

Silence itself is a message. Martin Luther King, Jr. said famously, "In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." America has always been a friend to the oppressed, the persecuted, the forgotten. I pray our allegiance has not changed.

This administration must make the solid rock of freedom their foundation, rather than the sinking sand of repression.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 23, 2009.

Hon. HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON,
Secretary of State,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY CLINTON: I write to share my dismay, also voiced by a number of leading human rights organizations, at your comments during your recent Asia trip indicating that human rights will not be a priority in your engagement with China. These statements come on the heels of the U.S. failing to participate in the United Nations review of the human rights record of China, among other worst offenders. Both are deeply troubling commentary on this administration's commitment to human rights, and are undoubtedly disheartening for scores of Chinese citizens, including the imprisoned Catholic bishops, persecuted house church leaders and repressed Tibetan Buddhists.

Certainly there is a place for pragmatism in diplomacy. It may be that the Chinese government, when confronted with its gross human rights violations, would dismiss U.S. concerns and tell us not to interfere in their "internal matters." But we need look no further than the Sharanskys and Solzhenitsyns of recent history to know that it is equally pragmatic to believe that bold, public proclamations on the importance of liberty, freedom, and the absence of repression are cause for great hope to those political prisoners who languish behind bars.

In short, words have power. They have the power to inspire, or deflate; they have the power to give vision or to stifle hope. But for words to inspire the hope for a day when the Chinese people can worship freely, where the press is not censored, where political dissent is permitted—they must first be spoken.

Silence is itself a message. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said, "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." America has always been a friend to the oppressed, the persecuted, the forgotten. Has our allegiance changed?

Words are, of course, strengthened by policy, and policy is shaped by personnel. You have a number of important decisions before you in this regard: Will the new U.S. ambassador to China be singularly focused on good bilateral relations, and increased trade—or will that diplomat tirelessly work to ensure that our embassy is an island of freedom in a sea of repression? Will the assistant secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor be someone known and trusted by the human rights community? Will the new ambassador for International Religious Freedom worship with the underground church and press the Chinese government to respect this first freedom?

This administration is young and finding its sea legs. My hope is that the solid rock of freedom will be your foundation, rather than the sinking sand of repression.

I urge you to change course, lest this country itself be changed.

I am reminded of a story told by Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel which speaks to this very point: "One day a Tzadik came to

Sodom; He knew what Sodom was, so he came to save it from sin, from destruction. He preached to the people. 'Please do not be murderers, do not be thieves. Do not be silent and do not be indifferent.' He went on preaching day after day, maybe even picketing. But no one listened. He was not discouraged. He went on preaching for years. Finally someone asked him, 'Rabbi, why do you do that? Don't you see it is no use?' He said, 'I know it is of no use, but I must. And I will tell you why: in the beginning I thought I had to protest and to shout in order to change them. I have given up this hope. Now I know I must picket and scream and shout so that they should not change me.'"

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

LORDS OF THE STREETS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I bring you news from the front. This week, in one of our neighboring country's schools, an elementary school, there was a raging gun battle for over 2 hours between the bad guys, the Army, and of course the police were involved in all of this. I'm not talking about a battle that took place in Iraq or Afghanistan. I'm talking about a battle that took place just south of our border in Mexico—the border, the second front that we should be concentrating on as a Nation and be concerned about what's taking place there. In Reynosa, Mexico, right across the Rio Grande River from McAllen, Texas, is where this gun battle took place.

The Gulf Drug Cartel, in control of Reynosa, was trying to move drugs into the United States, and they got involved with the Federal police and soldiers. This battle kept going on because both sides kept getting reinforcements. At least five of the gang members were killed and five peace officers, or Federal police, were killed. It is reported that teachers were shoving kids on the floor, blocking the windows with desks and tables, trying to keep down because of the ricochets that were taking place in the school.

One third grader said this: "We were all crying. We were so afraid," said this 9-year-old. She continued: "They could have killed every one of us."

The gun battle took place on both sides of the school. Then it moved into a shopping area and other parts of Reynosa.

The principal of the school had this comment. She said, "The bad men think they're lords of the streets." Mr. Speaker, maybe they are.

This is gang warfare in Mexico. Just last year, there were 6,000 people killed in Mexico, most of them attributed to the gang fights to try to control the drugs that are coming into the United States. Six thousand people? What does that mean? Well, there have been 5,000 Americans killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, less than the total number killed just last year in Mexico. It's reported that one American a week is killed in Mexico, maybe more than one a week. The drug cartels murder police officers; they kill elected officials; they chop the heads off of police chiefs; and some now have said that Mexico may be a failed state because of the drug cartels and the violence that is taking place there.

I don't know if it's a failed state or not, but it's a serious epidemic, and what is taking place that the drug cartels are in the center of this border war has to do with four commodities—with four commodities, Mr. Speaker. Two of those commodities go north, and two of those commodities go south. The drug cartels, of course, are running drugs and people into the United States. The two of those that are going south are the drug cartels that are helping to control, of course, the money and illegal guns going back into Mexico, most of those controlled by the drug cartels. We know that many of the drug cartels are working with the human smugglers, the coyotes, to have them bring drugs and people into the United States at the same time.

So the drug cartels are the enemy of America. They're working in Mexico. If anyone thinks that they're going to stay south of the Rio Grande River, they've not been very attune to what has taken place. Much of Mexico, especially on the border, has been corrupted by the drug cartels. It is extremely violent. I've been down to the Texas-Mexico border about 15 times, and every time I go, the situation is worse on both sides. Yet good folks on both sides live in fear because of the drug cartels and their violence, and nothing is happening.

President Calderon has answered with 40,000 soldiers on the border. He says, "Mexico confronts a historic challenge to become a secure country, a challenge to truly transform itself into a country of law and order."

