

In this context, another important issue is over-population. From a Buddhist point of view, life of every sentient being is precious, and birth control is not favored. But today, we are facing a situation where the growing number of people poses a threat to the survival of humanity. Therefore, I personally feel we need to be pragmatic and adopt birth control measures in order to ensure the quality of life today in southern countries, and protect the quality of life for future generations. Of course, as a Buddhist monk, I favor non-violent forms of birth control.

Another issue which is very dear to my vision of the future is global demilitarization. This may sound idealistic to many people. I am aware that it needs a process of rethinking, education and a step by step approach. Most important I believe, is to re-evaluate our concept of military establishment. National forces should be gradually dissolved and collective forces on a regional basis should be formed. An important further step toward the goal of global demilitarization is an international ban on arms trade and the expansion of demilitarized zones in all parts of the world. Recent progress on dismantling nuclear arsenals and nuclear test bans are encouraging and significant developments.

Many dictators in the developing world have survived by weapons and armaments supplied by northern countries. So much money has gone toward buying guns instead of feeding people and meeting basic human and environmental needs. Costa Rica, a country which has followed the demilitarized path, has done quite well in areas such as education and health compared to neighboring countries. On the other hand, take Somalia for example, it is such a tragedy that there is no shortage of guns and bullets, but a severe lack of food. In such situations, thousands of innocent people can die, including many innocent children.

Even in your own country, guns and violence are too prevalent. And it seems that a contributing factor is the availability of inexpensive automatic weapons sold to American consumers by companies owned by the Peoples Liberation Army. Those cheap weapons are not only harming Americans, but also financially contributing to the army repressing my people in Tibet.

I have always envisioned the future of my own country, Tibet, as a neutral, demilitarized sanctuary where weapons are forbidden and the people live in harmony with nature. I have called this a Zone of Ahimsa or non-violence. This is not merely a dream—it is precisely the way Tibetans tried to live for over a thousand years before our country was tragically invaded. Also, for at least the last three hundred years, we had virtually no army. Tibet gave up the waging of war as an instrument of national policy several centuries ago.

I would also like to express my deep sense of satisfaction that elections are taking place in South Africa that allow all South Africans to participate. I hope and pray that peoples of all backgrounds and leaders of all communities will continue to work together toward an open, democratic society. I also had the opportunity to visit Israel recently, and there too, I was very heartened to see a process of negotiations toward a peaceful solution. Both these conflicts are being resolved through personal, face-to-face dialogue which I have always believed is essential.

Unfortunately, my efforts to resolve the situation in Tibet have not been a successful. So far, we have not been able to make a breakthrough and establish direct talks.

It has been thirty five years since the Chinese took complete control of Tibet. At that time, I, along with over 100,000 fellow Tibetans, left my homeland to live in exile in

India, Nepal and other parts of the globe. As a result of the invasion and the ensuing occupation over 1.2 million of our people died of unnatural causes. Most of our monasteries, the learning centers and repositories of our culture—over 6000 of them—have been destroyed.

Since that time I have pursued a cause of non-violence and have tried in every way I know to find some reasonable accommodation with the Chinese government so that the Tibetan people can resume a life in peace and with dignity.

In 1979, Deng Xiaoping stated that all issues regarding Tibet were open for negotiations—except that of independence. I responded positively in agreement with the principles advanced by Mr. Deng Xiaoping with the hope that the Chinese government would be genuinely committed to negotiate on all other matters concerning the future of the six million Tibetans.

After informing the Chinese of my position on this point, through my emissaries who traveled to Beijing and met with Chinese diplomats abroad as well as through some of our foreign friends, I was hopeful that a forthright response would come from the Chinese so that we could enter into serious negotiations. My decision to make a short trip to Tibet in 1991 would have also given the Chinese government an opportunity to arrange direct meetings between me and some of their senior leaders who could have come to Tibet to meet me.

Unfortunately the Chinese government has yet to accept any of my proposals over the last fourteen years and yet to enter into substantive negotiations with my representatives, who remain prepared to meet with Chinese representatives anytime.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to again state my willingness to meet with any of the present members of the Standing Committee of the Politburo in a third country of mutual convenience with the sincere desire to make a breakthrough in our relationship.

