Tough Questions, Meet the Press

Max S. Baucus
Senator * or Department*: **BAUCUS**

Instructions:
Prepare one form for insertion at the beginning of each record series.
Prepare and insert additional forms at points that you want to index.
For example: at the beginning of a new folder, briefing book, topic, project, or date sequence.

Record Type*: **Speeches & Remarks**

June-1998

**MEET THE PRESS QUESTIONS ON CHINA**

(Select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

06/14/1998
Tough Questions
Meet The Press
June 14, 1998

1. Senator Baucus, should the President go to Tianamen Square? Isn’t that a sign that we don’t really care what happened there in 1989?

It’s not a question of whether President Clinton should go to Tiananmen Square, it’s a question of whether President Clinton should go to China. I think he should.

I personally plan to use the opportunity to remember and recognize exactly what happened nine years ago. That is to remember those who lost their lives in the pursuit of democracy.

It’s a simple matter of protocol. All foreign presidents are received at the Great Hall of the People. The reception will again raise the issue of human rights. And it will highlight the Chinese greeting of an official delegation of the world’s greatest democracy, one that believes in freedom. That message will be heard loud and clear, even if the president does not say anything.

So, what’s important is what the president says and does when he is in China. Does he have a chance to advance our security interests, maintain peace in the region, push for better trade relations and advance the cause of human rights? Yes. And that’s worth the trip.

The trends are getting better there. Look at this Washington Post article from Friday. Written by two foreign correspondents in Beijing, the article quotes Chinese who generally welcome President Clinton’s visit to China and Tiananmen Square. These people speak freely, and give their names. They want Clinton to speak for them, to express their belief in freedom and democracy.

"The government has tried to make everyone forget" about Tiananmen Square, a 43-year-old Chinese said. "But it just can’t. Clinton could help us remember."

Those are powerful words. And they help remind us that our job, as Americans, is to promote freedom and democracy, and to speak up for those who aren’t heard. That’s one of the things this trip will do.

These are the sort of people you should be asking about President Clinton’s trip, not me or Gary. And just think how extraordinary it is that these Chinese people feel free enough to express their opinions to a foreign journalist. It shows how much our policy of engagement has achieved over the last 20 years.

People like Gary are dead wrong when they say the president shouldn’t go to China. They’re not looking at things that are really happening in China.
Rejecting Most Favored Nation trading status is designed to impose incredible suffering on millions of Chinese. If we reject MFN, we would raise tariffs on Chinese imports tenfold. Factories there would close, millions of Chinese would lose their jobs, and the Chinese would be infuriated with the United States. We would provoke them, pick a fight with them when they are trying to stay out of the Asian financial crisis.

What we have is a policy of engagement. It has not accomplished everything it set out to do, but trends are good. We’re not all the way there yet. But we’ve got to keep working on it.

Gary, however, wants to plunge China into misery. And that’s without mentioning the security issues picking a fight would raise -- the volatility on the Korean peninsula, nuclear arms proliferation on the subcontinent and so on. These are big issues.

If we push China away, turn our back on them and reject MFN status, then we send them out there with other pariah nations like Libya, Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Do we want China to help Iraq build a nuclear bomb? The answer is no.

I’m for engaging China on all fronts:
- Peace and security issues in Asia and the Pacific
- Trade
- Human Rights
- And Environmental Protections

2. Given the appalling testimony heard in Congress — forced abortions, infanticide, sterilizations — how can you say that the President should go to China now? (Note: be prepared for Bauer to make some sort of comment about Partial Birth Abortion and Max’s record on that issue.)

Look, we all agree that forced abortion and infanticide are human rights violations. But will the President do more to convince China not to carry out these practices by condemning them from afar? By prying open China, we can focus an international spotlight on these issues, and in essence, insist on change - change expected of any civilized nation.

If we isolate China, as planned, then we’d have even less effect on China’s policy.

It is true that some of this happens. It is outrageous and it cannot be condoned. These are human rights abuses. They are really bad things. But again I ask, Is it more likely that we will raise this issue by going to China rather than criticizing from afar? By going to China we focus the spotlight of media scrutiny on the policies and conditions there, and allow the world to see what is going on. When we are there, we can ask them to stop doing these things.
3. What's the minimal commitment that China should make and president accept on human rights?

There are over 2,000 Chinese prisoners being held because of their peaceful expression of political views. We must insist that these prisoners be released immediately.

China should also honor its commitments to human rights, it should sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We accept it as the international standard of human rights, and think the Chinese should too. That's our goal, along with freeing political prisoners and giving the Red Cross access to prisons. The trends are going in the right direction.

4. The subject of missile technology has been talked about lately. Senator Baucus, do you think these allegations make this trip an embarrassing foreign policy misstep?

(Note: Max should be ready to answer the question of whether he has received money from Loral and how he can rationalize his views in that regard.)

The United States has a long standing policy of launching satellites in other countries. It is a bi-partisan policy, begun in the Reagan administration, continued through Bush, and maintained by Clinton.

As a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I can tell you that we are investigating this matter on a bi-partisan basis. There are two issues at stake: (1) Was missile technology transferred? (2) Did the Chinese Intelligence Service attempt to influence American elections? We've had three hearings but because the information distributed in most of those hearings is classified, I can't comment on where the investigation stands right now. The Department of Justice has some information that is critical to this investigation. We are working with them to see that information as long as it does not jeopardize the Department's own on-going investigation.

