of law, and protection of human and religious rights in the People's Republic of China; and

(5) the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (Public Law 96-8) are hereby affirmed as the statutory standard by which United States policy toward Taiwan shall be determined.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 2285

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have a unanimous-consent request which I have communicated to Senator DASCHLE. He is here to respond. Before I propound it, I will say this does have to do with the issue of gasoline taxes, and it is an effort to get a process started so we can have a discussion and debate about votes on this issue.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to Calendar No. 473, S.

2285, regarding gas taxes, and that following the reporting of the bill, there be 4 hours equally divided for debate under control of the two leaders or their designees. I further ask unanimous consent that no amendments or motions be in order and, following the use or yielding back of time, the bill be advanced to third reading and passage occur, all without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first, this bill has never been in committee. It has not had the opportunity afforded most legislation to be considered, have hearings, have people come forth and talk about the implications of eliminating the gas tax. Normally bills go through committee, and then they come to the floor. That is No. 1.

No. 2, what kind of a debate would one have when no amendments are made available? I cannot imagine that on an issue of this import we would want to accelerate the debate, accelerate the consideration, and prevent Senators from offering amendments and other ideas.

For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I regret the objection from the minority leader, but I understand. This agreement would allow the Senate to pass and send a message to all Americans that we are trying to do what we can in the short term to alleviate the rising gas prices all Americans are paying at the pumps.

I would not suggest for a moment that this is the long-term solution, and I should emphasize, this legislation would allow for the suspension of the 4.3-cents-a-gallon gas tax for the remainder of the year, with a trigger device that says that if the average price nationwide reaches \$2, then there will be a gas tax holiday for the remainder of the year for the full 18.4 cents a gallon.

It is pretty simple and straightforward. There would be time for debate, but I understand.

We will get the process started, and we will see how it develops in terms of the debate and what votes will occur in order for us to start this process, which looks like we will have to go through a motion to proceed to invoke cloture on the bill and then there will be subsequent votes.

In order for this to be considered in a timely fashion, which could take as long as a week or two, I thought we needed to get it started.

MOTION TO PROCEED—S. 2285

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 473 and send a cloture motion to the desk on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented

under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to the Gas Tax Repeal Act, S. 2285:

Trent Lott, Frank H. Murkowski, Paul Coverdell, Conrad Burns, Larry E. Craig, Mike Crapo, Judd Gregg, Orrin Hatch, Rod Grams, Susan Collins, Robert F. Bennett, Chuck Grassley, Mike Inhofe, Don Nickles, Sam Brownback, and Richard G. Lugar.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, this cloture vote will occur then on Thursday. I will work with the Democratic leader to set this vote, hopefully following the passage of the satellite loan guarantee bill, which I know the Senate is anxious to get completed. It was part of an agreement last year that we entered into with regard to the satellite bill that there was a need for a loan program to make sure that it actually worked, and so this bill will be on the floor. I am sure there are going to be some amendments that will be offered on that, but we would like to complete that and then go to this subsequent vote on Thursday. We will work through the timing of it. In the meantime, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. LOTT. I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

LEADER'S LECTURE SERIES—BOB DOLE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I note that at 6 o'clock tonight, we will be hearing the sixth presentation in the Leader's Lecture Series. Our presenter tonight is our beloved former minority and majority leader, Bob Dole. I encourage all Senators to attend. I know there will be family and friends and guests of Senator Dole. Hopefully, we will be available on C-SPAN so the American people will be interested in hearing from this patriot and one of America's favorite sons.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2000

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 29. I further ask unanimous consent that on Wednesday, immediately following the prayer, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then resume debate on S.J. Res. 14, the flag desecration bill

for up to 30 minutes equally divided between the chairman and the ranking member.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. LOTT. So then at 9:30, we will resume consideration of the resolution. We will have 30 minutes of debate, and the cloture vote will occur on the resolution. Senators can expect the first vote at 10 a.m. on Wednesday. Following that vote, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate begin a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. with Senators speaking for up to 5 minutes each with the following exceptions: Senator BROWNBAC, or his designee, the first 30 minutes; to be followed by Senator COVERDELL, or his designee, for 30 minutes; and Senator DURBIN, or his designee, for 60 minutes.

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

Mr. LOTT. If the cloture motion is agreed to, a final passage vote on the resolution is expected to occur during the day tomorrow, probably in the afternoon session, obviously. As a reminder, cloture was filed on the gas tax legislation, and pursuant to rule XXII, that vote will occur on Thursday at a time to be announced later after consultation between the two leaders.

The Senate will also begin consideration of the loan guarantees legislation as per the unanimous consent agreement.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LOTT. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE.

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

LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk briefly about a matter that we have been especially concerned about in recent months, and that has to do with the Corps of Engineers.

Prior to that, I rise to express my disappointment that we were not able to get to the electronic signature bill conference report today. I thought we had worked out all of the problems. Now, as I understand it, there are some problems on the Republican side. I hope it won't be held up too much longer. We need to get on with that legislation, and we have been trying to move this bill to conference now for some time. We had worked out our concerns with regard to representation, and I was certain we would be able to finish that work today. But given the problems there now appear to be on the Republican side, I am hopeful we can resolve those no later than tomorrow.