

[From the Omaha World-Herald, July 24, 1998]

CLINTON'S SWITCH ON FAST-TRACK A
PUZZLING POLITICAL MANEUVER

The Senate Finance Committee has resurrected a plan that was considered dead: giving President Clinton "fast-track" authority to negotiate international trade deals. But now the administration seems to be balking.

Fast-track authority enables presidents to negotiate international trade agreements without interference from Congress. When a deal is made, Congress can say "yes" or "no," but cannot rewrite it. Presidents have had the authority, granted by Congress, since 1974. But in 1994, the authorizing legislation lapsed.

Efforts to revive it earlier this year were supported by President Clinton, many congressional Republicans and business groups. But opposition was strong from protectionist labor groups and environmental organizations worried about pollution abroad. Those groups with the cooperation of Democrats, helped kill the proposal.

Maverick Republicans also had a hand on the ax. They attempted to hold fast-track hostage until Clinton agreed to reduce family-planning aid to Third World countries.

The Finance Committee voted 18 to 2 Tuesday to attach fast-track to a bill, already passed by the House, that would expand trade with Africa. President Clinton should be delighted.

But no. Press Secretary Mike McCurry asserted that the committee vote was "political mischief" rather than a commitment to free trade. Senate Democrats, too, were unhappy with the revival of the potentially divisive issue before an election.

Fast-track eases the way for U.S. negotiators to join in drafting international agreements. Without it, possible trading partners aren't motivated to make their best deal because they know Congress can always revise any agreement that is reached.

International trade has become increasingly important to the U.S. economy. That is especially true in the Midlands, where agricultural exports are growing fast. In Nebraska, for instance, exports have increased fivefold in the last five years.

Surely something that was so important just a few months ago remains important, even though an election is approaching. The president still needs the flexibility and authority granted by fast track to deal with trade agreements expeditiously.

When President Clinton declared that fast-track authority was one of his top legislative priorities, he was speaking out of a concern for U.S. trade relations. Senators and members of the House who pushed the issue had the same worthy motive.

Political maneuvering had to place in the conversation then. It still does not.

SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONDEMN PERSECUTION OF CHINESE IN INDONESIA

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I call to the attention of my colleagues in the House a resolution condemning the persecution of Chinese in Indonesia which was recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the city of San Francisco. I want to mention in particular two outstanding Supervisors—Mabel Teng and Leiland Yee—who took the initiative in calling for

a resolution to condemn the at-times brutal treatment of ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia.

Mr. Speaker, the recent popular unrest in Indonesia led to gross abuse of the human rights of the Chinese population there. At my direction the Congressional Human Rights Caucus holds a briefing for Members of Congress and congressional staff today to understand the dimensions of this tragic assault against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia. The U.S. Government must make clear to the government in Jakarta that such abuses are totally unacceptable, and we must be certain that the Indonesian Government works to prevent the recurrence of such actions.

At a hearing of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights which was held last Thursday (July 23) and which focused on human rights in Indonesia, I raised the issue of Chinese human rights violations in Indonesia with our Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck. I want to reiterate, Mr. Speaker, what I said on that occasion. I earnestly hope that the cataclysmic changes which are sweeping over Indonesia today and which will have enormously negative ramifications for tens of millions of Indonesians in an economic sense, will herald the opening up of the process of democratization and respect for human rights—and particularly, respect for the rights of the Chinese population living in Indonesia.

One of the sad aspects of our Nation's own human rights record has been our failure to press for equal rights for the Chinese population of Indonesia, which has been pivotal in the economic development of that country. In the hearing last week with Assistant Secretary Shattuck, Mr. Speaker, I asked and received assurance that the Department of State will press the government of Indonesia for a full investigation of the brutal and violent acts taken against the ethnic Chinese community there and that we will actively and aggressively urge full observance of the human rights of Chinese in Indonesia.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution recently adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors is an important statement on this important issue, and I commend Supervisor Teng and Supervisor Yee for their initiative. I submit the full text of this resolution to be placed in the RECORD.

CONDEMNING THE PERSECUTION OF CHINESE IN
INDONESIA

Condemning the persecution, racial violence and sexual brutality against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and urging our congressional representatives to call for a full investigation into these atrocious acts of violence and pressure the Indonesian government for a full investigation to seek accountability and justice.

Whereas, recently 1,200 people died in Indonesia as a result of targeted and vicious attacks and riots; and

Whereas, ethnic Chinese in Indonesia were targeted for racial violence, looting and sexual brutality; and

Whereas, various human rights groups report that at least 70 Chinese women were systematically raped, and 20 of those women died due to complications from their injuries; and

Whereas, rape victims included young girls; and

Whereas, Indonesian Chinese have been subjected to organized persecution that included looting, burning of churches and homes and mass raping in public; and

Whereas, human rights groups, including the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute, have accused the Indonesian government represented by security forces of failing to control the violence, and encouraging the brutality; and

Whereas, the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute and other human rights groups have filed a class action lawsuit against the Indonesian government for these attacks; and

Whereas, much of the media worldwide covered the student demonstrations in Jakarta, however, the specific reports of the widespread violence and attacks against the ethnic Chinese have been largely ignored; and

Whereas, the United States must condemn and denounce these horrific atrocities of violence and express the moral outrage of the American people; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Board of Supervisors in the City and County of San Francisco condemns the persecution, racial violence and sexual brutality against ethnic Chinese in Indonesia; and be it

Further Resolved, That the Board of Supervisors in the City and County of San Francisco urges that our Congressional Representatives call for a full investigation into these atrocious acts of violence and pressure the Indonesian government for a full investigation to seek accountability and justice.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, due to business in my Congressional District, it is with deep regret that I was unable to vote in support of roll call vote 340, a resolution honoring the slain capitol police officers, Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson. My sincerest condolences go out to their families and loved ones.

IN MEMORY OF ALAN J. GIBBS,
LIFELONG PUBLIC SERVANT

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, Alan J. Gibbs, died Saturday, July 25, at the age of 60. Most recently, Alan served as the Director of the National Transit Institute (NTI) at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

He was dedicated to public service, having worked for over 35 years at the federal, state, and local levels of government.

I join with his family, as well as my colleagues at Rutgers and throughout the State of New Jersey in remembering him, and honoring his accomplishments and great leadership. I know Rutgers is particularly proud of Alan's accomplishments at the National Transit Institute. Established at the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus in New Jersey's Sixth District in 1992, the NTI was created by Congress to develop education and training programs for transportation professionals and transit agencies across the nation. The NTI has trained thousands of individuals from transit agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, state departments of transportation, and employees of