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NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CHINA MFN

DEFEAT MITCHELL RESOLUTION: DO GOOD, NOT "FEEL GOOD"

TODAY WE BEGIN DEBATE ON THE ISSUE OF MFN FOR CHINA. I EXPECT THIS WILL BE A GOOD AND SPIRITED DEBATE. AND I HOPE THAT, ONCE WE HAVE DEBATED AND VOTED, WE CAN PUT THIS ISSUE TO REST FOR THIS YEAR.

WHEN WE GET TO THE VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE OF THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION, I BELIEVE THAT VOTE WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT NEITHER THIS RESOLUTION, NOR ANYTHING LIKE IT, IS GOING TO BE ENACTED INTO LAW THIS SESSION. AND THE NATION'S INTEREST WILL NOT BE SERVED BY DRAGGING OUT THIS ISSUE -- FOR PARTISAN OR OTHER REASONS.

SEE THROUGH HAND-WRINGING AND RHETORIC

AS I INDICATED WHEN THE PRESIDENT FIRST ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO SEE THROUGH ALL THE POSTURING, AND HAND-WRINGING, AND OVER-HEATED RHETORIC -- AND KEEP OUR EYE CLEARLY ON WHAT THE ISSUE REALLY IS, AND ISN'T.

THE ISSUE IS NOT WHETHER WE APPROVE OF, OR CONDONE, CHINA'S POLICIES IN AREAS LIKE HUMAN RIGHTS, ADVANCED WEAPONS PROLIFERATION, AND TRADE. WE ALL SHARE THE VIEW THAT CHINA'S POLICIES IN ALL THOSE AREAS FALL FAR SHORT OF WHAT WE WANT AND INSIST ON.

THE ISSUE IS NOT WHETHER WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CONCERNS. VIRTUALLY EVERY ONE OF US BELIEVES WE MUST KEEP THE HEAT ON BEIJING IN ALL OF THESE AREAS.

THE REAL ISSUE IS: HOW DO WE BEST DO WHAT CLEARLY NEEDS TO BE DONE? IS MFN THE BEST TOOL? IS IT AN EFFECTIVE TOOL?

AND THIS DEBATE REALLY IS BETWEEN THOSE WHO BELIEVE WITHHOLDING MFN WILL FORCE THE CHINESE TO "SHAPE UP" IN ALL THESE AREAS; AND THOSE OF US WHO BELIEVE THAT MFN IS NOT THE RIGHT TOOL -- BECAUSE IT IS A TOOL THAT WON'T WORK, AND WILL IN FACT PROBABLY BACKFIRE.

DENYING MFN WON'T RELEASE A SINGLE PRISONER

I WILL BE LISTENING HARD AT THE ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION -- LISTENING TO HEAR THEM EXPLAIN THE PROCESS BY WHICH TERMINATING MFN WILL LEAD TO THE RELEASE OF A SINGLE POLITICAL PRISONER; WILL BRING GREATER DEMOCRACY TO CHINA; WILL CAUSE CHINA TO RE-THINK AND RECONSTRUCT ITS ARMS SALES POLICIES; WILL CAUSE CHINA TO CHANGE ITS UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES.

I WILL BE LISTENING TO HEAR THEM EXPLAIN HOW MUCH PRESSURE WE WILL REALLY BRING TO BEAR ON CHINA BY WITHHOLDING MFN -- WHEN NOT A SINGLE OTHER NATION ON EARTH WILL FOLLOW SUIT. ON THE CONTRARY, IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAGINE THE PARTIES THAT ARE GOING TO BE HELD AROUND THE WORLD -- FROM AUSTRALIA, TO JAPAN, TO WESTERN EUROPE -- WHEN THEY HEAR THAT UNCLE SAM IS ABOUT TO IMPOSE ANOTHER RESTRICTION ON ITS OWN EXPORTERS, TO NO USEFUL END.

I SHOULD NOTE IN THAT REGARD THAT WE WILL APPARENTLY BE DEBATING LATER AN AMENDMENT FROM THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA, SENATOR KERREY, THAT REQUIRES THE ADMINISTRATION TO, QUOTE, "ENSURE," UNQUOTE, THAT OUR GATT PARTNERS WILL IMPOSE THE SAME RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE THAT WE DO. I MUST SAY, AMONG ALL THE "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" IDEAS THAT ARE FLOATING AROUND IN THIS RESOLUTION AND THE AMENDMENTS TO IT, THAT ONE TAKES THE CAKE. AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING HOW THE SUPPORTERS OF THAT AMENDMENT INTEND THE ADMINISTRATION TO "ENSURE" SOMETHING THAT WE ALL KNOW IS ABSOLUTELY, 100% IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOMPLISH. BUT THAT IS A MATTER FOR DEBATE AT A LATER TIME.

(MORE)

"FEEL GOOD", OR DO GOOD

FOR NOW, LET ME RETURN TO THE MAIN POINT, WHICH IS -- LET'S KEEP OUR EYE ON THE BALL.

THE ISSUE IS: DO WE JUST WANT TO "FEEL GOOD?" OR DO WE REALLY WANT TO DO SOME GOOD IN THESE VERY LEGITIMATE AREAS OF CONCERN.

