

withdraws from Mischief Reef because of pressure from the World Trade Organization.

Don't hold your breath, Madam President; it's not going to happen.

We can also see the absurdity of U.S. policy toward China by taking a look at China's proliferation record. In 1998, President Clinton certified that China could be trusted—let me repeat that.

He certified that China could be trusted with our nuclear materials, paving the way for the longstanding desire of some U.S. companies to export nuclear reactors to China. Then, in testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee in March 1999, Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth gave China a clean bill of health on proliferation.

I am not kidding. That is so.

Mr. Roth stated that China had actually become part of the solution to proliferation problems.

It didn't take long for Assistant Secretary Roth's testimony to be exposed as—let me find a gentle word—maybe “incomplete” is the nicest word I can find. In April 1999, the Washington Times reported that China was continuing its secret transfer of missile and weapons technology to the Middle East and South Asia. A follow-up story in July detailed China's continuing shipments of missile materials to North Korea. These press reports were verified twice this year by none other than the Central Intelligence Agency in its semi-annual proliferation reports to Congress.

But I guess we are supposed to believe that more trade will solve that sort of problem.

But I am not convinced—not by my distinguished friend from Delaware, not by all of the businessmen who have called on me, not by anybody.

In sum, Communist China's foreign policy behavior has become increasingly antithetical to U.S. national interests during the past 20 years of so-called “normal” trade relations. It is difficult to see how making the status quo permanent will cause any improvement whatsoever.

Of course, the direction of China's foreign policy will hinge largely on whether the Chinese government democratizes and begins to treat its own people better than under the existing Communist regime.

All of us know the horror stories of things perpetuated against the Chinese people by their own government. But here again, the record of engagement—or shall I state it more clearly, appeasement—has yielded miserable results.

In fact, China was somewhat more inclined toward reform 15 years ago than it is today. In the mid-and-late 1980s, China's leadership at least express some sympathy for reform, and for the students and others who were demanding it. But these reforms were ousted, replaced by hardline Stalinists who massacred the students and began a decade-long campaign of brutal repres-

sion. You can't describe it any way otherwise. Senator WELLSTONE and I will have more to say about human rights in China at a later time, but I believe the U.S. State Department's 1999 Human Rights Report says it all.

This is not JESSE HELMS. This is the State Department of the United States of America. And the last time I checked it was under the purview of a fellow named Bill Clinton.

The State Department said:

The Chinese Government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the past year, as the Government intensified efforts to suppress dissent.

Do you want to hear that again?

The State Department of the United States said: “The Chinese Government's poor human rights record deteriorated markedly throughout the past year, as the Government”—meaning the Chinese Government—“intensified efforts to suppress dissent.”

Many supporters of this legislation, if not most, insist that the way to improve this miserable situation is to reward Communist China with permanent most-favored-nation trade status. Madam President, I find absolutely no evidence whatsoever to support such an assertion.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Idaho is recognized for up to 15 minutes.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, thank you very much.

I ask unanimous consent that Senator MOYNIHAN follow me to make his opening statement on PNTR, and that he use such time as he may consume for that statement.

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

FOREST FIRES

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I asked for time in our schedule today so that I might be joined with other Western Senators and those Senators concerned about the catastrophic fires that have been sweeping across public lands in the West for the last month and a half.

Coincidentally, today is the first day of school across our Nation. Many of our children in elementary schools are going to be asked by their teachers: What did you do during your summer vacation? For the next few moments, I will suggest to you that this is my opening speech following my summer vacation. Let me tell you what I did during my summer vacation.

I went home to my beautiful State of Idaho and watched it burn—hundreds of thousands of acres of timberland, grassland, wild habitat, and environmentally sensitive land burned with catastrophic fires that were too dangerous, too hot, and too powerful to put firefighters in the face of to try to stop them and protect these beautiful natural resources.

In fact, I never thought I would return to Washington, DC, in search of

clean air. But it is true. The air is cleaner over our Nation's Capital today than it is in my beautiful State of Idaho, or Montana, or those Great Basin States of the West that are known for spaciousness, vistas, and clean air.

This year's fire season may well prove to be the worst in half a century. All of our 11 Western States, as well as Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, are reporting very high and extreme fire danger levels today.

As I speak, large fires are actively burning in California, Colorado, Florida—a little less so in Idaho today because it rained during the night, and it rained over the weekend. But it is true in Louisiana and Mississippi—a little less true in Montana because of that same rainstorm—Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

The map I have to my left demonstrates the character and the widespread nature of these fires. It isn't coincidental, nor is it unique, that most of these fires would be found on public lands—land managed by Federal land management agencies of this Government.

As of last week, the National Interagency Fire Center reports that 81 large fires are burning presently, covering nearly 1.7 million acres of land. The acres burned year to date exceed 6.5 million acres nationwide. That is over twice the 10-year average to date.

The reason I keep using the word “to date” is because we are now in the early days of September, and normal fire seasons will run late into September—and even later into October in California and other places down toward and including the Southwest. The total number of fires on public lands has surpassed 74,000. Let me repeat that: 74,000 fires on public lands. That is almost 13,000 fires higher than the 10-year average.

Nationally, wildfires this year have burned an area larger than our neighboring State to the District, Maryland. In other words, envision the entire State of Maryland charred by fire. That is how many acres have been consumed by fire in our Nation this year.

There are roughly 26,000 firefighters battling wildfires. We have run out of trained firefighters and are preparing 550 new Army troops to assist fire crews. This is in addition to over 2,000 soldiers already deployed to fire crews nationwide, as well as firefighters from 3 different foreign countries—Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. All of the personnel fighting fires deserve our heartfelt thanks for their efforts and their dedication. And yes, we have also lost lives of firefighters.

Current estimates suggest that nearly \$120 million was spent in August alone fighting wildfires. The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise reports it is spending \$18 million a day on fire suppression and related efforts. Last week, the Federal Government reported that it has spent \$626 million so

far on suppression costs this year. The Forest Service budget director estimates that wildfire costs this year will exceed \$1 billion in total. This estimate assumes that the fire season ends in the normal framework I have discussed. However, the fires that are currently burning probably will not be extinguishable by man. They will have to wait for the snow to fall this winter or late fall or for major storms to move in the normal winter cycle.