On my part I am continuing with my sincere efforts to resolve the situation through negotiations. If this approach does not bring about a positive result, then I must consult my people over our future course of our freedom struggle. However, my commitment to non-violence is fundamental and there will be no deviation from this path under my leadership.

I think we can say that, because of the lessons we have begun to learn, the next century will be friendlier, more harmonious and peaceful. I am very hopeful. At the same time, I believe that every individual has a responsibility to help guide our global family in the right direction. Good wishes are not enough; we have to assume responsibility. Large human movements spring from individual initiatives. I therefore believe strongly that it is the individual who makes the difference.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senator from Utah [Mr. HATCH] is recognized to speak for up to 15 minutes.

THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RESTORATION ACT

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to address an issue of great concern to the citizens of Utah and every other State. This past year, Congress passed the Religious Freedom Restora-

tion Act. This is a landmark bill designed to restore strong protections to citizens exercising their religion against unreasonable Government interference. Unfortunately, the Clinton administration, with breathtaking speed, has interpreted the act in a manner that effectively guts it.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act was described by many religious leaders—accurately so—as one of the most significant pieces of legislation in support of religious freedom to ever come out of Congress. It was intended to restore to all Americans a fundamental right guaranteed by the first amendment to our Constitution: the free exercise of religion. The act had widespread support from a broad and diverse coalition of religious and civil rights organizations, from the ACLU to the Free Congress Foundation. I was the leading sponsor of this act along with Senator KENNEDY.

Recently, I became aware that the Department of Justice intervened in what I believe is the first appellate case involving the interpretation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. To my deep chagrin, I learned that the Department had committed itself to a position in its amicus curiae brief that is contrary to the plain meaning of the act, to the detriment of religious freedom. Despite the act's widespread support and its clearly defined and agreed upon objective, its purpose is being undermined by this administration.

I might add that the core meaning of the bill was never a subject of controversy in Congress.

The underlying case, Christians versus Crystal Evangelical Church, involves a bankruptcy court decision which ordered a Protestant Christian congregation to return money to a Government bankruptcy trustee that was tithed by two members of the church who later filed a bankruptcy petition. The tithes were offered over a period of years in good faith, in the exercise of their religious beliefs and without any fraudulent intent.

Under the bankruptcy code, any transfer of assets made within 1 year of a bankruptcy may be recovered by the trustee to pay creditors. This provision is intended to prevent debtors from fraudulently disposing of or shielding their assets. The tithes that issued in this case were made out of sincere religious belief within 1 year of filing a bankruptcy petition.

No one challenges the importance of the Government's interest in preventing fraud. Preventing fraud would probably satisfy a compelling State interest, which would be all right under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. However, as in this case, the Government's interest is simply in enlarging the pool of assets for creditors, not preventing fraud. This interest does not satisfy the compelling Government interest standard that must be met under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In my view, the interest in collecting for creditors, while very impor-

tant, would almost never be compelling when weighed against the interests embodied in the first amendment.

In its brief, the Department argues that the Government's interest in protecting the financial interests of creditors conclusively establishes a compelling interest that overrides any religious free exercise right. If the Department's position prevails, it will have a disastrous impact on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, rendering it virtually meaningless. The department's very broad definition of the compelling State interest test, if adopted by the courts, will once again eliminate any real protection of religious liberty under the first amendment.

Mr. President, just 6 short months ago, President Clinton signed into law the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in a glorious ceremony on the south lawn of the White House before a large group of religious leaders. In his remarks he noted correctly that the act requires that the Government should be held to a very high level of proof before it can interfere with anyone's free exercise of religion. In fact, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act sets forth a specific standard that requires the Government interest to be a compelling State interest, an interest of the highest order.

It is difficult for me to imagine that providing an economic advantage to a pool of creditors satisfies the compelling governmental interests necessary to override our first amendment protection of religious free exercise, but the Department argues this position. And especially is the Department wrong since there was no fraud in this case, or no attempt to defraud.

I intend to ask Attorney General Janet Reno to reconsider the Department's position in this case. Perhaps this is the kind of limited protection President Clinton envisioned when he committed himself to the protection of one of the most precious of all-American liberties—religious freedom—but I can say quite confidently that this is not the type of protection Congress fought so hard and so long to restore. The Department's position is a slap in the face to our religious community, and it should not stand.

