GRAHAM, 20 minutes; Senator KERRY of Massachusetts, 10 minutes; Senator TORRICELLI, 15 minutes; Senator COVERDELL, or his designee, 2 hours.

I further ask consent that following the expiration or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the conference report, all without any intervening action or debate.

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

The Senator is recognized for up to 10 minutes.

U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to address the situation regarding the policy of the United States and the way in which we relate to the nation of China. The President of the United States is making a trip to the People's Republic of China, and there has been significant debate about this trip, which provides us an opportunity to ask ourselves what kind of policy should we have toward the world's most populous nation.

There have been a number of us who have questioned whether or not the President should go to Tiananmen Square, for example, to celebrate, in some way, his arrival with those who pulled the triggers at the square to crush dissent in 1989. There are a wide variety of pluses and minuses about the Presidential trip. I want to try to put this trip and our policy toward China into a broader perspective in terms of the way foreign policy perhaps ought to be conducted.

First of all, the President has suggested that we either have to do it his way—to support the Presidential visit, welcomed by leaders at the site of a tremendous violation of human rights—or else we have no engagement with China at all. I think this is a false choice. It is not necessary, in order to have a relationship with countries, that we automatically have to have a summit. As a matter of fact, we engage in relationships with very important countries—countries far more influential in some respects than China—and we don't have summits with them on a regular basis. This is the second summit in less than a year with the nation of China.

So the first thing I would like to say is that it is not necessarily essential, in order to pursue a productive policy for a long-term constructive relationship with China, that you have a summit. As a matter of fact, it might be counterproductive. It might impair the development of the kind of healthy, long-term relationship we need if we send the President unduly, or prematurely, to negotiate with or otherwise concede to individuals whose conduct doesn't merit the President's dignifying presence—whose participation in world events is not of a quality that should be legitimized by a visit from the President of the United States.

There has been a false dichotomy presented to the American people, and it has been the choice between either supporting the President's trip to China or being labeled isolationists. That is simply an inappropriate framework to force upon the American people. Most Americans understand that our objectives ought not to be involvement or isolation per se, but that the United States—the greatest Nation of the world—would relate constructively with the People's Republic of China on the basis of sound policy that leads to a constructive and mature relationship.

I believe that we have to have a policy toward China. While I question what the policies the President is pursuing, my reservations in no way suggest that I don't seek good relations with China. As a matter of fact, I think the road to good relations would be paved with better policy and fewer summits.

Allow me to explain. Whether we are talking about the relationships between individuals, or businesses, or institutions, or countries, there are principles that undergird and provide the foundation for good relations. Integrity is one. Relationships have to be based on integrity. People have to be able to trust one another. They have to know that when one says something, it can be trusted. Another component of a good relationship is responsibility. Individuals have to act responsibly. They can't threaten or otherwise endanger the other party if there are going to be sound relationships. Third, there has to be accountability. If we want long-term relationships, if we want a productive relationship, if we want something that can be relied upon and built upon, we have to have the foundation of integrity, responsibility, and accountability.

I suggest that our relationship with China is no different, an must include these kinds of building blocks. We have to have a relationship of integrity, responsibility, and accountability with China. If we don't have it, the future of U.S.-China relations is not bright.

I have some real problems with the way the Chinese have dealt with us. It is a way that does not reflect integrity. It does not reflect responsibility. It does not reflect accountability.

Take, for example, integrity. China last year, after almost 20 years of assuring the world that it doesn't proliferate weapons of mass destruction, was labeled by our own CIA as the world's worst proliferater of weapons of mass destruction. In spite of that, the President said, ''We will invite them over for a summit.'' And the Chinese were invited to the United States in October. As a matter of fact, there were nonproliferation assurances at that summit similar to the assurances that have been made over the past two decades. China pledged that it did not proliferate weapons of mass destruction. We don't involve ourselves in that.

Frankly, just a few short months later, our intelligence resources intercepted negotiations between China and Iran for China to provide anhydrous hydrogen fluoride, a material used to upgrade industrial-strength uranium to weapons-grade uranium. The material was destined for Isfahan, one of Iran's principal sites for manufacturing the explosive core of an atomic device.

It is pretty clear that the absence of integrity in the conduct of the Chinese is dramatic. It is an absence of integrity prior to the last summit, and it is an absence of integrity that followed on the heels of that summit. They will tell you one thing, and they do something else. That is not the basis of integrity that provides the foundation for a sound relationship.

Responsibility is the second key ingredient. I think most Americans were shocked—I was shocked; I was stunned—when it was revealed by our own intelligence sources that the nation of China had as many as 13 intercontinental ballistic missiles targeted on American cities, armed with massive nuclear warheads, termed ''city busters.'' Every city in the United States of America north of southern Florida is within range of these missiles, and they are targeted on the United States of America.

I don't think that is the foundation for summitry. I don't think that is the foundation for a good relationship. We never appeased the Soviet Union while it was targeting nuclear warheads on American cities. Ronald Reagan had a sense of principle. He had a sense of determination that you don't stand as a target, while at the same time offering privileges to your adversary. That is not the kind of policy America has pursued in the past. A policy which sells out America's long-term security interests might facilitate a particular sale, it might obtain a particular favor, but it is not in the long-term best interests of the United States to stand as a target offering concessions to a country pointing nuclear weapons at our cities.

I think it is, of all things, terribly irresponsible of the Chinese to have 13 American cities targeted with their ''city buster'' nuclear weapons on intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching virtually every city in the United States.