It is hard to believe that to be a true statement, but it is a true statement that in the heartlands of our wilderness, our public lands where these fires will continue to smolder, to flare up during the hot days of the late fall, it will take a snowstorm in the heart of Idaho to put out these kinds of fires.

On Wednesday, August 30, President Clinton granted Montana Governor Marc Racicot's request that Montana be declared a Federal disaster area. On Thursday of last week, my Governor, Dirk Kempthorne, asked President Clinton to declare Idaho a disaster area, and he has. And I expect likely declarations coming soon from others.

In a fire season as bad as the one we are now experiencing, it is undeniable we would be seeing a significant area burn. Indeed, the General Accounting Office has warned in a series of reports that there are 39 million acres of Federal lands at risk right now of uncontrolled catastrophic wildfire. Therefore, the severity of this season should not have been a surprise to anyone, nor should we have stood by saying this is a natural situation.

Ten years ago, a group of foresters and renowned national silviculturists met in Sun Valley, ID, to study the character of the forests of the Great Basin of the West. They said at that time that those forests were in severe need of active management because they were nearly dead or dying from disease and bug kill and that if we didn't pursue an active management policy, these forests would be at risk of catastrophic fire.

That was 10 years ago. Since that time, I and others have asked the General Accounting Office to study the state of our forests, only to be reminded that what has happened this year would happen if we were not actively involved. However, over the last 3 weeks we have heard a series of news stories that call into question whether the Federal firefighting agencies have been adequately funded, staffed, and prepared to deal with the fire risk that we all knew existed and that will still exist after this year. Notwithstanding differences in land management policy—and there are differences between this administration and me and other Members of the Congress—there is no disagreement that the Federal land management agencies should be prepared to deal with fires when they occur.

Nevertheless, 3 weeks ago, USA Today reported that the Bureau of Land Management fire preparedness

budget request was reduced first by the Department of the Interior and then by the Office of Management and Budget. Current and former Bureau of Land Management employees complained in writing that the effect of these budget reductions would be to reduce fire preparedness dramatically.

That story was followed by a Washington Times investigative piece that reported that the money taken from the fire preparedness budget was used to acquire new Federal lands as a part of this administration's current land legacy initiative. I am sure that at the time the President had money taken from these fire budgets he didn't understand that his land legacy would be millions of acres of charred trees and lost wildlife habitat. Mr. President, that is the permanent flame that you may well have as your legacy.

At the same time, United Press International filed a story that the Forest Service fire preparedness budget was similarly reduced either at the Department of Agriculture or the Office of Management and Budget, or both. United Press International quoted representatives of the Forest Service Employees Union complaining that, in downsizing, the administration disproportionately reduced the number of lower grade GS 5's and 9's and put the money with GS 14's. What does that equate to? It said that it reduces people on the ground and puts them in the Washington, DC, office. Folks on the ground fight fires. People in the Washington office do not. Yet that is the kind of transition about which even the Forest Service Employees Union was talking. Those are amongst a lot of things that this Congress will have to deal with in the coming days.

Last week, I had a good conversation with Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck. We agreed on a series of steps for the agency and the Congress to take over the next few weeks to address the situation currently at hand. We are not going to see major policy shifts this year, but we clearly ought to outline in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD why we are where we are today and why 6.5 or 7 million acres of our public lands have been charred.

Clearly, it is important that we develop an emergency budget not only to pay the bills of firefighting that we have incurred, but also the kind of environmental restoration that is critical now so we will not see continued catastrophic events occurring as a result of these fires, the kind that could destroy wildlife habitat and watersheds, because we were not able to move quickly in the kind of environmental restoration that is very necessary. We also have private lands at risk and private property owners who deserve to be compensated because of the way the Forest Service managed these fires in certain instances, or the character in which these fires burned.

I will be working with my colleagues in the coming days to do just that. First, we will hold hearings in the com-

ing weeks regarding: Was the Forest Service prepared this season to fight these fires? If they were not, why were they not? Then we will begin to examine the current policy and its impact on these 30-plus million acres at risk. I hope to take colleagues with me, as chairman of the Forestry Subcommittee, to my State of Idaho and into Montana and the Great Basin area of the West in the next few weeks as we talk to the citizens on the ground who have experienced firsthand the risk of losing their homes, their property, and, yes, even their communities.

We have already dealt with the urban wildland interface as a result of the catastrophic fires in Los Alamos. But even with that, we have not yet done enough. I hope the administration will bring forth a package in the coming days to work with us to develop a program of active management to try to save these environmentally sensitive areas, to improve the ability of these areas to deal with fire, and, most importantly, to improve the ability of our Federal lands management agencies to deal with fire in coming years. If we are truly in the kind of environment that I believe we are in, or if we are at a time and place of La Nina versus El Nino and ocean oscillations and seasonal changes in the environment, then next year could be every bit as great a fire year as this year. It is clearly important that we prepare now to do so.

I have had several of my colleagues join me on the floor who wish to speak to this issue. Madam President, I ask how much time is left of the hour that I requested?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 46 minutes remaining.

Mr. CRAIG. At this time I yield to Senator CRAIG THOMAS of Wyoming for such time as he may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Idaho, who has been a leader for a very long time in this area—not only on fires, of course, but the management of forests, which is really the issue we will finally have to get to here. I thank him for what he is doing and certainly for the hearings he will have in his committee, which I think will be extremely important and are now extremely appropriate.

Wildfires are a very serious thing. They are very scary. They are damaging. They threaten not only the forest itself but, of course, facilities and homes in the forests. I grew up right next to the Shoshone forest next to Cody, WY, between Cody and Yellowstone and, as a matter of fact, participated on two occasions in fighting forest fires. It really is something you can hardly imagine, particularly if you are on a steep mountainside and the forest fire itself releases boulders that roll down. There are lots of scary things about it.

As my colleague and most of us know now, wildfires in the West of the United States have ravaged literally

thousands of acres this year, the worst experience we have had in forest fires for a very long time. Hopefully, that is now under control. There has been some change in the weather—snow, as a matter of fact, in some places. There has been some change also in the climate itself. We have had a very dry year in the West which has made it even more difficult.