AS EVERYONE KNOWS, MYSELF, THE DISTINGUISHED SENATOR FROM MONTANA, SENATOR BAUCUS, AND A NUMBER OF OTHER SENATORS WROTE TO THE PRESIDENT -- SAYING THAT WE DO HAVE GRAVE CONCERNS IN MANY AREAS; INSISTING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION DEAL URGENTLY WITH THOSE CONCERNS, AND TELL US HOW IT INTENDS TO DO THAT; BUT CONCLUDING THAT MFN WAS JUST NOT THE RIGHT TOOL TO USE TO ADDRESS THOSE CONCERNS.

THE PRESIDENT HAS RESPONDED TO OUR LETTER, AND OUR CONCERNS, IN A VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD, DETAILED WAY -- AND HAS LAID OUT AN ACTION PLAN THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE CONCERNS THAT WE HAVE. I KNOW THAT OTHERS INTEND TO DISCUSS THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER IN DETAIL, SO I WILL NOT ASK TO INCLUDE IT IN THE RECORD AT THIS POINT. BUT FOR THOSE SENATORS WHO HAVE NOT YET READ IT, I HOPE THEY WILL DO SO NOW. THE PRESIDENT OUTLINED A REAL "DO GOOD" APPROACH. AND THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ACTION APPROACH OF THE PRESIDENT, AND THE "FEEL GOOD" APPROACH OF THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION, COULDN'T BE CLEARER.

THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION WILL NOT ACCOMPLISH WHAT IT SEEKS TO ACCOMPLISH.

ROBERT FROST ONCE ADMONISHED FENCE-BUILDERS TO TAKE CARE ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY FENCING IN, AND WHAT THEY WERE FENCING OUT.

SANCTIONS ADVOCATES SHOULD ALSO TAKE HEED ABOUT WHO WILL ACTUALLY SUFFER THE IMPACT OF THE SANCTIONS THEY PROPOSE.

DRIVING BEIJING DEEPER INTO ISOLATION

ENACTING THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION -- UNCLE SAM OUT THERE ALL ALONE, CUTTING OFF MFN WHILE ALL OF OUR PARTNERS CONTINUE TO GO THEIR MERRY WAY -- THAT WILL NOT SERIOUSLY HURT THE "OLD MEN" IN BEIJING. IF SEVERAL THOUSANDS YEARS OF CHINESE HISTORY IS ANY USEFUL GUIDE, THE BEIJING LEADERS WOULD REACT TO ITS ENACTMENT NOT BY "CRYING UNCLE" -- BUT BY RETREATING FURTHER INTO ISOLATIONISM AND REPRESSION.

ITS ENACTMENT WOULD HURT THE VERY PEOPLE WE SEEK TO HELP. IT WOULD HURT THE REFORMERS, WHO -- WHILE WE SMUGLY CELEBRATE OUR LOFTY MORAL STANCE -- WILL SUFFER THE REPRESSIVE BACKLASH WE HAVE SPARKED; AND WHO, IN THE LONGER RUN, WILL BE FURTHER ISOLATED FROM ACCESS TO OUR PRESENCE.

IT WOULD HURT THE FREE MARKET REFORMERS, MOST HEAVILY CONCENTRATED IN SOUTHERN CHINA -- WHICH, NOT COINCIDENTALLY, IS WHERE MOST OF OUR BUSINESS PRESENCE IS CENTERED.

IT WOULD HURT THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG -- WHO ARE COUNTING ON US TO HELP PRESERVE THEIR RELATIVE FREEDOM AND PROSPERITY, AS THEY TRANSITION TO THEIR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRC.

IT WOULD HURT US -- OUR INVESTORS, OUR EXPORTERS, OUR IMPORTERS -- COSTING US COUNTLESS DOLLARS, AND JOBS, AND GROWTH; ALL WITHOUT HAVING ANY POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR BROADER FOREIGN POLICY OR HUMANITARIAN GOALS.

I JUST MADE REFERENCE TO THE SEVERAL THOUSAND YEAR HISTORY OF CHINA, AND THE LESSONS THAT HISTORY TEACHES.

RESIST PATISANSHIP, POSTURING

THE HISTORY OF THE SENATE IS A BIT MORE MODEST IN DURATION. AND I'M AFRAID OUR HISTORY TOO OFTEN SUGGESTS THAT THIS BODY IS NOT VERY CAPABLE OF PUTTING ASIDE POSTURING, AND PARTISANSHIP -- AND JUST GETTING ON WITH THE SENSIBLE, EFFECTIVE APPROACH.

BUT I HOPE WE CAN ACT ON THIS ISSUE IN A WAY WHICH WILL LEAD FUTURE HISTORIANS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE SENATE CAN ACT RESPONSIBLY, SENSIBLY AND PURELY IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

THE WAY TO DO THAT IS TO DEFEAT THE MITCHELL RESOLUTION, AND TO GET BEHIND THE ACTION PLAN OF THE PRESIDENT TO REALLY DEAL WITH OUR LEGITIMATE CONCERNS IN CHINA.

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