

back was China's decision to ban joint ventures in the telecommunications industry. In Beijing last Tuesday, David Aaron, Undersecretary for International Trade at the Department of Commerce, became the first American official in nearly a decade to speak openly about China's protectionist trade policy and to threaten retaliation.

Aaron is quoted in last Wednesday's Wall Street Journal as saying of the long list of trade barriers erected against American imports in China, "The list keeps getting longer, and nothing gets struck off it." He continues, "China is taking the trade relationship for granted. They want to export to us but not buy our products."

Yes; that is precisely what I have been arguing for 3 years. But an administration wedded to a policy of "engagement" with China no matter how unproductive refused to believe it until now. I cannot begin to express the sense of vindication I had when reading an article in last Wednesday's Washington Post that hinted at a new administration trade policy with China. Instead of continuing to hope that China's desire to join the community of free trading nations in the WTO would outweigh its protectionist tendencies, the administration is finally "threatening retribution in a much more concrete arena—the United States market"

All well and good, but a day late and a dollar short. While President Clinton dismissed those of us in the antiengagement camp as ignorant, antifree traders, while the administration allowed the Government of the People's Republic of China to walk all over the United States for 6 years, and while the United States trade deficit ballooned out of control, my home State of Washington suffered the consequences.

Since 1972, China has refused to allow Pacific Northwest wheat into its market. This nontariff barrier erected against our wheat is based on a bogus phytosanitary concern with the spread of a wheat disease called TCK smut. For more than 20 years, the United States has presented Chinese officials with irrefutable scientific evidence which proves conclusively that there is absolutely no risk of introducing TCK smut into China.

China's ban on Pacific Northwest wheat is in violation of international standards requiring that import barriers imposed in the name of food safety be based on sound science. But it is protectionism, not sound science, that serves as the basis for China's ban on Washington State wheat.

For the past 3 years, I and several of my colleagues from the Pacific Northwest, have written to the President and Vice President to ask for assistance in tearing down this deplorable trade barrier. Our entreaties have been totally ignored, Mr. President, and the wheat farmers in my home State of Washington have suffered at the hands of the administration's weakness.

Instead, the administration turned a blind eye to the wheat ban and hundreds of other Chinese protectionist policies, arguing all along that continuing to grant most-favored-nation trading status to China was the best and only way of improving our trade relationship with China.

In addition, our apples are barred from Chinese markets. Our insurance firms can't do business in China. Our telecommunications equipment is barred.

The Chinese are not stupid. In fact, one might argue that they are brilliant strategists, having convinced the United States to sit on its hands while China pillaged the United States market. That the President, the leader of the strongest nation in the world, rolled over and played dead in the face of Chinese threats is an embarrassment to the United States. He betrays the free people of Taiwan—who do buy our goods and services. But he will sell China what it will gladly purchase—our defense secrets. He allows our intellectual property to be stolen with impunity.

The President knows that China is the world's largest emerging market. With a billion potential consumers for United States goods and an insatiable need for infrastructure improvements and technology, the Chinese market is among the most appealing in the world. In the fact of this prize, the administration simply caved in to the demands of China's dictators.

What the administration has ignored until this week, is that the United States is China's most important market as well. In fact, the United States absorbs 30 percent of China's exports. And today, with the financial crisis having drastically decreased demand throughout Asia, the American market is even more important to China.

In its rush to expand its economy and catch up with the rest of the world, China, since the late 1980's, has embarked on a full scale effort greatly to increase its overseas exports and thus to foster an economic boom within its own borders. Without the United States market, China's economic growth would come to a screeching halt.

That is why, Mr. President, I have argued for 3 years that we should use the United States market as leverage in our trade disputes with China. But the administration refused to accept the logic of this strategy—until, that is, Secretary Aaron spoke so frankly in Beijing on Tuesday. I implore the administration, with its newfound wisdom, to take Aaron's advice and start tomorrow not just to threaten, but to impose retaliation against China unless it makes dramatic changes in its trade policy immediately.

To make such threats without following through would be disastrous. The administration must act on its words and impose trade restrictions on China immediately unless it takes drastic steps to eliminate market access barriers to United States exports.

The administration should start with the most egregious barrier of all, the ban on Pacific Northwest wheat. If, by next week, China has not succumbed to the irrefutable scientific evidence and allowed Pacific Northwest wheat into its market, the United States must take retaliatory action. If China won't let our wheat into its market, we shouldn't let China's textiles into our market. It is a simple solution, and it will work. China wants our markets. It won't risk losing them, even if the price is open markets to American goods and services.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

CUT TAXES NOW

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, during the past several weeks the Senate has spent its time debating spending legislation. Now with only 10 days remaining in the second session of this 105th Congress we are going to begin considering a supplemental spending bill.

The American people are currently facing tax rates that are near all-time highs. These excessive taxes are being imposed on the American people in spite of the fact that for the first time in a generation the Federal books are balanced. The first time since 1969, since Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon, the books are balanced and we have these near all-time high tax rates.