In my home State of Wyoming, we have had thousands of acres devastated. Let me share some of the actual numbers that I think are fairly startling. This is from the National Fire News. The National Interagency Fire Center puts this out from Boise, ID. They have a 13-year comparison of the losses that have taken place as of September 4, for the year 2000.

The loss has been 6,566,000 acres this year. This year, of course, is not completed. There are always losses. Last year, in 1999, there were 4.4 million acres burned; the year before, 2 million, and 1 to 2 million has been the more common amount, although in 1996 it was 5.7 million acres that were destroyed.

I guess the message is that we know there is going to be some burn. The burn, of course, is the natural way. There are those who argue: Let nature take its course. However, things are not the way they were 300 years ago or 200 years ago. There has to be some kind of different approach.

In the States, of course: California, 214,000 acres; in Florida—Florida which is outside the West—183,000; Idaho, being the hardest hit at this point, 1.2 million acres burned in Montana, nearly a million—900,000 acres. New Mexico had almost half a million acres burned. So it has been very devastating. Certainly our first obligation is to fund and do what we can now to stop the fires and to repair the immediate damages.

I think it is interesting that in the long term, the total this year is 6.5 million acres burned, and burned for the last 10 years, 2.9 million—less than half. So we have had a very difficult experience this year.

I ask unanimous consent a complete table of wildfire statistics be printed in the RECORD.

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

THIRTEEN-YEAR WILDLAND FIRE COMPARISON STATISTICS
YEAR-TO-DATE FOR THE UNITED STATES

As of September 4	Number of wildland fires	Number of acres
2000	74,571	6,566,520
1999	70,609	4,403,438
1998	60,872	2,037,629
1997	49,644	2,720,690
1996	86,533	5,787,767
1995	63,170	1,661,679
1994	58,638	3,238,065
1993	46,625	1,613,843
1992	70,444	1,478,661
1991	57,583	2,020,184
1990	55,630	4,386,528
1989	45,015	1,448,639
1988	67,945	3,623,613

NUMBER OF WILDLAND FIRES AND ACRES AFFECTED IN
2000 BY STATE UPDATED SEPTEMBER 4, 2000

State	Number of fires	Number of acres
AK	351	751,233
AL	4,377	65,477
AR	2,019	26,226
AZ	3,260	94,144
CA	5,693	214,735
CO	1,921	126,005
CT	55	183
DC	2	2
DE	12	165
FL	5,604	183,304
GA	6,883	50,735
IA	0	0
ID	1,413	1,234,818
IL	22	386
IN	875	3,005
KS	14	689
KY	1,163	49,287
LA	3,473	53,724
MA	1,854	2,735
MD	253	506
ME	208	283
MI	555	9,635
MN	2,448	55,738
MO	162	11,692
MS	3,758	55,355
MT	2,289	921,608
NC	2,814	16,818
ND	934	40,996
NE	19	434
NH	246	160
NJ	521	1,432
NM	2,222	453,519
NV	1,000	634,478
NY	104	452
OH	737	3,950
OK	1,100	46,481
OR	1,583	427,617
PA	113	954
PR	1	1
RI	81	75
SC	3,738	18,301
SD	507	14,704
TN	1,476	18,984
TX	2,468	176,194
UT	1,613	235,186
VA	687	8,234
VT	28	67
WA	942	256,706
WI	1,435	4,509
WV	920	18,917
WY	621	276,061
Total	74,571	6,566,520
Ten-Year Average	61,975	2,934,848

Mr. THOMAS. I think we need to recognize and thank the people on the ground, the agencies, the firefighters, for all they did. This is tough work. This is dangerous work. So I am very grateful for what has been done.

I was out in the midst of it, out in Yellowstone during this last August. Certainly some of the problems were that there were not enough facilities; there were not enough airplanes; there were not enough firefighters; there was not enough equipment to deal with all these things that happened. Again, I am not blaming anyone for that, but it did make it much more difficult.

In the appropriations bill with which we are now dealing, I have requested some additional funds for wildlife and fire management this fiscal year. I am very concerned, as the Senator from Idaho pointed out, that in many of these cases—not only firefighters but also maintenance and other kinds of things—this administration has put more emphasis on acquisition and purchase than they have on the management of the resources we have now. I think we need to take a look at that. I am chairman of the parks subcommittee. All of us know there are \$4 billion or \$5 billion in infrastructure repairs and maintenance needed. But that is not where this administration put the money.

This land legacy thing was the one that had the emphasis. So there are

some tough questions, I think, certainly not of motives but tough questions in terms of management, as to what our responsibility ought to be. I really am looking forward to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee's oversight hearings when we can take a real, honest look at what we ought to do.

What do the roadless areas we are talking about have to do with the ability to control fires? I think it has something to do with it. We have wilderness areas and parks, of course, that are managed differently. It is true that in a wilderness area you are not going to have roads. You have to deal with it another way. Most of these fires are not in the wilderness. If we had access to the fires early on, I think it would be helpful. Certainly harvesting, clearing out the underbrush, clearing out the fuel as it builds up, as it naturally does around mature trees—I have been in some places that are very nearly wilderness, again up around Cody, WY. When selective timbering is done, you go through and you hardly notice it having been harvested. But I tell you, there is much less likelihood of an uncontrollable fire in that area than in the condition in which it had been.

Of course, the administration is quick to say it has properly managed the fires. This may not be the case, both from the standpoint of being as prepared financially as we should have been, and, of course, having some management techniques which many of the forest people, many of the people who are actually on the ground, recommend. They know there are things that can be done.

I think this is an area we need to talk about. We need to talk about it now. Our focus, of course, has to be on the future and what we can do to limit the kinds of losses in our resources we had this year. I am very pleased to be able to work with my colleagues here, particularly the Senator from Idaho. I am looking forward to doing what we can to be prepared so in the future we will have less of a tragedy than we had this year.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank my colleague from Wyoming. Let me especially echo the point he made well just a few moments ago. We have had thousands of men and women out there on the fire lines risking their lives over the last month and a half. Clearly, a special thanks is needed to them for the work they have done. I think that is most appropriate as we assess now where we are and what we might be able to do, both short term and long term, in the packages that are put together and the policy changes that are made. The administration has said they will be coming forth with some proposals. We will take a very serious look at them as they come, to work with them in the immediate sense as we look at long term.

