agreement and normal trade relations with Vietnam; and broader efforts toward economic recovery in Asia.

At the same time, however, we should avoid seeing the present strains in relations with China as signs of inevitable confrontation. They likely reflect growing fears of domestic unrest and loss of confidence in China's future strength, rather than an arrogance born of security and success.

And while we should be firm, we must also avoid being wilfully provocative or unwilling to seek out common interests.

U.S. INTERESTS IN WTO ACCESSION

That brings me to the largest single item of common interest on our agenda: China's potential accession to the WTO.

Such an accession would have immense potential benefits for both America and China.

From our perspective, it can create a more reciprocal trade relationship; promote the rule of law in China; and accelerate the long-term trend toward China's integration into the world economy and the Pacific region.

This integration is, we should always remember, immensely important to our long-term security interests.

To choose one example, twenty-five years ago China would likely have seen the Asian financial crisis as an opportunity to destabilize the governments of Southeast Asia, South Korea and perhaps even Japan. Today it sees the crisis as a threat to its own investment and export prospects and has thus contributed to IMF recovery packages and maintained currency stability.

Thus China's policy has paralleled and complemented our own; and as a result, the Asian financial crisis remains an economic and humanitarian issue rather than a political and security crisis.

From China's perspective, WTO entry has the long-term benefits of strengthening guarantees of Chinese access to foreign markets and promoting competition and reform in the domestic economy; and the short-term benefit of creating a new source of domestic and foreign investor confidence at a time of immense economic difficulty.

COMMERCIALLY MEANINGFUL ACCESSION ESSENTIAL

Neither of us, however, will win the full benefits of WTO accession unless the accession agreement is of commercially meaningful quality.

Thus Congress should be vigilant about the details of such an agreement. Broadly speaking, this means:

Significant tariff reductions and other measures to liberalize trade in goods;

Market access for agriculture, including the elimination of phony health barriers of Pacific Northwest wheat, citrus, meats and other products.

Liberalization of service sectors including distribution, telecommunications, finance, audiovisual and others;

This requires a lot from China. It is not entirely clear that China will make a commercially meaningful offer to us. and if they do not, we should be willing to wait rather than push forward with this accession.

ACCESSION MUST BE JUDGED ON TRADE POLICY MERITS

However, if they are ready to make such an offer, the United States should clearly be willing to say yes. That should include the permanent normal trade relations we offer virtually all WTO members.

Congress would, of course, have to vote on permanent normal trade relations. Because Congress already holds all the cards with respect to the Normal Trade Relations vote, I am concerned about proposals to create a second vote, which would delay accession by requiring a prior vote on admission. This raises a number of troubling questions.

First, I think we need to be prepared to move quickly if and when we get the desired commercially acceptable accession package—simply put, we must be prepared to strike when the iron is hot. Such an important step should not be hamstrung by requiring a separate vote by Congress.

Second, the proposal raises constitutional and precedential questions. Congress has not voted on any of the previous 100 GATT and WTP accessions since 1948, since WTO accessions are executive agreements which generally require no U.S. concessions.

But most important, a vote on WTO accession would more likely be a judgment on the immediate state of our overall relationship with China than on the trade policy details of the accession.

China's accession to the WTO is about whether China is ready to trade openly and fairly with the United States. Whether China will accept rule of law and abide by that rule of law.

In effect, we would likely hold a set of unilateral trade concessions by China to the United States hostage to every other concern we have about China—from human rights to security, environment, labor policies and much more. The likely result would be an immense loss to the United States. Therefore, I do not favor such a proposal and will oppose it on the floor.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mr. President, China policy must not be considered simply in isolation.

Premier Zhu's visit offers us an immensely important opportunity, both to right the overall course of our relationship and to conclude the specific talks over WTO membership for China on the right, commercially meaningful basis. I welcome this and hope our colleagues will do the same.

But this relationship is only one piece—important, but only one piece—in our broader relationship with the Pacific region and our Asian allies.

If we are to develop these other relationships carefully; if we are firm with China when necessary but also willing to seek out areas of common interest; if we react to difficult periods with confidence in our own strength and commitment to our own interests, we can expect a very good future.

I am fully confident that this is what we will do because we have some very important opportunities here to be sure to secure that relationship.

I thank the Chair and I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 544

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now turn to Calendar No. 28, S. 544, the supplemental appropriations bill, and the only tobacco amendments be relative to the Medicaid tobacco recoupment provision.

I further ask that Senator SPECTER be recognized to offer an earmarking amendment, that all debate conclude on the amendment this evening, with the exception of 90 minutes to be equally divided, and the Senate resume the amendment on Thursday at 9:30. I further ask that the vote occur on or in relation to the earmarking amendment at 11 a.m. on Thursday and that no further amendments be in order prior to that 11 a.m. vote.

I further ask that following that vote Senator HUTCHISON of Texas be recognized to offer her amendment relative to Kosovo.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. In light of that agreement, there will be no further votes this evening. However, Senators will be reminded that the next vote will occur at 11 a.m. on Thursday.

I thank the chairman of the committee, the managers of the bill, and the Senator from West Virginia for being ready to go, on relatively short notice, on this important matter.

I yield the floor, Mr. President.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, is the supplemental bill before the Senate?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 544) making emergency supplemental appropriations and rescissions for recovery from natural disasters, and foreign assistance, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate will consider a supplemental appropriations bill that includes both emergency and nonemergency spending for the fiscal year.

Over the past 3 months, the Office of Management and Budget has transmitted to Congress several supplemental budget requests, totaling $2 billion.