Morning Newsmaker, National Press Club (2)

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

MONTH/YEAR of Records*: July-1998
(Example: JANUARY-2003)

(1) Subject*: National Press Club-Morning Newsmaker
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject* Improving US relations with China

DOCUMENT DATE*: 07/08/1998
(Example: 01/12/1966)

* "required information"
Good morning.

Thank you all for coming.

I want to especially thank Bill McCarren for helping arrange this Morning Newsmaker. Thank you for that introduction, Bill.

As you know, I returned July 3 from the president's trip to China. I led the six-member congressional delegation.
The other members on the trip were Senators Rockefeller and Akaka, and Congressmen Dingell, Hamilton and Markey. We worked well together. We called ourselves the Gang of Six.

On the trip, I had some separate meetings. I spoke to 300 students at Fudan University in Shanghai. Met with generals at the National Defense University in Beijing. Talked to the agriculture minister and top trade and economic officials, including Premier Zhu Rongji. Had a very interesting discussion about China's ag sector with top ag economists from Beijing University. Talked to Chinese environmentalists. And met with American business men and women all along the way.
This was an historic trip because it was the first visit to China by an American president since Tiananmen Square, 1989. This placed a special burden on President Clinton — in terms of what he hoped to achieve and the hopes and concerns of the American public.

Reflecting back on the nine-day visit, I think the trip was a success. Not all across the board. But in furthering our relationship with one of the world’s emerging powers and securing a more positive strategic relationship with China.

Let me be more specific.
In terms of our relationship with China, we have four main goals:

1. One is our strategic goal of engaging one of the world's most powerful countries to secure peace and prosperity in Asia. I think President Clinton's trip was successful in this regard. In helping put our relationship with China on more solid footing. With some good follow up, this trip could mark the beginning of a period of closer relations with the world's most populous country.
During this trip, we were able to solidify our working relationship with China on two strategic concerns: Maintaining peace on the Korean Peninsula, and attempting to stabilize the spiraling Asian economies. We need to continue moving forward on the Korean issue to avoid another conflict on the peninsula, not only between the Koreas, but between American and Chinese interests. We have to closely monitor North Korea, because if its political system falters, we want to be confident that the Chinese will work with us. And the Chinese have committed to not devalue their currency, which acts as a stabilizing factor in a volatile economic climate.
2. Two, Americans thought it was important that the president express how much value we place on human rights and freedom. I think President Clinton did a masterful job in promoting American values and ideals in China. He spoke passionately to the Chinese people about why we so highly value human rights and freedom.

Before he went, he was the target of criticism from the right and left for engaging China and going to Tiananmen Square.
But this trip proved that if we engage China, as the president and delegation did, we can speak directly to the Chinese people about the importance of creating strategic partnerships and about American values.

By going to China, the president delivered our message of promoting democracy, freedom and human rights to hundreds of millions of Chinese people. That was historic, especially when it played on national television.

I also thought it was important that President Clinton and the delegation visited Hong Kong.
It showed America's commitment to Hong Kong as it struggles through tough economic times. And it highlighted Hong Kong people's own commitment to self government and democracy. The president's visit showed where things can lead if China chooses to liberalize its system.

3. While this trip offered us a chance to stabilize the relationship between two of the world's powers and left Americans with a good feeling because President Clinton spoke bluntly, courageously and respectfully on human rights, there still is a lot of substantive work to do. That brings me to my third point.
China has not moved far enough on trade and market access issues, as well as on climate change issues. And it still has not signed on to the Missile Technology Control Regime.

If China really is seeking a partnership with the United States, and it wants to be a member of the world community, it must act responsibly and open its markets to our products and do its part to help prevent massive global climate change. It must address these specific issues.
Go beyond just the fundamental basic interest of avoiding conflict and become a responsible international player that can address issues that further promote peace and prosperity and a healthy environment.

I told China's top leaders, including Premier Zhu Rongji and the Chinese ag minister, that Congress and the American people are getting impatient with China's growing trade imbalance with the U.S. and their closed markets. Those of us who support engagement with China are finding ourselves increasingly frustrated with a country whose Great Wall is more than just a world wonder.
It is a brick wall we keep running into. I told them — and other members of the congressional delegation also told them — in no uncertain terms that they need to lower their barriers, or there will be repercussions.

If we don’t see much movement on these issues in the future, then, while the benefit of stable relationship may remain, the good feelings between our two countries will dissipate and not lead to substantive progress. As I said, Congress’ patience is wearing thin. Reforms on these issues are in China’s interest. They got a lot out of this trip. Now they need to reciprocate.
4. And, finally, we -- in Congress and the American public -- need to reach an agreement on how we treat our China policy. That essentially means when we reach a basic consensus on such a policy that we do not then play political games with it.

It means we send a clear, consistent message to China on our policy. That doesn’t mean we should stifle debate on our China policy. Just that we do it in a productive fashion. That we do what’s right to secure American interests. Few foreign relationships affect the American people as much as this one. It’s important that we get it right — and keep it free of politics.
The trip gives us a chance to follow up on what could be a strategic partnership for the beginning of the 21st Century.

As we engage China, I think we have to keep American values and interests in mind. We want:

- Security in the Pacific -- peace in Korea, stability in the Taiwan Strait and an end to nuclear tests.
• We want fair and open trade — so that American products are as welcome on their shores as Chinese products are on ours.

• And we want basic human rights -- continuing the trend toward fewer political prisoners, more open debate and better adherence to international standards of human rights.

Through this historic trip, we advanced America’s interests. We didn’t get all we wanted. For a country that has more millennia under its belt than we have centuries under our, progress is bound to be slow.
But we have significantly improved our relationship with the world’s most populous nation, and engaged them in a constructive dialogue that I hope will bode well for America, China and the world.

Thank you.

Now I will take questions.
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target of criticism from the right and left for engaging China and going to Tiananmen Square. But this trip proved that if we engage China, as the president and delegation did, we can speak directly to the Chinese people about the importance of creating strategic partnerships and about American values. By going to China, the president delivered our message of promoting democracy, freedom and human rights to hundreds of millions of Chinese people. That was historic, especially when it played on national television. I also thought it was important that President Clinton and the delegation visited Hong Kong. It showed America’s commitment to Hong Kong as it struggles through tough economic times. And it highlighted the Hong Kong people’s own commitment to self government and democracy. The president’s visit showed where things can lead if China chooses to liberalize its system.

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China has not moved far enough on trade and market access issues, as well as on climate change issues. And it still has not signed on to the Missile Technology Control Regime. If China really is seeking a partnership with the United States, and it wants to be a member of the world community, it must act responsibly and open its markets to our products and do its part to help prevent massive global climate change. It must address these specific issues. Go beyond just the fundamental basic interest of avoiding conflict and become a responsible international player that can address issues that further promote peace and prosperity and a healthful environment.

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- And, finally, we -- in Congress and the American public -- need to reach an agreement on how we treat our China policy. That essentially means when we reach a basic consensus on such a policy that we do not play political football with it. That we don’t bat it around just to score political points. That we send a clear, consistent message to China on our policy. That doesn’t mean we should stifle debate on our China policy. What I’m saying
is that we don’t play politics with it. That we do what’s right to secure American interests. Few foreign relationships affect the American people as much as this one. It’s important that we get it right — and keep it free of politics.

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