

THREE REPORTERS BANNED FROM  
PRESIDENT'S CHINA TRAVELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I am here this morning with three empty chairs, and I would like to talk about the President's visit to China. Not since Genghis Kahn led hordes of warriors across the Asian plains has China been invaded by a larger political entourage than President Clinton leads this week.

Accompanying him, at taxpayer expense, will be hordes of aides, staff, military, press, and spinmasters. It is reported that more than 1,200 individuals will accompany the President, and fleets of jumbo jets will transport scores of personnel and equipment across the Pacific.

More than six limousines and dozens of vehicles will be shipped to China to add comfort and security for the President's entourage. But what will not be a part of the President's China visit, Mr. Speaker, are three journalists, three U.S. journalists. I have them symbolized by these three empty chairs up here at the well this morning. Three empty chairs.

Three journalists from Radio Free Asia will not be going to China. There will be three empty seats. Three journalists from Radio Free China will have had their visas denied and revoked by Chinese officials just within the last few hours. It is an outrage on the eve of our President's visit that legitimate journalists covering this visit will be barred from reporting this event for Radio Free China.

There will be three empty seats. As this headline today declares, "Beijing pulls visas of three U.S. reporters," we see these three empty seats that signify those journalists who will not be covering this event.

As someone who has advocated a free trade policy towards China in an effort to secure a more free and open China and a free press for the Chinese, I and many others, again, have been betrayed.

If these reporters were allowed to go, they would certainly cover a lavish banquet at the Great Hall. What they would not report, if they could attend, would be the unjust imprisonment of Chinese, such as teacher Lee Hi; and that is reported in today's Washington Post. I commend that to my colleagues.

Lee Hi, a 44-year-old former teacher at a Chinese medical college is serving a 9-year sentence in Beijing's prison. His crime: assembling a list of people jailed for taking part in pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989 from the Beijing area alone. He documented more than 700 in prison. And 158 of those, mostly workers rather than students, received sentences of more than 9 years and are presumed still held. While President Clinton and the Chinese President dine on a sumptuous meal, Lee Hi and others will rot in Chinese prisons.

Mr. Speaker, without a free press and without freedom for political dissidents, we have, in fact, empty chairs, and we have, in fact, an empty policy towards freedom of dissent in China.

SUPPORT THE BRADY BILL, ORGANIZED  
LABOR AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that I would like to discuss this morning, and I hope sometimes that we can read the writing on the wall. It should not be a surprise to America that the Brady bill lives and works.

In a report by the Department of Justice, we have determined that the Brady bill, the 7-day waiting period that caused such consternation and controversy, has prevented some 70,000 persons from illegally obtaining guns in America.

When every day 14 children are killed by guns in homicide cases totaling 5,110 per year, it seems that the least this Congress could do is listen to common sense and support the continuity, the renewal of the Brady bill.

Yet, now we are facing its extinguishing with something on the order of an instant check. Oh, an instant check with computers may be viable, except some might say the year 2000 provides a strange possibility. But I believe the Brady bill, with the 7-day cooling off period, is something that America needs.

More importantly, I believe that America needs less guns and not more guns. The old story of "guns do not kill, people do" is really getting too old. People and guns do kill. Over the last couple of months, we have seen what youth and guns can do.

The Brady bill is an important legislative initiative that should be continued. Mr. Speaker, I hope that we have enough common sense to continue the Brady bill and give it extra life to protect the lives of our children and our families in America.

Why not? Why would the National Rifle Association want us to extinguish the Brady bill so that we can continue to extinguish more available lives in America? Wake up, America. Call in and support the continuity and the continuation of the Brady bill.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to speak this morning to those hardworking men and women who work with organized labor. For some reason, we have discounted the historic place in history that they have gained. We have discounted all of the work that they have done to create better working conditions, safer conditions, and better working hours.

We have discounted the kind of benefits that they have gotten for working men and women, things like good wages and child care. And the tragedy of Proposition 226, when the right side of California, meaning the right perspective, the wrong perspective was trying to extinguish the union's right to organize.

In my State of Texas, in the Houston area, I pay tribute to those workers who have been locked out of Crown Petroleum for over 2 years. All they want is a good place to work and fair working conditions.

What do you think would happen to those families if they did not have organized labor to prop them up to provide them with some minimal income while they are fighting with those who do not believe in justice in the workplace? I support organized labor and its effort to create better working conditions for all of America.

We asked the question what would we be like if we had those kinds of hours, bad working conditions, and poor wages. I think if America thinks for a moment, they would applaud organized labor, and thank them for the hard work they have done, and talk to those who put them in a negative light. Let us support them tomorrow as they move forward on a day of commemoration and appreciation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me cite a story that was in the Wall Street Journal, a Pulitzer Prize winning article that talked about a senior who had made great strides in overcoming his neighborhood that was drug addicted.

An African American youth who was described as living in a country within a country, places where many of us did not experience in growing up, stepping over drug dealers and drug deals as he forced his way to school, being teased because he got good grades.

He is now an emerging senior at Brown University, but he had a 960 SAT. For those who know those scores, you realize that those are not the scores that would be attractive for a place like Brown University.

But do you know what? He was also a recipient of the policy of affirmative action. So you see, it does not really matter whether or not we have made the great strides. Affirmative action is still needed in this Nation.

As an African American, I am a product of affirmative action, but I did not graduate on affirmative action. I am sick and tired of hearing the attack against lacking the need for affirmative action, California's Proposition 209. We defeated Proposition A in Houston Texas; the initiative in the State of Washington.

Why does America not wake up? We do better if we work together and not work against each other. Yes, there are still populations in this country that need affirmative action. Do they graduate on it? Do they continue living on it? No, they do not. It is just an opportunity. Let us support affirmative action and opportunity.