

Eternal Vigilance

by Gary L. Bauer

What is the price of liberty? Among our forefathers, Thomas Jefferson provided the most memorable answer when he said: "Eternal vigilance." Events in Washington and around the world brought this message home to me forcefully in recent weeks.

On the morning of the vote on extending most-favored-nation trading status to communist China, I went to Capitol Hill and met with some of my friends in Congress. I urged them to consider the persecution of Christians in China, the fact that pastors and priests are imprisoned, tortured, even killed for their faith in Christ, but my friends claimed that firmness by the U.S. might cause harm to American missionaries and bring greater persecution to Chinese Christians.

We were at an impasse. I then suggested we look at the threats to America's national security. What about the thinly veiled threats by Chinese military officials to destroy Los Angeles? What about the attempt to sell 2,000 AK-47s to L.A. street gangs? What about the array of 46 U.S. supercomputers sold to China? These supercomputers may make Chinese missiles lighter and more accurate, more capable of striking the United States. I asked them about China's sale of poison gas, missiles and nuclear weapons technology to terrorist states like Iran with the attendant threat to Israel and U.S. soldiers in the Middle East. My questions raised eyebrows, but did not stop the congressmen from voting to reward China.

These are serious issues. We must remember what the Vietnam War Memorial means for families. I have seen children and grandchildren tearfully tracing the names of fathers and grandfathers they never knew. Whenever someone falls in war, the fabric of family life is torn in a way that only God can mend.

My dad dealt with the pain of his war wounds for 30 years after the guns fell silent in the South Pacific.

In our FRC office, there is a Norman Rockwell print called Freedom from Fear. It shows a World War II-era mom and dad tucking their little children into bed. While the children sleep peacefully, Dad holds his newspaper in one hand. The headlines blare a message of the bombing of civilians in Europe. America has never suffered this fate, but that is only because of the grace of God and the "eternal vigilance" of our people and our elected leaders.

Another memorable picture is of Winston Churchill walking through the bombed-out ruins of a London apartment house. Churchill, with his cigar, his cane, his hat (familiar symbols of his indomitable spirit), flashes his famous "V" for victory sign. But victory was bought at a terrible price. For the mothers and fathers whose children lay beneath the rubble of that shattered building, the memories of "the years the locusts ate," when Britain's leaders tried to "engage" Germany's dictator, will be forever painful.

Last December, the man who ordered the Tiananmen Square massacre, Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian, visited Washington. He was given a 19-gun salute at the Pentagon. U.S. military personnel were ordered to render honors to him. Then he had the audacity to tell reporters that the Tiananmen Square massacre never happened at all!

We will continue to press for U.S. sanctions on firms run by the Chinese military, firms which sell the products of Christians' slave labor on the American market. We will appeal to our friends in Congress to protest the impending strangulation of freedom in Hong Kong and the threats against Taiwan. This battle has only begun and, with your support, we will make a difference.

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ON THE HORIZON

- President Clinton's **nominee** for **ambassador to Mexico** is **opposed by** Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman **Jesse Helms (R-N.C.)**. "I don't think he's ambassador quality," said Helms of **Massachusetts Gov. William Weld**. Helms promises to **scuttle the nomination. Weld**, a **social liberal** whose values clash with **Mexico's Roman Catholic** traditions, has pushed for **homosexual "rights,"** favored **condoms in schools** and strongly **advocates abortion**. He also has a **poor anti-drug** record. Governor Weld favors **"medical" marijuana** and **giving needles to drug addicts**. Meanwhile, **drug abuse** among **his state's adolescents** has **increased faster** than the **national average**. — RLM

- Congress is busy **writing federal spending bills**. This appropriations **process** will **continue** through **September**. Congress is likely to **vote later this month** on the **most controversial** bill, the **"Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriation."** This bill includes **funding** for many **programs** that **affect American families**, most notably **education** and **abortion** programs. President Bill **Clinton** is **seeking increased funding** for **education** programs, such as **Goals 2000** and **School-to-Work**, as well as **funding** for several **new programs** he envisions, including **"America Reads,"** **national testing** and **Internet access** in **every classroom**. — ARM and JAM

- **Rep. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.)** introduced **"The HIV Prevention Act of 1997,"** which redefines the **AIDS virus** as a **deadly health threat**. Expect **hearings this fall**. A **positive consequence** of offering **this legislation** was the **administration's decision** to develop **guidelines** for **partner notification** requiring **states** to **inform individuals** if they have been **exposed to HIV**. Meanwhile, **needle exchange antagonists** contend that **giving clean needles** does not slow the **spread of AIDS** among **drug addicts**, and may **encourage more drug use**. This month, FRC will **announce** the **results** of a **nationwide poll** conducted to **determine public understanding** of this issue. — RLM