

an emotional reaction—a decision rendered too quickly, initiated out of fear fueled by the terrible disaster in Oklahoma City. I ask you to reconsider a decision made amidst such emotion, and replace it with one of reasoned courage.

By ordering the reopening of Pennsylvania Avenue by May 17, 1996, you have the power to undo a costly mistake, return the avenue to the people, and guarantee that its closure will not mark its first anniversary.

Sincerely,

ROD GRAMS,  
U.S. Senate.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

#### PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Michael Schiffer, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges during my remarks.

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair.

#### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON CHINA

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, 100 years from now, I have no doubt that when historians look back, the remarkable rise of China as a world power will be considered one of the most important international events in the latter half of the 20th century. Even more than the tragic war in Bosnia, more than the fragile attempts at peace in the Middle East, more than the collapse of the Soviet Union, I believe that China's ascendance as a great power and its impact as such—and the content and quality of the United States relationship with China—will shape the direction of global history in the Pacific century.

In recent months, Sino-American relations have reached perhaps their lowest level since President Nixon's historic trip to China in 1972. Our relationship has been plagued by tensions in nearly every area in which we interact—trade, nuclear nonproliferation, concerns about Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Tibet to name just a few. But most often the Sino-American relationship has been buffeted by clashing visions of human rights. And it is that which I wish to speak about today.

Last month, the State Department issued its annual report on human rights which contained a highly critical section on China. Having read the report and the attendant media coverage that interpreted its contents, I wish to address what I perceive to be a number of grave misjudgments and, frankly, a double standard in American foreign policy when it comes to China.

Let me begin with some examples of that double standard. The liberation of Kuwait following the Persian Gulf war is viewed as a triumph of freedom and a high point in recent American foreign policy. Yet, how many Americans are aware of the fact that upon their return the Kuwaitis expelled thousands of Palestinians and denied repatriation of thousands more who had fled during the war for their suspected—and I say suspected—support of Iraq. Before the war, there were over 400,000 Palestinians in Kuwait. Now there are 33,000, according to the Human Rights Watch/Middle East.

What happened to them, and who cares? At times, it seemed that there was more attention in the American press given to the number of wives of certain members of the Kuwaiti royal family than of how many Palestinians were expelled in political reprisal.

There has been, however, some media coverage and American criticism of Russia's brutal suppression of Chechnya's move toward independence. The Russian military decimated the city of Grozny with tremendous loss of life among civilians and the Chechnyan rebels alike. And the battle goes on today. Conservative estimates are that 30,000 people have been killed. Yet, our President just visited Russia, and our relations with Russia have never been better.

The cover story in the April 22 Washington Post puts America's blind eye in perspective: "Clinton, Yeltsin Gloss Over Chechen War."

... [the two leaders] declared their admiration for each other and brushed off criticism of Russia's war against Chechen separatists.

Our relationship with the former Soviet Union is of such unquestionable importance that, muted criticism aside, American support of the Russian President has never really been in question. So how can China's importance be any the less?

Recent tragic events in Liberia, where an unknown number of people have been killed, is only the latest slaughter to emerge from that continent. Not long ago, the news media recounted the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi and Hutus in Rwanda, and the regime of Gen. Sani Abacha in Nigeria continues to suppress political dissent with lethal force. And yet, each of these countries enjoys the most-favored-nation trading status with the United States.

Even some of our closest allies have deeply flawed human rights records.

In Egypt, a legitimate effort to crack down on Islamic extremists has at times crossed the line into abuse, such as extended detention without charge, torture, and even summary executions.

In Brazil police just 2 weeks ago killed 19 people who were protesting the slow pace of land reform.

Turkey, a close NATO ally, has made considerable progress on human rights in recent years, but freedom of expression is still suppressed, torture is still

widespread, and there have been numerous documented cases of the excessive use of force against the Kurds in recent years, about which we are all familiar.

I do not mean to suggest that human rights should not occupy an important place in our Nation's foreign policy. In each of the cases cited above we have, rightly, protested to the governments involved and worked with them to improve their human rights records.

The status of human rights in the countries I have just mentioned is or has been questionable, yet our relations with them do not fluctuate wildly based on human rights violations. We are able to recognize that the United States also has other important interests that must be taken into account, and we must constantly weigh these interests and values as we try to construct an effective foreign policy.

No one, for example, would suggest that we cut off relations with Kuwait, Russia, Egypt, Brazil, or Turkey based solely upon their record of human rights abuses. The United States simply has too many security, diplomatic, economic and other interest at stake to contemplate such a course of action.

And yet, that is exactly the case with what is probably our most important bilateral relationship in the world today.

Fundamental to the instability in the relationship between the United States and China is the lack of any conceptual framework or long-term strategy on the part of the United States for dealing with China. Instead, U.S. policy has been reactive and event-driven, responding to whatever happens to be the current revelation—generally about human rights. Each time we lurch from crisis to crisis, we call into question our entire relationship with China.

A whole host of events has contributed to the current deterioration in Sino-American relations, but it is important to recognize the role played by the media in this process.

I recognize that the Chinese government does not treat the international press well. But virtually everything we read, hear or see in the American press about China is negative. Yes, there is much that happens in China that is worthy of scrutiny and criticism, but there is also much that is positive as well, and it is largely ignored. The real danger in this is Americans know so little about China. They know only what they read and, particularly since Tiananmen, most of it is negative.

The most blatant example of this unbalanced reportage of China was evident when the State Department released its human rights report last month. I read the newspapers. The coverage of the section on China was 100 percent negative.

Then I read the report itself, and I am deeply troubled by what can only be described as America's blind eye when it comes to China.

Let me read you some of the press coverage following the release of the