Well, good for President Calderon. I hope he succeeds, but if we think it's going to stay south of the border, we're sadly mistaken.

Just in 2007, in my hometown of Houston, in broad daylight, two rival gangs, smuggling gangs, were going up and down the freeway, shooting at each other, trying to fight over a group of illegals that one of them wanted to take away from the other. You know, that case, like many others, has gone ignored mainly by the mainstream media.

This country, Mr. Speaker, faces a border war like we have never seen before, and so now I think we ought to take some action on this side of the

border. It's interesting that, in the last Presidential campaign, neither candidate, in all of that talk, ever said anything about the border—our border, the second front.

It is time to reinforce the border with the National Guard, the military. If the Mexican Government is going to have the courage to have the military on the border to keep the drug cartels from crossing into our country, we ought to have the courage to have the border secured with our military to protect us and to squeeze those drug cartels dry. Send the military down there, and teach the drug cartels they will not have it their way, Mr. Speaker.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BIRTHRIGHT OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Congressman POE raises some very good points. One of the major reasons we should be renegotiating NAFTA is to deal with many of the consequences of that trade agreement which was sold as a nirvana for the continent, and there are so many consequences that are harmful to people in this country and to the other two trading partners. So I was very interested in his remarks.

I came down to the floor tonight to talk about liberty. When our Republic was founded, Patrick Henry courageously implored, "Give me liberty or give me death." He put his priority on sacrifice for liberty as the fundamental building block of our Republic, a moral calling of the highest order.

Similarly, as immigrants from far off lands flock to America's shores, they still journey through New York Harbor and read the timeless words at the base of the Statue of Liberty, penned by poet Emma Lazarus, that recall our primary founding moral value: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Freedom is not only what this Nation offers to all who come here legally, but it is the cornerstone upon which our founders built this Nation. America today is navigating a slippery slope that is a departure from our birthright, our Nation's very reason for being. When freedom becomes subjugated to financial dependence on undemocratic regimes or marketplace conveniences, surely we risk losing our way. Those around the world can become disillusioned with our Nation's very reason for being.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "Can liberties of a nation be sure, when we re-

move their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are a gift from God?" He clearly means we should not take the abundance of our Nation in whatever form and squander it or take it for granted.

I become concerned myself when pecuniary interests trump human rights. With China's now becoming the chief holder of U.S. Treasury debt, one must ask, "What comes first, liberty or bondage?"

Whether it is human freedom in China or repressive theocracies across the Middle East or dictatorships in Africa, Asia or Latin America, at what point does our growing financial dependence sully America's birthright, which is liberty first, last and always?

I stand here, amazed, that yet again the wise Thomas Jefferson issued, for posterity, a warning as follows: "If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of currency first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around them will deprive the people of all property until their children wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered." Imagine how many years ago he said that.

My friends, my dear colleagues and my fellow citizens, we must take a strong and devout look at where we are and how we got here. Our financial dependence on foreign regimes has compromised our very birthright. It was with sadness that I watched our able Secretary of State dance on eggshells on her recent trip to Beijing. It is Lady Liberty that must inspire us to recapture our freedom for our own posterity.

Surely, Thomas Jefferson would like that.

SUE AND CHUCK COBB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the life and the work of Ambassadors Sue and Chuck Cobb for what they have achieved in the life that they have made together. The Cobbs have set a new standard for the great American family as leaders in business, as public servants and as loving parents.

Ambassador Chuck Cobb is an alumnus of Stanford Business School. The greatest prize that he took from Stanford was not the MBA that he earned there; it was Sue, his wonderful and future wife. Ambassador Chuck Cobb's professional life is as successful as it has been diversified. As a businessman, he has served on the borders of nine publicly traded companies as well as numerous private ones. More than 30 master plan communities and even entire towns have been developed under Chuck's leadership. As a public servant, he rose through the ranks of the Department of Commerce where he served as Undersecretary and then as

assistant Secretary for President Ronald Reagan. He saw the fruition of his labor with his appointment to the position of Ambassador to Iceland for President George H.W. Bush. The people of Iceland graciously rewarded his work as an ambassador with their highest honor, the Falcon Grand Cross Star.

Ambassador Sue Cobb's journey from Stanford to the position of ambassador was no less exciting. While leading several nonprofits and law firms, she attempted to be the first woman from the United States to climb Mt. Everest, and later wrote the book "The Edge of Everest: A Woman Challenges the Mountain." Following her service as chairman of the Federal Reserve of Miami, Sue Cobb was appointed as U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica where she served to improve health care, law enforcement and environmental management practices. Sue's work as ambassador was so acknowledged as excellent that our Nation's finest diplomats are honored with the Sue M. Cobb Exemplary Diplomatic Service Award. During her tenure in Jamaica, Ambassador Sue Cobb coordinated the relief efforts to help Jamaica's people after it was ravaged by Hurricane Ivan.

Ambassador Chuck was the cochairman of the committee that secured \$9 billion in Federal funds to rebuild my community, South Florida, after Hurricane Andrew.

In addition to their exemplary work in both government and private enterprise, Chuck and Sue have made a home together and have filled it with love for more than five decades. Mr. Speaker, on February 28, they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. They have raised two sons, who are distinguished and remarkable people. Christian is an architect with an MBA from Harvard, and Tobin is an investment banker who earned his MBA from NYU. They have blessed the Cobb family with seven beautiful grandchildren.

It is obvious that there is much that we can learn from the lives of the Ambassadors Cobb, but if we could glean a single lesson from the half century that they have spent together, Mr. Speaker, it would be how unbelievably far a man and a woman can go when the faith they have in each other is as unwavering as it is so clearly shown in Ambassadors Sue and Chuck Cobb.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.