Now, let me yield 10 minutes to the other Senator from Wyoming, Mr.

MIKE ENZI. I am pleased he joins us today to discuss this critical situation in the West.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I rise to join in this elaboration on the damage and devastation that is going on in the West. It has been a tradition in the Senate that when disasters happen, Senators come to the floor and they ask emergency measures be taken, both to stop what is happening and to make up for some of the economic loss that is a result of the emergency.

That is what we are doing today. Just as importantly, we are here today suggesting that there are changes the Federal Government can make so that we do not have these problems again. Prevention is better than pain. Prevention is better than the pain that is caused by the forest fires that devastate homes, jobs, and recreation.

Senator THOMAS and I have been traveling around Wyoming. We are downwind from Idaho. We are downwind from Washington. We are downwind from Montana. In the daytime, one cannot see the mountains or the fires for the smoke. At night, you can see the fires as you drive down the roads, and people prepare their evacuation plans to get out of their homes, to abandon their homes to flames. It is a terrible situation.

It can be prevented, but we are going down the wrong road right now. I rise to express my deep concerns over the mismanagement of the National Forest System that has led to one of the worst fire seasons in the history of the United States of America.

There is no question that fire is a part of the natural world. No one knows this better than the men and women in the Western United States who have risked their lives during the last 4 months to protect and save homes, lives, property, and the environment from the terrible threat of the catastrophic wildfires.

As of September 4, the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID, reports that 6.6 million acres of Federal public lands have been burned this year alone. In comparison, in 1996, we suffered what was up until then the worst year on record for fires in the continental United States. At that time, we lost 5.8 million acres. We have already exceeded that loss by almost 800,000 acres, and it is growing.

What makes this tragedy so terrible is that most of this threat could have been prevented had our Federal land management agencies not been stymied by the Washington, DC, one-size-fits-all-based policies that sacrificed forest health for political gain. Rather than implement policies that would have made our forests more fire resilient and would have made forest communities safer from the threat of catastrophic wildfires, these agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife

Service, have adopted practices from Washington that have allowed our forests to grow denser and denser without establishing the proper safeguards, such as defensible fuel profile zones and mechanically thinned forests that can incorporate fires into the natural management.

For more than 60 years, our Nation has placed an emphasis on aggressive fire suppression programs which have removed fire as a mitigating factor in maintaining forest health. As a result of these well-meaning efforts, many of our forests now suffer from an unnatural accumulation of vegetation on the forest floors. Dense undergrowth, combined with increasing taller layers of intermediate vegetation, has turned Western forests into deadly time bombs.

Unlike healthy fires of the past that thinned out the underbrush and left the large trees to grow larger, modern wildfire quickly claims the dense vegetation like a ladder until it tops out at the uppermost, or crown, level of the forest and races out of control as a catastrophic fire. Because of their high speed and intense heat, these crown fires leave an almost sterile environment in their wake. After a crown fire, nothing is left behind—no trees, no wildlife, and no habitat—with few micro-organisms left to rebuild the soil.

Vegetation manipulation, including timber harvests, is therefore necessary to restore our forests, particularly in the West, to conditions that are most resistant to catastrophic disturbance and that are within acceptable ranges of variability. Good stewardship, scientific studies, including the Sierra Nevada ecosystem project report, state that timber harvest is a tool that can be used to enhance overall forest resilience to disturbance. The SNEP report states, for example, that "logging can serve as a tool to help reduce fire hazard when slash is treated and treatments are maintained." If conducted on a large enough scale and in a controlled manner, timber harvests can restore our national forests to a point where large catastrophic fires are much less likely. In other words, we can harvest the trees instead of burning them down. We can make them into boards that will keep that CO₂ they have absorbed over a lifetime intact in a home instead of going up in smoke as CO₂.

The Forest Service has recognized this threat and in April of this year stated that "Without increased restoration treatments . . . wildfire suppression costs, natural resources losses, private property losses, and environmental damage are certain to escalate as fuels continue to accumulate and more acres become high risk."

The Clinton-Gore administration, however, has chosen to ignore its own experts and has proposed new programs that would combine with current planning efforts, such as the Sierra Nevada framework, Interior Columbia Basin

ecosystem management project, the roadless initiative, and the Federal monument proclamations, will only make the situation worse by removing our access to forests and by taking away some of our most effective forest management tools. Instead, the administration wants to rely on the extensive use of prescribed fire which will further exacerbate the risk of catastrophic wildfires on the Federal land throughout the West and proposes to prohibit all forms of commercial timber harvest, regardless of the objective.

Those prescribed fires get out of control, as I am sure the Senator from New Mexico will point out in a little while, in one of those damaging winds. In Wyoming, prescribed burns get out of control, and if you cannot get to the fire, you cannot put out the fire. We are talking about a roadless initiative in the United States right now.

This is a map that shows the forest system in Wyoming—not the grasslands, not the Bureau of Land Management-controlled lands—the forest system. Wyoming has about 400 miles on a border. If we take away the roads in any of those colored areas, how do we get in to fight the forest fire while it is still a small fire? That is when we want to take them on. That is when we need to be able to get to them. If we wipe out the roads—and they are referred to sometimes as ghost roads because they are not roads one takes a normal car over, but they are roads from which fires can be fought.

Madam President, I draw your attention to another sign that has appeared in Montana. This is actually addressed to all of us, but it is a little more pointed than that:

To the firefighters: Thank you for all your efforts.

To the U.S. Forest Service: Everything that we love is gone . . . up in smoke. The mismanagement of our forests has turned our beautiful valley into an ash heap.

To Bill Clinton and Al Gore: Because of your environmental policies, the jobs are gone, the way of life is gone, and now the beauty is gone. What's next? Shame on you.

If we do not do anything about it, shame on us.

In the interest of protecting the integrity and posterity of our forest and wild lands, wildlife habitat, watershed—if there is a forest fire and it wipes out all the trees, next year North Dakota will have more floods because more water will make it into the stream—air quality, human health and safety, and private property, the U.S. Forest Service and other Federal land management agencies must immediately enact a cohesive strategy to reduce the overabundance of forest fuels which place these resources at high risk of catastrophic wildfire.

