

Statement of Representative Christopher H. Smith
Ranking Member, Congressional-Executive Commission on China
Hearing: "Impact of the Olympics on Human Rights in China"
February 27, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon to everyone.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing. I remember that you were one of the Congressmen who in 2000 led the fight to create this Commission, ensuring that Congress not lose its focus on human rights in China. The fact that the Olympics will be held in China this summer should be of grave concern to Congress.

A few weeks ago, the *New York Times* reported the arrest of a 34-year-old Chinese dissident named Hu Jia.

Mr. Hu's crime? Using his home computer to disseminate information on human rights violations. He joins a huge, ever-growing number of cyber dissidents who today, in China, are being hauled off to jail simply for promoting democracy and human rights.

The *Times* article suggests the obvious: in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics in August, the PRC is using its iron fists to eradicate dissent.

Even Mr. Hu's wife and 2 month old daughter are now under house arrest, prompting the Times to note that their baby is "probably the youngest political prisoner in China."

How sad is that?

But in this particular case we can take direct action against this abuse. I am afraid that many American companies, like Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo!, have cooperated with the Chinese government in turning the Internet into a tool of surveillance and censorship. Last year I introduced the Global Online Freedom Act to prevent U.S. high-tech Internet companies from turning over to the Chinese police information that identifies individual Internet users, and to require them to disclose how the Chinese version of their search engines censors the Internet. In October, the Foreign Affairs Committee approved the bill, and we are hoping to move it to the floor of the House soon.

The fact of the matter is that the scale of human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese government exceeds that of any other government on earth.

In China, forced abortion is pervasive as a means of enforcing the government's draconian one child per couple policy, a policy which has made brothers and sisters illegal. Government officials have coerced compliance with this inhuman policy through a system marked by pervasive propaganda, mandatory monitoring of women's reproductive cycles, mandatory contraception, mandatory birth permits, coercive fines for failure to comply, and, in many cases, forced sterilization and forced abortion. The Chinese government's population planning laws and regulations contravene international human rights standards at every level, not only through the horror of forced abortion, but also by limiting the number of children that women may bear, by coercing compliance with population targets through heavy fines, and by discriminating against 'out-of-plan' children.

The one-child policy has led to a social plague of gendercide, the annihilation of tens of millions of girls, just because they were girls. According to the Chinese government's official figures, the ratio of boys to girls born in China is 120 to 100. In some provinces of China it is 140 to 100, and even higher. And these are official figures; the real figures are probably higher.

The Chinese government has no notion of religious freedom. It arrests members of the house church movement merely for gathering in each other's homes to read Scripture and pray. This happens all the time. Seven days ago, the China Aid Association reported the arrest of more than 40 house church members in Inner Mongolia. Eleven days ago, China Aid reported that 21 major house church leaders were sent to labor camps in Shandong.

The Chinese government even invents human rights violations that no one else had thought of. Two weeks ago, ABC News' "20/ 20" reported that dissected bodies, coated in plastic, which are being displayed in touring shows across America, were the bodies of executed prisoners, sold, by the very officials who had a hand in killing them, on a black market for dead bodies. Here too the crime touches American soil, so I have requested a hearing on this matter, written to the Attorney General requesting an investigation, and am drafting legislation to require independent experts to verify the identity, manner of death, and consent to display, of any corpses to be commercially displayed in the U.S.

In China there is no freedom of speech, press, or assembly, and internationally-recognized labor rights simply don't exist.

Despite enormous concessions by the West, robust trade with the U.S., Europe, Africa and Latin America, and WTO accession, the Chinese government's brutal crackdown on religious, labor, environmental, and democracy activists has continued, unabated, and even worsened, since the Tiananmen Square Massacre almost 20 years ago!

Men and women of conscience—so many of China's best and bravest, who if freed could transform their country--are today in Laogai—the Chinese Gulag.

Given the nature and scale of human rights violations by the Chinese government, it is a shame that the Olympics will be held in China. But I believe we cannot let the Olympics pass without asserting our solidarity with the victims—those who have been hurt, or even destroyed, by the myriad human rights violations perpetrated by the Chinese government.

Their sufferings must not be forgotten!

I look forward to learning from the representatives of so many distinguished human rights NGOs what is the best way we can speak up on behalf of the imprisoned in the run-up to the Olympics.

The Olympics will certainly not be a time to remain silent. I remember how Wei Jingsheng, the great Chinese democracy activist who spent more than 14 years in prison, told me in Beijing about a paradox. When Americans or others boldly and tenaciously demand that the Chinese government release prisoners, some do get out, others get more lenient treatment. On the other hand, he said, when you forget us, kowtow to the government or engage in diplomatic niceties, the guards aren't nice to us in return, they beat us *more*.

The human rights dissidents of China need friends and advocates. They need us to turn this window of pre-Olympic opportunity into a season of hope, justice, and freedom. No one has more clout than the representatives of the human rights NGOs present today. Together we need to find our voice - for them.