

Please read his words in the RECORD, and tomorrow vote "no" on permanent trade status for China.

Supporters of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) for China tell us the US is giving up nothing in its trade deal with the regime in Beijing, that China is making all the concessions. This claim is false.

The US is giving up something of profound importance—its ability to aid people everywhere in their struggle for human rights and democracy. The US has enormous power, due to its economic leverage. Although the US has been reluctant to use this power against Chinese tyranny, the power exists; Beijing recognizes this fully, even if the US does not.

The annual renewal of China's "driver's license" on trade may have become routine, but the power to grant the license remains critical. That is why Beijing is desperate to obtain PNTR, and rid itself of this power. That is why both Rep. Levin and Cox's proposals, no matter their very fine points, are "toothless" if this power is not retained. The hope that the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank will place limits on China will amount to little, for multinational financial institutions are woefully inadequate to take over responsibility of the US Congress. It may not follow the US lead in any event.

Framing the debate on WTO and PNTR as "keeping the door open" is misleading. America's door is open. The door to China is only half-open. However, the Chinese people have learned that they lack the rights other people enjoy. If this were not so, the enormous uprising in hundreds of Chinese cities known as the 1989 Tiananmen movement would never have occurred. Yet the door to China remains and will remain half-closed, because that is the way to retain power under tyranny.

Trade alone simply cannot open the rest of China's door. If the US Congress grants PNTR now, it legitimizes this half-open/half-closed status. To certify Communist China as "normal" in its abnormal state would deprive reformers within the government of needed pressure to push for change.

The claim that PNTR gives American access to the "vast Chinese market" is specious, because it does not exist. Simply put, we cannot construct the "vast Chinese market" without first the rule-of-law being instituted, as President Lincoln put it, "by a government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

In fact, the multinational business community is making an unholy alliance with Chinese tyranny. The Communist government uses brutality to subjugate Chinese workers while U.S. corporations use the threat of moving their businesses to undercut American workers' demands. Businesses in China's neighboring countries—Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—will use "slave labor" to China to flood the U.S. market. PNTR is a loss-loss proposition for most workers in Asia and America, but especially for China's. The business community should not be so complacent, because Chinese tyranny will redirect Chinese people's anger against them toward the outsiders.

The majority of pro-democracy organizations are against PNTR, yet a few prominent individuals in China have announced their support. Why such contradiction? The question we must ask is how much can we credit the words of kidnaped victims when they are at the mercy of their captors? The answer is not much. We simply cannot take the current opinions of Bao Tong and Dai Qing to represent their true thoughts, nor can they represent the opinions of others, when Bao and Dai have long been in the grip of a tyrannical government.

Those who have experienced brutal oppression and insidious threats understand their quandary. We can, and must, express sympathy for their deplorable and excruciating plight. My criticism is not directed at them personally, but at the tiresome propaganda regularly doled out by the Chinese Communist Party and their supporters in the United States.

Still, the basic principle against PNTR is very simple: if PNTR is granted, the US surrenders its power to be a force for positive change in China—its power to promote human rights, to deter China's increasingly aggressive military posture, and as well, to compel the regime to live up to its economic promises. How can anyone call this nothing?

Wei Jingsheng has spent 18 years in prison for insisting on speaking the truth to power.

These comments are based on Chinese government honoring its commitment that they will do, but they don't.

#### COMMENTS

There are reports of "dissidents" in China who support PNTR. First, we'll know that without freedom of speech and press, the Chinese government controls what they want Chinese people to know. Secondly, please put yourself into their shoes—when the hostages speak kindly of their captors and ask you to believe what the captors say that they will follow their promises would you believe that?

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4444.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

#### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, this evening my colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), and I are going to do a special order on the Medicare prescription drug benefit. As most Americans know, 1965 was a critical moment in America's health care history. That was the year that the United States Congress and the President of the United States enacted Medicare.

Prior to that time, if you were elderly or if you were disabled, you could not provide for your health care. You did without health care. You had no regular doctor's care. You had no access to hospitalization and you suffered and you died early.

In 1965, America proved its humanity and proved the level of its civilization by caring for its elderly and eventually extending that Medicare benefit to the disabled.

When it did so, it did not include a prescription drug benefit. It did not,

because it was an awful lot to accomplish just to get the physician coverage and the hospital coverage. At that time, prescription drugs were not nearly as utilized as they are today. But, today, the miracles of modern pharmaceutical industry, the miracles provided by the work on the human genome and biological products have brought us to a point where if you do not have access to a pharmaceutical drug benefit, you do not have access to first rate health care, you do not have access to the best health care in the world.

For years, we folks in Washington in the Congress and White House have talked about how terrific it would be if we could create and add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, but it has been all talk for a lot of years, and now it is time for action.

The reason it was all talk and no action heretofore was because this country was not in any state financially to provide a Medicare benefit. We were adding a \$250 billion to the national debt every year, we were spending money like drunken sailors in this town, and there was no way that we could continue that practice and then add to it the addition of a prescription drug benefit.

But, since 1994, the Republicans in the Congress have changed the direction of the country. We have reformed Medicare itself to make sure that it will last well into the future. We have reformed welfare, removing ultimately half of the welfare recipients from dependency to work and to independence. We have balanced the Federal budget for several years in a row now. And in the current fiscal year, we have taken Social Security off budget and made sure that never again would the Social Security surplus be spent for other causes than Social Security.

We are now finally paying down debt. By the end of the current fiscal year, we will have paid down \$250 billion in debt; and we expect, at the rate we are going, to have the United States national debt paid off by about the year 2015, if not sooner.

We have done all of this, and still we have a surplus, so this millennial year is the year we can step up to the plate; and we can provide a prescription drug benefit to America's elderly and America's disabled.

While two out of three Medicare beneficiaries in this country do have access to some kind of prescription drug benefit, that coverage is often scant and shrinking. Many of our seniors on Medicare-Plus Choice have seen that their plans have had to pull back their benefit and now, for instance, are only providing for generic coverage and not providing for the brand coverage, unless there is a very expensive extra payment paid by the beneficiary.

For those without coverage, the choices are grim. There are miracle drugs available to humanity today, but if you are an elderly woman, an elderly widow, living on a small Social Security stipend, and you have Medicare