While this strategy must include increased timber sales, however, there is no reason these sales cannot be structured to improve forest health by including in the terms of the contracts a requirement to thin out the underbrush and leave our forests in a healthier, more sustainable condition.

I have concentrated on forest fires. There are grassland fires happening on BLM lands, private lands, and there are some lessons to be learned on taking care of those, too. It is not as dramatic to talk about a grass fire as a timber fire, but on those lands where there is good stewardship, the fires will stop. Where there is bad stewardship, the fires will blow across at a rate animals cannot even run.

The catastrophic wildfires not only cause damage to forest and other lands but place the lives of firefighters at risk, pose threats to human health, personal property, sustainable ecosystems, and air and water quality.

We must call to task the failed policies and move forward with better proactive policies that protect the West and the United States from the overriding threat of catastrophic wildfire.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his comments. He has made a very critical statement as it relates to some of the initiatives that are before us today, as it relates to roadless initiatives, roadless areas, accessibility to these areas, and the risk of catastrophic fire.

Last week, I sent to the President a letter indicating we had discovered that the administration, in their roadless area initiative, was not using the current reports on catastrophic fire as it related to their initiative. We would ask them to go back and review that before they attempted, by regulation, to lock up another 10, 15, 20, 30 million acres of land. It ought to be examined against the current fuel-loading on that land and the risk of catastrophic fire.

Now I will yield to the Senator from New Mexico who has just gone through a catastrophic fire in his State that nearly wiped out one of our great National Laboratories. It certainly wiped out a beautiful area in the mountains of New Mexico near Los Alamos where it took hundreds of homes and may well end up costing the taxpayers of this country over \$1 billion to repair bad policy and bad decisionmaking coming together that created the Los Alamos fire.

I yield to my colleague from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. I thank the Senator. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I recall coming to the floor when we considered the military construction appropriations bill. My friend, the Senator from Arizona, Mr. KYL, recalls that. The military construction bill came to the floor and we told the Senate how we worked for over a month, in a bipartisan manner, to provide the administration with tools to improve fuel reduction in the wildland and urban interface; that is, urban interface areas for communities that are at risk.

I understand the distinguished Senator, Mr. KYL from Arizona, has some very excellent portrayals of what happens to forests that are attended to and cleared as compared with those we leave unattended and then have a fire. Unfortunately, the administration threatened to veto the legislation we worked on because they found some of the suggestions too hot to handle. However, my colleagues found the suggestions very prudent, and later accepted my amendment to the Interior appropriations bill, which is where we finally were able to offer it. It was offered there as an emergency measure and received huge bipartisan support.

Throughout the United States, there is an increasing amount of land in what natural resource scientists and firefighting experts call wildland-urban interface. This is very important because if that burns, not only do we lose forests, but we lose communities, we lose villages, we lose watersheds right close to cities which have a propensity to destroy the water supply as the trees in the watershed burn.

Many millions of acres—according to the General Accounting Office estimate, 39 million acres or more—of national forests are at high risk of wildfires.

Over August—it was not a luxury; normally visiting my State is a privilege and a luxury—I had to go there to visit fire-devastated communities, and in particular one, Los Alamos, but also some smaller ones. One of the communities is named Weed, where a couple hundred people came with their concerns because they are so frightened about what is happening to the forests on which they live, work, and from which they used to make a living.

As of today, there are over 52 fires burning over 1,000 acres each across this country.

The total number of acres burned this year is 223 percent of the 10-year-to-date average.

On Labor Day, almost 17,000 acres burned—on that one day.

Close to half a million acres have burned in my State this year; many more in other States, including the States of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and others.

When we first started working on this measure, the administration believed there was too much national environmental special interest group opposition to my mild fuel-reduction amendment. But I wanted to ensure that we did not just throw money at the problem and say we solved the threat to our communities.

We gave them, in that amendment, \$240 million in emergency funding to work on hazardous fuel reduction. Actually, since that amendment, which will be in conference under the chairmanship of Senator GORTON, there have been many more fires that have occurred. Much more evidence has been discerned with reference to communities that are right up next to forests that are loaded with kindling on the

ground, ready to make a small fire into a monstrous fire.

The language in that amendment provides the land management agencies additional authority that they now lack to do some of this fuel reduction work. We asked them, at their sole discretion, to do this work in a way that would provide jobs to local people, opportunities to private, nonprofit, or cooperating entities, such as youth conservation corps, and opportunities for small and micro businesses.

We asked the two Secretaries involved to identify those communities where hazard reduction activities were already underway or could be commenced by the end of the calendar year. We further asked the Secretaries to describe, by May of the coming year, the roadblocks to beginning hazardous fuel reduction work in the remaining communities at risk.

I can tell you about some of the communities in my State because our State forester had no hesitation to find out this information. He went out to find it. We have an excellent State forestry department and an excellent State forester.

They found the Ruidoso area, an area many people visit, has a very serious threat in terms of heavy pine scattered throughout the areas and residue on the ground of a very high kindling nature.

In Santa Fe, the water supply is in immediate jeopardy.

The growing East Mountain communities of Albuquerque are facing significant fire hazards.

The Middle Rio Grande Bosque—a green area, a greenbelt along our river, the Rio Grande—and the Espanola area, increasingly face the threat of out-of-control fire; that is, federal forests that are not cleaned up, forests that have not been paid any attention to in terms of management.

Los Alamos was deeply impacted by the Cerro Grande fire and will have the continued threat in unburned canyons.

We have all seen on television the terrible pictures of personal devastation from that area where more than 400 people were left without residences. Some were in duplexes that were burned to the ground. We have to pay for those because that fire was started by a Park Service employee who made a very serious mistake. I think we are all aware of that. That actually happened.

I want to summarize my remarks by suggesting that it is still very interesting to me how the Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Babbitt, can come out to the West and say some of the things he does. President Clinton's Interior Department has been in charge of many federal lands—along with Agriculture Department, in charge of the forests for as long as Clinton has been President. I say to my friend from the State of Arizona, soon that will be 8 years. They have been in control of: How should we manage? What should we cut? What should we do with these forests? It is interesting that Mr Babbitt

would come out West and say: This administration is not responsible for any of this; it comes from administrations before this one.

