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Discussion after the Speech of Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

Discussion

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Discussion After the Speech of Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

QUESTION, *Professor King*: You mentioned a change in China, which may result in a new era. People make a difference in these countries. Perhaps my question is on the Most Favored Nation (MFN) versus human rights; is there some consideration of maintaining a contact where we continue to engage in dialogue and try to influence the development?

ANSWER, *Father Drinan*: Henry, I think everybody wants that. In no way should we go back to not talking with them. One possible option is that we would terminate the goodies, the lack of tariffs and so on, for those products made in government related, government owned industries, but not for those that have been privatized. That is one option. I do not know whether or not it will work. But then some people say let us just keep the heat on and give them another extension, and other people say that the whole mechanism is obsolete anyway. It goes back to the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, namely the Most Favored Nation Status. There are only four or five nations on the earth now that have to be given this all of the time. Let us just give it to them and have open borders, and then keep working with them.

In any situation, I think though that there is an opportunity for a moment of truth. Mrs. Pelosi, the point woman in the Congress on this, does not want to impede all of our trade, but at the same time she just does not want to be perceived by the world as caving. They want their goodies and Toys-R-Us reached them, and that was what happened to George Bush. All the big industries reached him, and I did not think it was good for him or for the nation.

I do not have an answer. All I can say is that we should keep our concern front and center and that we should insist upon certain things and allow the Chinese to save face. It is very important to them to do that; they are a proud people. But if they let the Red Cross in, if they allowed the 250 people out whose names they have, and some other things, we would say that is all right for a time. But Senator George Mitchell said to the President categorically the other day, that the democratic majority in the Senate and in the Congress does not want to waive it and pretend that nothing is wrong.

COMMENT, *Mr. Langmack*: I have a comment. I was a student of Father Walsh at Georgetown some years ago, and I am sure you knew Father Walsh. It is a real pleasure for me to hear you speak today, because you are speaking the same way he spoke some 40 or 50 years ago when I was a student there. And your ideas are still as fresh today as they were when I heard Father Walsh speaking to students then.

COMMENT, *Father Drinan*: You have made my day. I was a young seminarian at Georgetown when Father Walsh had just come back from Nuremberg. As you know he was a consultant for over a year on the terrible treatment that they gave to priests, nuns and rabbis. And he did the book that Nuremberg put out on that. He talked to a lot of us seminarians about these things, and it really was an inspiration.

As you know he established the School of Foreign Service to create people who would do human rights around the world. That is what brought Bill Clinton to Georgetown and why Father Walsh is so important. And incidentally, I live in the Jesuit community and quite by happenstance I live in the same room that Father Walsh lived in for 30 years. It just happened to be open when I came there from Boston.

You are a very good audience, and I feel thrilled and honored to participate. I hope that you all know how much Henry King has contributed to the development of all of these things. He was the Chairman of the section on international law of the American Bar Association long before I became associated with that group. He was a member of the committee that I chaired for three years, namely the Standing Committee on World Order Under Law. He has taken all of these initiatives in addition to, of course, teaching at your distinguished law school. If we had 100 people like Henry King we could transform the world, transform the nation. That is where we need his leadership, like Father Edmond Walsh.

Let me close finally after thanking you, and congratulating you, with a statement from Margaret Mead that has always touched me. If you doubt sometimes whether it makes any sense that they do have any effect, Margaret Mead said this: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

COMMENT, *Professor King*: I want to thank Bob. He is always an inspiration. He has the vision and he knows where the answers are. He is looking ahead rather than behind him. He is looking at how we can do, rather than saying it cannot be done. He has been positive and constructive and he has made a tremendous difference in his theory of human rights.