I personally believe that President Clinton must not know what they are doing, or he would put a stop to it. So, in a sense, it is a slap in his face, as well, since he was one of the strongest supporters of what we were trying to do. I hope that he will get involved and direct the Department to back off—especially since there is no fraud here—and allow the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to have the widespread, broad coverage that we intended here in Congress in the first place.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in defending the religious liberties guaranteed by the first amendment and reestablished under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senator is permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes.

AIRLINE SAFETY

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, a very important matter has come up that I hope the Senate and the House of Representatives will address itself to. Under the leadership of our great Secretary of Transportation, Secretary Peña, we should be alerted to the fact that we have a ticking time bomb going on with regard to airline safety.

The Secretary of Transportation has taken the recommendation of a previously structured national commission to ensure competitiveness in the airline industry that this Senator was a part of, to change and challenge the competition, increase safety, and modernize our traffic control system in the United States.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks there be printed in the RECORD for the information of all, a report to the President and Congress of August 1993 entitled "Change, Challenge, and Competition," by the National Commission to Ensure a Strong and Competitive Airline Industry; and two articles of the last 2 days, yesterday and this morning, Tuesday, from the Washington Post, by two excellent writers, with regard to the Federal administration's case, supported by the Secretary of Transportation with regard to the need to do something and to plan to do something now before the present situation becomes chaotic.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. EXON. Mr. President, I salute the great safety record of the Federal Aviation Administration. Certainly, if you look at the record, you will see that with the diligence, the tenacity, and the determination of the dedicated air traffic controllers of the United States of America, we fly an unbelievable amount of aircraft and flying hours to the benefit of the traveling public. Their record has been exemplary.

The fact of the matter is that something needs to be done with regard to planning for the future. If you will take the time to look firsthand today at the equipment that is available to the air traffic controller, which all of us as the traveling public and all of the employees of the airlines rely on to keep track of and keep the proper distance between the mass of air traffic

today, particularly at certain of our more heavily controlled airports, you will begin to realize the enormity of the situation.

In addition, Mr. President, this has a national security implication because, in addition to the private aircraft and the commercial aircraft, all of the aircraft flown by the military of the United States of America in at least our airways and our skies in the United States of America are, once again, controlled and kept separated by the Air Traffic Controllers Association and their dedicated people.

If you take the time to look at the equipment that they use, you will find, Mr. President, that in all too many cases the computers, the viewing screens, the communications facilities that make and bring all this together are older than any of the aircraft and in many instances older than any of the air traffic controllers that are now using them. In the days of yesteryear we relied basically on the vacuum tube from the standpoint of being the heart and soul of radio, including, in the early days, television. The vacuum tube is a thing of the past. The vacuum tubes that we are using in our air traffic control system today are not, by and large, manufactured in the United States but abroad, because the computer chips and other technologies have made the vacuum tube obsolete. When you realize that certain parts of our air traffic control system are relying on a vacuum tube, you realize how far behind we are.

Mr. President, the Secretary of Transportation has suggested that a new type of corporation, which would be owned and controlled by the Federal Government not unlike the Tennessee Valley Authority, should be enacted as recommended by the Airline Commission in order to streamline, to speed up, to enhance, if you will, the Federal Aviation Administration, and to move the Federal Aviation Administration from its present status to the new corporation. This would contribute a great deal to the advance that has been made to speed up and modernize our air traffic control system.

Why is this necessary? I simply submit for the RECORD that there are currently 19,000 scheduled airline flights a day in the United States. Air traffic control systems are being stretched to their absolute limit and, as I referenced earlier, have done an excellent job. In 1980, there were 300 million passengers flying. Last year, there were more than 500 million passengers flying. By the year 2005, there will be 800 million passengers flying in the United States. The number of flights per year is expected to increase from 60 million in 1993 to 74 million by the year 2005.

I simply say that, of the budget of the United States, 80 percent of the current Federal Aviation Administration budget goes to the air traffic control situation. Restructuring the Federal Aviation Administration could save, according to the recommenda-