Frankly, how many years would it take this administration to fix the problems in the management of the forests? I have listened to my good friend, the chairman of the subcommittee that handles this issue in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I heard him talk about what the Federal Government has done and not done.

I have not heard anything about a major effort to clean up the forests. In fact, I think it has been to the contrary. I think there has been a fear that if you clean this up, you are logging. If you clean up the stuff on the ground so it will not burn, you are putting people to work in rural areas; and you are supporting this idea that there are many uses for forests, you are making it a reality—where this administration wants to push more to only public use rather than any private use.

I say to the Secretary of the Interior—and I certainly have not heard Secretary Glickman say this—but for him to come out West and say this didn't happen on their watch seems to me to be skating on very thin ice in terms of the reality of things.

What do we have now? What we have now is a Presidential election. Vice President GORE is running, and many of us think most of these policies were run through his staff for their "environmental" validity.

I think it would be nice to know, since the Secretary of the Interior denies that this administration and our Vice President, who many know was in charge of a lot of environmental policies—where was he on all these fire danger issues? More importantly, where will he be if he is elected? I cannot believe that if a set of questions were put to him—and we can't do that—he will answer them only if he wants to and only if they write them up a certain way. What did you do during your 8 years with reference to this problem, and if you are elected, what will you do during the next 4 years? Be very specific. Wouldn't it be something if you asked: Do you support a policy saying you can not put a road in the forest, even to stop the fire? I don't know if he would answer that.

The policy in this country now appears to be not to put any roads in. In my State they have told me that in the overgrown Santa Fe watershed, they don't believe they are allowed to put a road a half mile up—even a temporary one—to thin a rather steep slope, which you cannot get to from the main road. There are many frustrating stories like that. We hear stories about the federal land management agencies concerned with "protecting" certain things on the ground before you use a Caterpillar to stop a fire.

Frankly, to me, the results make that policy an adversity, because in order to save some resources, the re-

sult is ironically thousands and thousands of acres of burned forests and damaged resources. So which is the more prudent policy? To try to stop the fire early on at a quarter of its entirety using mechanized equipment, or let the whole thing burn and look back on it and say we didn't touch any of the ground with a tractor or any equipment, but we sure burned the forest down? These are very important issues. Where do we go next?

I submit that Congress is going to see—even in the few days it has—that that \$240 million as an emergency comes out of that conference. I think some Senators are getting some estimates about the environmental restoration cost for some of these forests that burned in the State of Senator KYL, and certainly in the distinguished chairman's State, and in the State of Montana and others. What will it cost to go back and rehabilitate and make them grow again? That surely is a great American emergency.

Do we want to leave these millions of acres with only the stark reality of a fire? Millions of trees are standing that are burned. Do we want to leave them all there until they rot away? Don't we want to say that as part of a rehabilitation plan, we ought to remove some of them?

Frankly, I will give you one example. We have a little community in Otero County called Alamogordo. It had one nice lumber mill, which just closed. Do you know what is around it? A very big fire that we reported here on the floor. Around the small town of Weed, near that closed sawmill, stands millions of burned trees with about 25 percent of their utility gone. We have not yet decided to remove one of those trees and to put somebody back to work in that lumber mill because of the policies the Senator from Idaho was speaking of.

We need plans. I agree. But we also need to put the money up so the plans and the work be done quickly, in my opinion. One of the biggest and most important things we can do in the coming weeks is to provide this to the administration and say, "Get started." Clearly, they won't accomplish a great deal, but the sooner we get started the better.

I understand Senator KYL has an expert in his State who has worked on the issue of how much good can we do in cleaning up the forests, so that we have some fire prevention, instead waiting around and then trying to put out a devastating fire.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG. Before I yield to the Senator from Arizona, I thank the Senator from New Mexico for his most appropriate statement. He experienced this firsthand earlier in the year before Idaho and Montana experienced it—the kind and the character of truly intensive and catastrophic fires, burning thousands of degrees hotter than a normal fire in a normal forest setting.

He is right. Over the course of the next several weeks, as chairman of the

authorizing subcommittee, I am going to work very hard to come up with figures and amounts that we can build into an emergency package and hopefully include it in the Interior appropriations bill, which would fit the kind of environmental restoration necessary on the acres that have already burned, but also the kind of urban interface stewardship programs that will bring about the fuel reduction that our colleague from Arizona will speak to in a moment. He and people in his State have done some very interesting and extremely valuable pioneering work on the Ponderosa Forest of northern Arizona, which is important for this Congress, and hopefully this administration, to take into consideration as a part of the way we deal with these forest lands that now have literally tens of thousands of gallons of gasoline-equivalent fuel on the ground, which burns explosively under the right circumstances, as we have just experienced.

Let me yield to my colleague from Arizona, Senator JOHN KYL, to speak to this issue and the experiments going on in his State.

(Mr. ENZI assumed the chair.)

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Idaho for bringing the attention to this issue to the Senate floor, to our colleagues here, as well as to people around the country. To my colleague from New Mexico with whom I have been visiting about this matter for 5 or 6 years now, a real thanks for his efforts to bring a \$240 million supplemental appropriation which will only begin to scratch the surface of the needs we have. Half of that money goes to the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service and the other half goes to the Department of the Interior for the BLM because in our public forests today we have them spread both in the National Forest System, as well as the Department of the Interior-administered lands of the BLM. Arizona and New Mexico have the largest pine forests in the world.

Senator CRAIG pointed out that we have done some pioneering here. For the last decade or so, Northern Arizona University's School of Forestry has been working on techniques to return the forest to the rather parklike, very natural condition that it was in at the turn of the century, 100 years ago, when you had very broad stretches of grassland with few trees per acre—maybe 100 trees per acre. Big beautiful trees, ponderosa pines, are a little bit reminiscent of a sequoia, for example—very large, yellow bark, a beautiful huge tree. When they are spaced out a fairly large distance from each other in a rather parklike condition, I don't think there is anything prettier.

More to the point, there is nothing more beneficial for the flora and fauna in the area. Lush grass feeds the deer and elk and other browsers. We have a healthy environment for birds and other species and, frankly, the entire ecological situation is the way that God created it to be.

