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Talking Points for Press Conference in China

Max S. Baucus

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(1) Subject*:
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(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject*

DOCUMENT DATE*:
12/13/2000
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* "required information"
To: Max
From: Zak
Re: Talking Points for Press Conference
Date: 12/13/00

*Thank you for inviting me here today. I visit China every year because the rate of change economically and socially is staggering. In the interest of our two countries continually developing trade policy, an annual visit is necessary.

*I am here on a week-long trip to four countries with several of Montana's best businesses. We are here to introduce Montana to China and to explore the many business and market development opportunities between my home state and China.

*I have been deeply involved in trade expansion and market opening for over two decades. I led the effort in Congress to extend MFN to China. And I remain committed to seeing the trade relationship grow between our two countries.

*In terms of WTO it is important that China remain flexible, reach agreement, and conclude negotiations during the next session January 10-17 in Geneva. The reason is simple. If the multilateral negotiations are not completed in January, we run the risk of our next President not having enough time to grant PNTR.

*If PNTR is not granted by May, Congress will have to do another extension of NTR. A debate over another annual extension would not serve anyone's interest.

*However, I am hopeful. My meetings with Zhu Rongji in recent years convince me that he and much of the senior leadership are committed to economic reform and WTO compliance. Obviously there are opponents to reform and they are strong. But his commitment, and Jiang Zemin's are critically important.

*It will be slow with many challenges and reversals. But, I am confident about the direction.

*Thank you and I will open it up for questions.