Congress did some work in balancing the budget and restraining spending, but Americans did most of the work. And now that there is a surplus, they should be the first ones to get some relief. Currently, on average, 21 million American married couples are forced to shoulder an additional, on average, \$1,400 in taxes simply because they are married. That is ridiculous. Congress now has the opportunity to correct this injustice by repealing the marriage penalty. And I want to say this very clearly: We can do so without touching the Social Security trust fund.

We need to enact profamily, progrowth tax relief and eliminate the marriage penalty. That is an important first step that we need to move forward on reducing our horrendously high taxes in America. America clearly needs strong families. The family is the building block for our country and our hope for the future, and it is unconscionable the Tax Code of the United States is being used to subsidize something against the family, to penalize those who are married rather than living together, and creating disincentives towards marriage. We need to eliminate the marriage penalty during the remaining 11 days of this session of Congress. We have the time. We have the opportunity. The House has passed an \$80 billion tax package that includes elimination of a portion of the marriage penalty. The Senate needs to move forward with this now.

The American people should be the first to benefit from our budget surplus

with a reduction in their taxes this year. And we can do it without touching the Social Security trust fund. Elimination of the marriage penalty will serve this purpose. First, it will restrain the growth in the Federal Government, and more importantly will begin to keep Washington taxmongers out of people's wallets and out of their lives.

During debate on the Treasury-Postal appropriation bill, the Senate spoke overwhelmingly in favor of a complete elimination of the marriage penalty. We need as large a tax cut as is possible, and in particular, as large a cut in the marriage penalty as possible.

Finally, I would like to state my willingness to work in a bipartisan way with my colleagues across the aisle in providing the type of tax relief that I know we both want to give married couples laboring under this oppressive Tax Code.

A couple of days ago, some of my colleagues were on the floor demanding that the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board begin to implement expansionary monetary policy by cutting interest rates. Cutting interest rates would incentivize investment and act as a stabilizing effect on many worldwide financial markets now teetering under a cloud of uncertainty.

I think that is good, that the Federal Reserve should consider moving towards a more expansionist monetary policy, but I don't think we should require the Fed to do that. I believe we should let the Federal Reserve do its job and we should concentrate on doing our job. If Congress has the will to enact progrowth fiscal policy, I suggest it begin to do so by enacting the largest tax cut possible so we can help stimulate the financial markets, help in this uncertain financial situation that we have, and continue the growth taking place.

We have a unique opportunity to substantially change our Tax Code treatment of married people. We can do so without touching the Social Security trust fund. There are other people who want to spend that money. I think we need to leave the money alone, create a real Social Security trust fund, and at the same time let's give people a little bit of their money back with a tax cut. The House has done this. Let's work together, let's push to finally be able to get some of that tax relief put in place.

Last year, we cut taxes for the first time in 16 years. We need to continue that effort to cut taxes to continue to stimulate the economy, to continue to give people back a little bit of their money. We should start with married two-wage-earner couples who are being penalized by a Tax Code that doesn't make any sense at this point.

So I urge my colleagues, let's work with the House and make this tax cut a reality. We can do it. We have spent a year talking about spending. Let's take a few days to talk about tax cuts.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business Friday, September 25, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,523,820,694,890.03 (Five trillion, five hundred twenty-three billion, eight hundred twenty million, six hundred ninety-four thousand, eight hundred ninety dollars and three cents).

One year ago, September 25, 1997, the federal debt stood at \$5,387,704,000,000 (Five trillion, three hundred eighty-seven billion, seven hundred four million).

Twenty-five years ago, September 25, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$459,982,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-nine billion, nine hundred eighty-two million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,063,838,694,890.03 (Five trillion, sixty-three billion, eight hundred thirty-eight million, six hundred ninety-four thousand, eight hundred ninety dollars and three cents) during the past 25 years.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT OF THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD FOR FISCAL YEAR 1997—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 160

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Railroad Retirement Board for Fiscal Year 1997, pursuant to the provisions of section 7(b)(6) of the Railroad Retirement Act and section 12(1) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 28, 1998.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:46 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4579. An act to provide tax relief for individuals, families, and farming and other small businesses, to provide tax incentives for education, to extend certain expiring provisions, to amend the Social Security Act to establish the Protect Social Security Account into which the Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit budget surpluses until a reform measure is enacted to ensure the long-term solvency of the OASDI trust funds, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 4112. An act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

At 6:27 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4060) making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4103) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on September 28, 1998 he had presented to the President of the United States, the following enrolled bill:

S. 1379. An act to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and the National Security Act of 1947 to require disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act regarding certain persons, disclose Nazi war criminal records without impairing any investigation or prosecution conducted by the Department of Justice or certain intelligence matters, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-7216. A communication from the Associate Managing Director for Performance Evaluation and Records Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule