

China know that economic and political reform are closely linked as well. That is why many of China's military hardliners oppose China's entry into the World Trade Organization.

Perhaps it is this inevitable linking between economic reform and political freedom that has inspired the Dalai Lama, no stranger to China's religious repression, to say:

I have always stressed that China should not be isolated. China must be brought into the mainstream of the world community. . . .

To those who doubt that economic reform has occurred in China, or that it is significant, I ask them to consider how much has changed in the last half century. You will remember that in 1952, China's Communist government mounted a wide-ranging crusade to undermine private entrepreneurs, businesspeople were commonly condemned as "counterrevolutionaries," and many were assessed large fines and forced out of business.

In fact, by 1956, China required all private firms to be jointly owned and, in fact, run by the government. In practice, this meant that we had state control of all private enterprise in China. It wasn't until the early 1980s that private enterprise began to emerge in China. More significantly, it wasn't until 1988 that the private economy even had a defined legal status in China.

Today, 12 years later, China is a different country. Today, young Chinese engineers who studied and worked in California's Silicon Valley are going back to China, lured by entrepreneurial opportunities that didn't even exist a few years ago.

The number of individuals employed by the private sector in China has soared by over 31 percent in the last 3 years. That is bad news for China's state-owned enterprises. That happens to also be bad news for China's People's Liberation Army, which depends on many state-run businesses for revenue and have opposed these reforms that are going on within China, including this agreement before the Senate.

But this development is good news for the cause of freedom. As the number of individuals employed in the private sector rises, the state will have less and less direct control over how people think and how people react to political change.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Edward Steinfeld is one of our country's keenest scholars on what goes on in China. This is what he had to say about the meaning of China's World Trade Organization concessions on China's direction as a country:

The concessions of 1999 represented a thorough reversal of course. Instead of reform serving to sustain the core, the core itself would be destroyed to save reform, along with the growth, prosperity, and stability reform has brought to China.

In the new view, instead of using market forces to save state socialism, state socialism itself would have to be sacrificed to preserve the market economy.

I agree with Professor Steinfeld. China's membership in the World Trade Organization will require it to reform a very large portion of its economy, and not only to comply with WTO rules, but to be able to compete internationally.

With a "yes" vote on the motion to proceed and a "yes" vote on approving permanent normal trading status for China, we can help change the world. China constitutes one-fifth of the world's population. We can be on the right side of history. We ought to be on the right side of history. I urge a vote for this motion to proceed and a vote of yes on final passage.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would like to use an amount of my leader time prior to the time we go to the energy and water bill to speak on an unrelated matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### FIREFIGHTING HELP IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I haven't had the opportunity yet today to welcome all of our colleagues back and to express my hope that we use this next period as productively and as successfully as we can.

As have most of my colleagues, I had the opportunity to spend a good deal of time at home in South Dakota for the last 3 weeks.

I especially want to commend the Forest Service for the extraordinary job they have done in fighting historically the most consequential fire we have had in the State now, with 85,000 acres of timberland burned. I am grateful for the response we have had from people all over the country. I especially thank the Forest Service, the Governor of the State of South Dakota, William Janklow, for the remarkable job he has done, the National Guard for their response, and the volunteer fire departments from all over the State of South Dakota and surrounding region.

We are grateful for their extraordinary response, and we are grateful as well for the effort that has been made to contain the fire which is now 85-percent contained.

I thank the volunteer ambulance personnel whom I met from all over the State. We are experiencing what many of our colleagues are experiencing with volunteer ambulance service. Many of

them are on the verge of going out of business because of reimbursement schedules for Medicare and Medicaid. Without those, especially in rural areas, we are in a very serious set of circumstances involving the health and in many cases the lives of people who live in rural areas today.

I thank those in schools all over South Dakota who opened their doors and their offices to me in Kadoka, White River, Lemmon, and most of our Indian reservations in Belle Fourche. I thank them.

I thank those who especially were willing to meet with me on hospital reimbursement and appreciate very much their willingness to talk about how serious the circumstances were with regard to Medicare reimbursement for hospitals and clinics throughout our State.

I must say, at virtually every one of our stops we had occasion to talk about the unfinished agenda here in the Senate. I want to talk just briefly about that prior to the time we turn to another important piece of legislation, the energy and water bill.

#### UNATTENDED LEGISLATION

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, there is great concern about unattended legislation, legislation having to do with health care, education, meaningful gun safety, and minimum wage. There is no legitimate reason we could not have accomplished something on each of the issues I have mentioned and many more.

There is no legitimate reason this Congress couldn't have passed a real Patients' Bill of Rights long before this.

There is no good reason we couldn't have added a voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit.

There is no reason we couldn't have agreed by now to strengthen our children's schools. We have had many opportunities. There are those who say that passing bills is hard work.

If you want to see real hard work, go to Murdo, South Dakota some day. Talk to Cathy Cheney and the five other members of her volunteer ambulance squad.

They are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When a call comes in—even if it's in the middle of the night—they drop whatever they're doing, leave their jobs and families, and go. Most times, they are not back for at least 3 hours.

When they're not answering calls, they're studying for certification tests. And they don't get paid a dime for any of it. That is hard work, Mr. President. And it is not just South Dakotans who face challenges like this.

Go to any community in any state in America, and you'll find people who are working hard—some of them are working two and three jobs—to make a decent life for themselves and their families, and to give something back to their communities.