

NGAWANG CHOEPHEL

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Secretary Albright is planning to travel to China soon to discuss a wide range of important issues with Chinese officials. Her trip is in anticipation of a subsequent visit by President Clinton. On her agenda will be the issue of human rights, and I want to use this opportunity to remind other Senators of the case of Ngawang Choephel, a Tibetan ethnomusicologist and former Middlebury College student. Mr. Choephel came to this country on a Fulbright Scholarship, and in September 1995 he was arrested in Tibet for making a film about traditional Tibetan music and dance. On December 26, 1996, just one month after I spoke to Chinese President Jiang Zemin personally about Mr. Choephel, he was sentenced after a secret trial to 18 years in prison.

This case goes to the heart of our ongoing difficulties with the Chinese Government on human rights. I have repeatedly asked for, and never received, a shred of evidence that Mr. Choephel was engaged in any illegal or political activity. His crime, it appears, was that he was Tibetan and wanted to preserve Tibetan culture.

Mr. President, every country has the right to prosecute individuals who engage in conduct that threatens the safety of others. But no country has the right to violate internationally recognized human rights which are the rights of all people regardless of nationality. As long as a person can be imprisoned for doing nothing more than making a film about Tibetan culture, our relations with China will continue to suffer. By releasing Mr. Choephel, the Chinese Government would risk nothing, but it would represent an important step to those of us who are looking for credible signs that the Chinese Government genuinely wants to improve its human rights record.

An April 21, 1998 editorial in the Rutland Daily Herald notes the release of Chinese dissident Wang Dan, and calls for the release of Ngawang Choephel. I ask that excerpts of the editorial be printed in the RECORD.

DON'T FORGET TIBET

The release of a leading dissident by the Chinese government has shown the Chinese leadership to be willing to make the right political gestures in anticipation of a visit later this spring by President Clinton.

Now is a good time to remind the Chinese that Americans believe Tibet to be an important human rights issue and that future relations with the United States would be improved by better treatment of Tibet. It is a good time, too, to remind the Chinese of a Tibetan with a Vermont connection who has been sentenced to serve 18 years in jail.

Ngawang Choephel had fled Tibet with his mother when he was 2 years old. He eventually found his way to Middlebury College where he was a student of ethnomusicology. He returned to Tibet to record the music and dance of his native land, but he was arrested in the summer of 1995 and sentenced to 18 years.

Releasing one or two well-known dissidents is not enough to establish a record of respect for human rights when other thousands remain behind prison walls for crimes no more offensive than the recording of folk songs.

Ngawang Choephel is just one among thousands who remain behind. As long as he is not forgotten, Clinton and the Chinese may also remember how much more needs to be done before China has established itself as a nation with proper respect for the rights of the individual. •

THE CONTENT OF UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT WITH CHINA

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, on April 3, 1998 I addressed a conference at Stanford University on the subject of "The Content of U.S. Engagement with China." This conference, on an issue which I believe to be of paramount importance, was convened by The Center for International Security and Arms Control and the Institute for International Studies in conjunction with the Stanford University and Harvard University Preventive Defense Project. I thought my colleagues would find my remarks to be of interest, and I ask that they be printed in the RECORD.

The remarks follow:

ENGAGING CHINA: THE DIRECTION OF THE FUTURE

For the last twenty years I have believed that the single most important undeveloped bilateral relationship in the world is the relationship between China and the United States of America. And I have been puzzled as to why so little attention has been given to its development.

Now, after many years of little presidential interaction between Washington and Beijing, President Clinton's decision to move up his visit to China from November to June I think means that each President is looking at the relationship in a different way. And I believe that this Administration is now ready to fully engage China.

So, what does engagement mean? What should be the content of such a policy? How should it be carried out? And why has it taken so long?

While the debate between engagement and containment with China is by no means dead, this clear and unequivocal effort to engage Beijing now at the highest level marks an historic turning point in U.S.-China relations—and what may well be the most defining bilateral relationship of the coming century.

As we move forward in this new effort at engagement, it is worthwhile to explore the issue of why it has been so difficult to reach this point, and then discuss what "engagement" should look like, and some of the practical steps the United States can take to carry out this effort.

OBSTACLES TO A SUSTAINED POLICY OF ENGAGEMENT

Anyone who has participated in China policy debates in recent years knows first-hand how difficult it has

been to sustain any goal-oriented, consistent policy of engagement. Several reasons come to mind:

First is the events at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Just as Tiananmen Square was a much more significant event for China than the Chinese government would like to admit, it also substantially impacted the ability of the U.S. to pursue a policy of engagement.

For many Americans, the events of June 4, 1989 remain their dominant view of modern China—a view shaped by horrifying pictures of tanks advancing on students and workers, and the one white-shirted, slight man, clutching a shopping bag, defiantly facing down an advancing tank. These images are etched indelibly on the minds of virtually everyone who saw the extensive television coverage. It left a mark of unvarnished brutality on the government of China and on the People's Liberation Army. Many in this country came to view China as nothing more than a brutal dictatorship.

From that day on in Washington, China policy became event-driven, lurching from one crisis to the next—every media revelation on human rights, every trade dispute, every diplomatic confrontation over Taiwan, the future of Hong Kong, and the plight of Tibetans. U.S. policy toward China was held hostage daily by whatever "message" we were sending to respond to a particular issue—from the summary and prolonged detention of students involved in Tiananmen Square, to the incarceration of Harry Wu, to the arbitrary imprisonment of scholars and dissidents. Issues like prison labor, and abortion dominate the views of certain members of Congress to this very day.

Secondly, Americans have trouble accepting a non-elected government as a legitimate partner, particularly when that government is Communist. American political instincts are so entrenched when it comes to communism that they often override even our own stated interests. Perhaps this is due to the long Cold War with the Soviet Union. But Americans remain distrustful of a "Red China" despite the fact that China has adopted Western-style market capitalism and is reaching out to the West. Many in Congress see the tight control over political expression and unjust incarceration of dissenters as that which should be the controlling factor of our foreign policy with China.

Thirdly, China's modernization of its military, its increasing nationalism, and the military saber-rattling toward Taiwan in reaction to the Cornell visit of Lee Teng-hui—which culminated in a tense show of force involving missile launches and aircraft carriers—encouraged many here to vilify China as the new Evil Empire and likely military adversary. The book *China Can Say No* introduced a very real element of hostility, and the American corollary, *The Coming Conflict with China*, argued, in response, that conflict is indeed inevitable, that the Beijing government