The third important element is accountability. Where do the Chinese stand on accountability? The trade barriers that China has toward the United States are incredible. In recent years, China's tariff levels have been about six times as high on our goods as our tariffs are on Chinese products. Not only that, China imposes nontariff barriers that make it impossible for our companies to penetrate the Chinese market. China treats American companies differently, so that U.S. firms don't have the protection of law in Chinese courts commensurate with the protection the United States extends to foreign investors in our market.

The absence of integrity, the absence of responsibility, the absence of accountability—the absence of these cornerstones of what ought to be U.S. policy means that the house of cards being constructed in summitry with China is in danger of collapse. I think if we are really interested in China policy over the long term, we ought to build the U.S.-China relationship on a foundation that demands integrity, responsibility, and accountability.

When the President's presence implicitly accepts atrocities in China, and when the Administration continues to pursue a bankrupt policy of engaging the Chinese at any cost, the interests of the American people are not served and the United States is not served at its highest and best. It is no wonder that individuals on both sides of the aisle have protested this trip. It is no wonder that this is not a partisan issue. Sure, there may be more Republicans who are willing to stand and talk about this now. But in our news conferences together, we have brought these concerns to the President, saying, you are making a mistake with the kind of things that you are intending with this summit.

The President will likely try to come home with some transaction, or some deal, to say that it was an achievement of the summit. But let us not forget that the real purpose of summits ought to be the development of sound structural relations, the kind of underpinning and foundation that will result in the potential for long-term, beneficial, constructive relationships between countries. As long as we ignore the absence of integrity, we ignore the absence of responsibility, we ignore the absence of accountability, it seems to me that we are not building the kind of relationship based on mutual respect.

I would say this: As a minimum, this summit must end with the President returning to the United States with an assurance that United States cities are not targeted by Chinese ICBMs—with some kind of verification to ensure China's detargeting of American cities is genuine.

The Chinese know that they have not acted with the requisite integrity. They know that they have not acted with the requisite responsibility. I think they understand that they have not acted with the kind of appropriate accountability that would provide the basis for the right foundation for a sound U.S.-China relationship. China, in some ways, may not expect to get the kind of relationship that mature nations dealing with one another on the basis of these values would have.

Maybe that is why the Chinese have attempted to influence elections in America with donations to buy the kind of respect they have not earned with good will.

Of all the things I would expect us to demand at the upcoming summit, one is that illegal contributions from subsidiaries of the Chinese Army not come to contaminate the political process in the United States of America.

I want to say with clarity that an important challenge for the United States is to develop sound long-term relationships with important nations around the world. We cannot develop those relationships, however, without the fundamentals of integrity, responsibility, and accountability.

We have in China today a regime whose brutal repression at home betrays its intentions abroad. America should be sounding liberty's bell, not toasting the tyrants who sent tanks to Tiananmen Square and pulled the triggers there.

I believe we need to find a way to make sure that integrity, responsibility, and accountability are the fundamental components upon which our China policy rests. To legitimize Chinese conduct absent those values, those principles, is likely to result in a long-term U.S.-China relationship with more risk than reward, with more difficulty than cooperation.

Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity. I thank you for the time you have spent in the Chair.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:18 p.m., recessed until 2:17 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished majority leader is recognized.

VITIATION OF CLOTURE VOTE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote scheduled for 2:15 today be vitiated, and the order with respect to the Hatch-Feinstein special order now commence.

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

Mr. LOTT. I observe the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, this Senator asks unanimous consent to be permitted to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, the Senator is recognized to speak as in morning business.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I thank the Presiding Officer very much.

RIGHTS FOR AMERICA'S DISABLED VETERANS

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about veterans' rights being bartered away. And I hope that my colleagues both here on the floor and in the various parts of the Capitol will listen to what I have to say, because it may be the last time this can be said.

These rights for veterans are being bartered away in back room deals; they are being done without full Senate consideration; they are being done without amendments; they are being done without the public's knowledge; they are being done in a way which is, to me, shocking. I am referring to the denial of veterans' disability rights that was enacted as part of TEA 21 and the process which is now going on with regard to the technical corrections bill, which is needed to amend drafting errors that were made to TEA 21.

Mr. President, I have been in the Senate now for 13 years. I have been very honored to serve on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. It is part of my Senate service that has truly made me proud. I am proud to be helping real people with genuine human needs. Coming from a great State like West Virginia, which, like the Presiding Officer's State, places great honor on military service, and in serving on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, both of these things have allowed me the opportunity to learn a lot about the sacrifices that millions of our brothers and sisters have made to preserve the freedoms that we too often take for granted. They have earned our respect in ways that many of us will never know, God willing.

I am proud to serve veterans, and I hope to continue to serve them however I can. But I am not so proud of the way this Congress—this Senate—is treating disabled veterans this year, and I wish to talk about it. I am, in fact, ashamed for all of us in the Senate. It is not a pretty story. It makes me very angry, and it makes me very sad. America's veterans—indeed, all Americans—are being subjected to an unprecedented money grab, a shell game, conducted behind closed doors, as part of the highway reauthorization process.

Mr. President, veterans have earned better treatment than they are getting. They have earned more from their Government than a process that denies them their rights without any accountability—They have earned more than a process that is out of control. I repeat, this is a process in which all of the American people are being harmed by what is being done to veterans behind closed doors.

My colleagues all need to know the truth of this. Why is it that we are now willing to look the other way when a conference report grossly exceeds the scope of the underlying original legislation? As my colleagues know, I have been fighting for many months to correct the injustice that we do this year