Then along came man, and through a series of mistakes we mismanaged the forests to the point that today most of the forest is clogged and gnarled into what they call a "dog hair trimmer," meaning that a dog can't run through it without leaving half of his hair behind on the underbrush that has been growing up.

What happens is that, first of all, all of this underbrush competes for the nutrients and the water in the soil so none of the trees grow to be the big, beautiful trees we all love, and none of the grass can grow so that the browsers—the deer, elk, and animals such as that—don't come into the area. And because every bit of nature depends on something else, most of the species simply vanish. Nothing can really survive there.

You create two other conditions: disease-prone because they are weak; secondly, fire-prone, where a spark of fire here is like setting off tinder with a larger box around it to burn. Because of the undergrowth and fuel on the ground, as soon as the fire starts, it quickly spreads to the lower branches and then the upper branches of the trees, and that is why you see this almost explosion of fire as it crowns out; it goes right up through the top of these huge, magnificent trees and explodes the trees in the process. What happens is that the soil is baked to a temperature that is unhealthy for regeneration. Ordinarily, nature-caused fire will burn along the ground and burn a little bit of the underbrush that is there but never crown out. As a result, it is not the timber fire that you get here. This literally sterilizes the soil. For years, nothing can regenerate. Perhaps devastatingly, erosion results very quickly—destroying streams, rivers, and lakes. It takes the topsoil that has taken millions of years to be created so things can grow, and wipes that out. It drains all of it right down into the rivers and streams and clogs them up.

What is the environment for the flora and fauna? There is nothing. We talk about endangered species. Goodbye species.

We had a fire around Four Peaks in Arizona which destroyed about 75,000 acres. I learned that this was the heaviest concentration of black bear habitat in the country and perhaps the world. What happened to all of these black bears? Many of them did not survive. Many of the other animals did not survive. The trees are gone. We have a very large bird population in Arizona. Amazingly enough, many of those birds had nowhere else to go.

The point is that when you have this kind of catastrophe, you are not aiding nature; you are destroying it. All of the environment is destroyed in the process—not to mention the waste and the cost. We have now spent about \$1 billion this year to fight these fires. That money could have gone a long way toward managing the forests and preventing the fires in the first place.

You are not simply saving timber; you are not simply preserving a nice view for people. You are saving the environment for the flora and fauna—preventing erosion, preventing the sterilization of the soil, and all of the rest.

As I started to say, work has been done around the country, but most importantly in Northern Arizona University, pioneered by Dean Garrett, and most recently by Dr. Wally Covington at Northern Arizona University. Secretary Bruce Babbitt is a friend of Wally Covington and fully supports the work that he has been doing at Northern Arizona University. In some small projects in northern Arizona, we have been able to acquire funding to do this forest restoration and demonstrate the efficacy of the treatment.

The problem is the administration has not carried that on to a larger treatment area. I don't know why because science proves it out. Secretary Babbitt understands that it is the right thing to do. But I think, frankly, it is a fear that the radical environmentalists, which this administration relies upon for a great deal of its support, will object. Indeed, after putting together a wonderful program with the support of Secretary Babbitt, Dr. Covington, the Grand Canyon Trust, and other environmental groups, all of whom were working together to make the area around Flagstaff, AZ, safer, to improve the environment, and to restore the forests to a healthy condition, radical environmental groups sued to stop the process and delayed it for an entire year—to no effect because the project will go on. But it will be delayed a year.

The GAO reports that we have 39 million acres to treat in this country. Strike that. With 6 million acres having burned this year, we are now down to 33 million acres. We have to do this within a 20-year period if we are going to save these forests. That is going to require a commitment of the next administration. If the current administration can't do the job, maybe the next one can.

Finally, I am holding a document put out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southwestern Region, called "Arizona's Wild Land Urban Interface." To summarize what is in this document, you see areas that haven't been treated that are severely burned. Then you see what happens when they treat the areas. You find, for example, in the Coronado National Forest a before-and-after picture where you see this clogged-up condition of undergrowth. It is not pretty, it is not environmentally sound, and the number of trees per acre are reduced to about 300. Whereas they had about 1,500 before, they are trying to get it down to about 150 per acre. When you do that, you have a beautiful park-like condition that is healthy.

I can tell you, having visited the treatment areas around Flagstaff, that after about 3 years you see the pitch content of the trees significantly im-

proved. That prevents the bark beetles from attacking the trees. The protein content of the grass is an order of magnitude higher. All of the elk, deer, and other animals are coming in to browse. Everything about the forest is healthier when you can go in and thin out this underbrush and hopefully follow up with a prescribed burn which simply burns along the ground and burns any of the residue. It doesn't crown out. After that, you can let nature take its course because then you have a healthy forest with larger diameter trees. If lightning strikes, not one of those trees catches fire. It starts with the grass on fire around it. It may burn the grass for several acres. That is all right. That will regenerate in just 1 year. That is acceptable. But it doesn't crown out and destroy the rest of the forest. That is what we have to commit to do in all of our Nation's forests.

I commend the small first step that Senator DOMENICI has taken here with appropriations. I commend the administration to create a budget that will begin to spend, frankly, billions of dollars that are necessary to treat the forests of our country, not just in the southwest but all over the western United States which so desperately needs this new forest management to save our Nation's forest.

I appreciate the fact that Senator CRAIG has offered me the opportunity to speak to this today, and I look forward to continuing to talk about this issue because, unfortunately, like some of the other things, it takes a catastrophe to finally bring out what has to be done. While all of us lament the catastrophe, at least perhaps it will jolt us into doing what is right to save our wonderful forests in the U.S.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I thank Senator KYL for what I think is a very clear explanation of what happens when you have this massive fuel-loading that has occurred on the floors of our public land forests in the Nation. When he talks about active management, he is not talking about wilderness areas. He is not talking about wildlife preserves. He is talking about the millions and millions of acres of land that we call multiple-use lands or lands that are classified within this roadless area that this administration is currently examining and is considering keeping roadless and undisturbed.

The question becomes very clear. Can you do this kind of active management by righting the wrongs of past actions we have taken on our public lands to restore forest health and to allow fire then to be a participant in the ecosystem in a way that is not catastrophic or stand altering or wildlife destroying? Those are very real changes with which all of us have to grapple. We ought to start. I will start with hearings in the next few days that will deal with that. Some of our environmental friends recognize this. One of them happens to be from New Mexico. The Forest Guardian Group is

quoted as saying that wildfires are getting bigger, burning hotter, and the effects are more devastating.

