

and to attract even more visitors. So, what time doesn't do to our buildings, popularity will—and thank goodness for that.

More than 90 percent of Smithsonian visitors are Americans, many traveling great distances on a pilgrimage to the nation's secular shrines—the Capitol, the White House, the Library of Congress, the many memorials to brave Americans. The history of the nation is built into such structures. They're the physical manifestation of our shared sense of national identity.

Smithsonian Institution buildings belong in the company of those other monuments, because the Smithsonian is the center of our cultural heritage—the repository of the creativity, the courage, the aspirations and the ingenuity of the American people. Its collections hold a vast portion of the material record of democratic America.

The most sophisticated virtual representation on a screen cannot match the experience of standing just a few feet from the star-spangled banner, or the lap-top desk on which Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, or the hat Lincoln wore the night he was shot, or the Wright brothers' Flyer and the Spirit of St. Louis. All those icons of America's history, and countless others of comparable significance, are at the Smithsonian.

And yet the experience of viewing them is compromised by the physical deterioration of the Smithsonian's buildings, which are becoming unworthy of the treasures they contain. The family on a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington and the Smithsonian should not have to make allowances—to overlook peeling paint, leak-stained ceilings and ill-lit exhibition spaces.

We can try to hide the problems behind curtains and plastic sheeting. But the reality cannot be concealed: The buildings are too shabby. In the nation's museum—to which Americans have contributed more than 12 billion of their tax dollars over the years—this embarrassment is not acceptable. It's no way to represent America.

The Smithsonian has hesitated in the past to put before Congress the full scale of its repair and renovation needs. It has tried instead to make do. But it will be undone by making do, and the American people will be the losers.

So we intend to face the problem and to transform the physical environment of the Smithsonian during the coming decade. The United States is in a period of immense public and private prosperity, and we should take every opportunity to turn that wealth to the long-term well-being and enhancement of the nation. Restoring the museums of the Smithsonian to a condition that befits the high place of our nation in the world will be a splendid legacy from this generation to future generations of Americans.

In January the nation will swear in the new century's first Congress and inaugurate its first president. They must be committed to preserving the nation's heritage. At the same time, we as private citizens must do our part to meet this critical need.

Americans should not have to wonder why their treasures are housed in buildings that seem to be falling apart. Instead they should marvel at the grandeur of the spaces and at the objects that are the icons of our history.

#### CHINA PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS LEGISLATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I would like to spend a few moments talking about the issue of PNTR, Permanent Normal Trade Relations, with China. Last month, the House passed H.R.

4444. That bill authorizes PNTR for China once the multilateral protocol negotiations are completed and the WTO General Council approves China's accession. The bill includes a solid package of provisions that establishes a framework for monitoring progress and developments in China in the human rights area. It also provides for enhanced monitoring of China's compliance with its trade commitments.

Now, it is our turn in the Senate to act. We have two challenges. First, we need to debate the bill now, not later. And, second, we need to pass the bill without amendment. I call on the Majority Leader to set a date certain in July to start this process.

Extending permanent normal trade relations status to China. Regularizing our economic and trade relationship with China. Bringing China into the global trade community. Helping the development of a middle class in China. Developing an environment between our two countries where we can productively engage China in significant security, regional, and global discussions. These are not Democratic issues. These are not Republican issues. These are national issues. Passage of PNTR is a first step, and it is critical to America's national economic and security interests.

Support in the Senate is strong. I believe there will be an overwhelming vote in favor of final passage. Republicans and Democrats. Small states and large. East and West. North and South. Conservative and liberal. Most of us recognize how important this is to our country, to the region, and to the world.

That is why I will continue to urge the Majority Leader to set a firm date to bring the PNTR bill to the floor so we can move this legislation. I ask my colleagues, Republican, as well as Democrat, to join me in delivering that message to the Majority Leader.

Once it comes to the floor, there will likely be a plethora of amendments, some germane and others non-germane. The Senate has its own rights and prerogatives. I will always defend the right of Senators to offer amendments to a bill. But, I am concerned that amendments in the Senate, which would force the bill into a conference with the House, would lead to delaying, and perhaps jeopardizing, final passage of this landmark legislation. We cannot afford such a development.

H.R. 4444 is a very balanced bill. It deals with the major concerns relative to China's entry into the global trading system. Therefore, along with many of my colleagues, I have made a commitment to oppose any amendment to H.R. 4444, no matter how meritorious the amendment might be on its own terms. Prompt passage and enactment of this bill should be a top bipartisan priority. I urge all my colleagues to join me in making the commitment to oppose any attempt to amend this legislation.

H.R. 4444 ensures that future U.S. administrations will closely monitor Chi-

na's compliance with its WTO obligations and with other trade agreements made with the United States. It will make the administration in the future act promptly in the case of damaging import surges. It provides for a vigorous monitoring of human rights, worker rights, and the import of goods produced by forced or prison labor. H.R. 4444 also provides for technical assistance to help develop the rule of law in China. It enhances the ability of U.S. government radios to broadcast into China. And it states the sense of Congress regarding Taiwan's prompt admission to the WTO.

To repeat, extending PNTR to China is vitally important to America's economic and strategic interests. Our top priority should be a bill approved by the Senate identical to H.R. 4444 so that it can immediately be sent to the President for signature. I hope we complete action rapidly in July.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, June 28, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,649,147,080,050.00 (Five trillion, six hundred forty-nine billion, one hundred forty-seven million, eighty thousand, fifty dollars and no cents).

One year ago, June 28, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,640,294,000,000 (Five trillion, six hundred forty billion, two hundred ninety-four million).

Five years ago, June 28, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,948,205,000,000 (Four trillion, nine hundred forty-eight billion, two hundred five million).

Twenty-five years ago, June 28, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$535,337,000,000 (Five hundred thirty-five billion, three hundred thirty-seven million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,113,810,080,050.00 (Five trillion, one hundred thirteen billion, eight hundred ten million, eighty thousand, fifty dollars and no cents) during the past 25 years.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### HOW NOT TO SQUANDER OUR SUPERPOWER STATUS

● Mr. BIDEN. I rise today to comment briefly on an extremely thought-provoking opinion piece by Josef Joffe in the June 20th edition of the New York Times. The article was entitled "A Warning from Putin and Schroeder." It describes how the current global predominance of the United States is being countered by constellations of countries, which include allies and less-friendly powers alike, and how American behavior is aiding and abetting this development.

Mr. Joffe is the co-editor of the prestigious German weekly *Die Zeit*. He received his university education in the United States and is well known and respected in American foreign policy