As for the Loral Corporation possibly influencing my stand on this issue, well, that is ludicrous. [One of the Family Research Council's major donors is the Amway corporation. If Mr. Bauer is concerned about our dialogue with China, including our trade relationship, what does he have to say about the fact that one of the Family Research Council's major donors--Amway--has a large factory in China?]

In any cases, it's not a factor.
5. Why, after 16 years of diligent renewal of MFN, have we so little headway to point to in the way of progress in China?

China has been closed for more than double the time that it has been open. We are working with a society that has thrived on Mao's concept of producing for itself, without international interference. No, we haven't been able to achieve of the benefits of open trade - TCK, distribution and dismantling State Owned Enterprises is a slow moving process. But I do not think we should give the Chinese even a slight window of opportunity to regress. They need to keep moving forward.

6. What about burgeoning trade deficit? How do we deal with that? How address it?
   One, take down Chinese trade barriers
   Two, recognize that trade and exports aren't trivial matters.

7. Given everything that has come to light in the past few months — illegal campaign contributions, human rights violations, a breach of U.S. security — is this really the time to go to China? Shouldn't we, as some people suggest, take a step back and re-examine our policy toward China?

Granted, there are problems with China. Significant ones. But do we solve these problems by staying at home and resorting to name-calling? Would President Clinton be more effective in addressing human rights abuses or security concerns by ostracizing China? Who is to say that if we don't engage China then it won't seek friendship with our bona fide enemies, such as Iran, Iraq, Libya and others?

8. Regarding the PLA, what are your thoughts on the efforts of Senator Hutchison and others who want to ban the import of goods from companies owned by the People's Liberation Army?

Well, there are four reasons why this is an impractical and ill-advised idea:

- It is impractical. There are over a billion people in China and with that come a huge number of factories and corporations. How does Mr. Bauer suggest we get to the bottom of finding who really owns all of these companies? It's nearly impossible.

- It seems to me that most of Mr. Bauer's reservations about the PLA's corporations is that the PLA uses its profits to further arming themselves and threaten America. But if we are threatened by China, shouldn't we take heart that the PLA is selling cars to Korea? If they are busy selling vehicles, that tells me they are not spending their time becoming a better army.
Finally, I think we need to look at the strategic implications of the PLA. If conflict occurs in that part of the world, there is a good chance that it will be in the Korean Peninsula. As I have continually stressed, the role the Chinese play is critical in the region, and we stand to lose a great deal by alienating the Chinese army.

9. Aren't you concerned that China has contributed greatly to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction?

China has reacted in alarming ways at times. We all see reports of sales of missiles and nuclear technology. Ominous positions on the South China Sea. Rising military spending, coupled with unwillingness to publish clear, accurate information about the defense budget. A troubling relationship with Iran. Missiles fired in the Taiwan Strait during Taiwan's Presidential elections in 1996. A rhetorical style that seems hysterical at times.

These are serious problems. But we must remember that we have seen worse. In the 1950s and 1960s, China opposed all US foreign policy goals. May well have encouraged North Korea to attack the south, and ultimately intervened in the war itself. Fired artillery not only near, but at Quemoy and Matsu. Fought border wars with India and the Soviet Union. Attempted to subvert nations friendly to us by sponsoring revolutionary movements in Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

Today is very different. If we set aside issues in which China has a territorial interest, the record is good. In Korea, China works with us to prevent a conflict. Far from subverting its neighbors, China seeks investment from their business leaders. Rather than oppose our foreign policy goals, it acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty; supports a nuclear test ban and conventions on biological weapons and chemical weapons; supports the Test Ban Treaty; and takes part in the ASEAN Regional Forum and cooperates at the UN Security Council.

China has made progress. Granted, it has work to do, but it has made progress. We can either help it work through these issues--and we have a tremendous stake in doing so-- or we can criticize it and remain detached. I think that positive, firm communication is better than name-calling.

Finally, let me state the obvious: we don’t live in a perfect world. A few years ago, Japan— one of our strongest allies—helped the Russians with turbine engines that are very helpful on Russian subs. Do we ostracize the Japanese and take away MFN? The answer to that question is obvious.

10. List other mischievous Chinese bills and amendments introduced by those criticizing president's trip—in addition to Hutchison

- Doing a Lexis Search
- More money to beam radio programs into China criticizing the government
- Beam news to China
- Ban the import of military components to China
10. **What do you think about the Chinese government's apparent attempt to influence American elections?**

I would rather wait for the facts to emerge through the Justice Department investigation rather than react to headlines. But if these reports are true, what we see is essentially a naive and foolish effort that will backfire against the Chinese government. But it still should not diminish our efforts to resolve our differences with China.
CENTRAL THEME

U.S. Interests are at stake here

- Peace and Security in Asia and the Pacific
  We need a working relationship with China if we hope to maintain peace and stability in the Pacific and Asia

- Open and fair trade with China

- Universal Standards of Human rights

- Environmental protection

Our policy of engagement is correct - We need to be doing more to bring them into the rest of the world

Trends in China are basically good (Post article on Tiananmen)

We still have a lot of work to do

Mastel says its OK to express outrage at things China has been, but don’t be apologist for China