It is clear that we will have to take mechanical steps to thin forests before we can use fire to restore these forests to their natural regimes.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Will the Senator allow me a question?

Mr. CRAIG. I am happy to yield to the Senator from New York.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I hope he will make available more of the research that has been described so carefully by himself and the Senator from Arizona. This is new to an easterner but not too new. Two-thirds of the State of New York is covered by hardwood forests and some cedar and pine. But these are important propositions that should be listened to intensively. I surely wish to be one who will do so, and I look forward to supporting the efforts that are indicated.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Senator from New York for saying so. Yes, it is true that some of these ideas are new. Some of them have been building over the last decades as we have recognized the current state of the health of our forests. My time is up.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I am sure the chairman would wish us to yield such time as the Senator from Idaho needs to conclude.

Mr. CRAIG. Let me conclude because the chairman of the Finance Committee has just brought a very critical issue to the floor. I appreciate the opportunity to kind of sandwich ourselves in between the opening remarks of the chairman and the opening remarks of the ranking member of the Finance Committee as it relates to China and PNTR, which is the most important issue before this Senate. But it is important that Senators be given an opportunity to hear the concerns that are now out there about our public lands and some remedial action that we can take in the short term as we look at long-term policies working with this administration and future administrations to resolve this kind of critical issue.

I thank you very much for the time and the time my colleagues have used in joining me to bring out some of the necessary and important facts about the events that are occurring out there as we go through this most devastating fire season.

Let me conclude once again with this thought. Six and one-half million acres of public land have now burned. For those who might be listening and who do not understand what 1 acre of land represents, or 1 square mile of land, let me suggest that it is the entire State of Maryland charred to the ground, with piles of ash, with snags of timber, standing dead trees, nothing left, with the risk of siltation and soot and ash moving into the watershed, into the streams, and into the valuable aquatic habitat. No wildlife can live there. Much of the wildlife having been destroyed, no trees can provide the pro-

ductiveness to build a home and provide fiber for our country except in charred snags. An area the size of the State of Maryland has now burned. Thousands and thousands of acres continue to burn. I believe that is a national crisis. It is a crisis on which all Members must focus. If it had been a hurricane that just wiped out the State of Maryland, we would all be rushing to save that State.

Fire, too, is a part of Mother Nature's disaster or catastrophic scheme. I hope our colleagues will work with us and that the Nation will begin to understand that active management on these timbered public lands in the appropriate and designated areas is not only critical; it is necessary to save our forests.

I yield the floor.

TO AUTHORIZE EXTENSION OF NONDISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous agreement, the Senator from New York is recognized for such time as he may consume.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I thank my revered chairman for this opportunity to discuss the most important issue we will deal with in this portion of this session of Congress.

At the Finance Committee's final hearing on China this spring, on April 6, our last witness, Ira Shapiro, who was formerly the chief negotiator for Japan and Canada at the U.S. Trade Representative's office, closed his testimony with these words.

[this vote] is one of an historic handful of Congressional votes since the end of World War II. Nothing that Members of Congress do this year—or any other year—could be more important.

I rise to suggest, sir, that he is not wrong, and to explain at some length, if I may be indulged, the reasons therefor.

The United States has a long history of commercial ties with China, beginning at a time when we exported raw materials, medicinal herbs and such like products, in return for sophisticated manufactures.

The first American ship to visit China, the *Empress of China*, cleared New York harbor more than 216 years ago on February 22, 1784. It carried a cargo of 300 tons of ginseng, a wild root found in the uplands of States such as New York, where it is gathered to this day and is known as shang. The cargo included wool, cloth, lead, cotton, and pepper—pepper, I take it, to be a transshipment of pepper received from South Asia. She reached Canton 7 months later, on August 23, 1784, and returned to New York the following May where the vessel created a sensation with its exotic cargo of manufactures: porcelain, umbrellas, fans, and then some tea and spices.

By the 1830s American commercial interests in China had grown consider-

ably despite China's restrictions on trade. But American traders lagged far behind their British counterparts—one might say the Portuguese, as well, who were the first in the Far East—and when the British secured additional trading rights by the Treaty of Nanjing, concluded in 1842 after the first Opium War, as it was known, the merchants of Boston became especially fearful that American traders would suffer discrimination.

In the context of today's debate, it is worth recalling that the U.S. response a century and a half ago to the fears that we were being locked out of the China market was just what we are talking about today. We sent a special emissary to ask the Chinese to grant the United States what is in effect normal trade relations status. Congress voted \$40,000—some Members thought it to be an exorbitant sum—for a special diplomatic mission to China. Congressman Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts was dispatched as minister plenipotentiary. His instructions stated that his primary object was to secure for the United States the same commercial privileges that had just been won by the British.

On July 3, 1844, Cushing signed the United States' first treaty with China. It was called the Treaty of Wanghia, named after a village near Macao which was a Portuguese settlement. Its centerpiece was "a most favored nation clause." That was the 17th century term used at the time. The meaning is that you will get the same treatment as that nation which has the most favored treatment, which in effect means equal treatment for all, or what we call normal trade relations. Just equal treatment for all, ensuring that the American merchants would have the same terms of trade and negotiation as did the French and the English traders.

A century and a half later, we are still grappling with these very same concerns. Thus, we find ourselves on September 5, 2000, debating the merits of establishing permanent normal trade relations with China, that term, "normal trade relations," having been changed, having been adopted in the Finance Committee. We are very proud of our chairman in this regard, to have succeeded in changing the 17th century term "most favored nation," which gave altogether the wrong impression to any but skilled trade negotiators and merchants.

Our purpose is to ensure that Americans are not disadvantaged in the Chinese market and the Chinese not disadvantaged in ours.

We begin the debate on a high note and with great expectations. Just as we left for the August recess on July 27, an overwhelming majority of Senators voted, 86-12, in support of the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to this bill. That is what we are doing now. It was almost exactly proportionately divided: 45 Republicans and 41 Democrats voted for cloture.

The vote followed an unquestionably impressive and somewhat surprising