

**Statement from Congressman Joe Pitts for CECC
Hearing: The Impact of the 2008 Olympic Games on
Human Rights and the Rule of Law in China**

February 27, 2008

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing on The Impact of the 2008 Olympic Games on Human Rights and the Rule of Law in China. In preparing for this hearing, I have been pleased to see some of the positive changes occurring in China as a result of the government's commitment to uphold the mandate of the Olympic Charter; however, I remain concerned about the staying power of any of these changes. The question remains as to whether or not the people of China will benefit from the increased observation of and attention to Chinese government regulations on issues as varied as refugees, migrant workers, and the peaceful expression of religious faith.

Over the years as I have watched changes in China, I have been encouraged and discouraged during countless cycles of two steps forward and then three steps backwards. While some might dispute that assessment, the fact that I continue to receive numerous reports about Chinese officials' actions against North Korean refugees, Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang Province, child laborers, and Protestant house church leaders and congregants reflects that there still is a long way to go. Unfortunately, the government does not seem bent on protecting, assisting, or improving the lives and/or the peaceful expression of beliefs by any of these groups.

While this hearing focuses on the impact domestically of the Olympics being held in China, there is another side to China's recent and even long term activities. China's support for the government of Sudan is highly problematic, particularly in light of the rape, death and destruction occurring in Darfur. While the Chinese government making a recent statement to the government of Sudan on this issue is a small positive step, much more pressure and leadership on behalf of the people of Darfur should come from Chinese officials.

Chinese officials constantly use the refrain that they do not interfere in the internal matters of other countries — that is an interesting statement in light of the fact that their presence, money, and resources automatically do interfere in the internal matters of other nations. In Burma, for instance, reports suggest that since 1989, the Chinese government has provided the dictators in Burma with over \$2 billion worth of weapons and military equipment. This Chinese weaponry has allowed the regime to quadruple the size of its forces to 450,000. As a result, Chinese weaponry has directly contributed to the brutal dictatorship's targeting of children, women, and ethnic groups in its attacks against its population.

Chinese officials can't tell me that they have no responsibility for what is going on in Burma — it's simply not true. As is well-known, the Burmese regime uses rape as a weapon of terror, uses individuals captured in raids as human land-mine sweepers, and destroys food sources, homes, and places of worship. Specifically, the dictators of Burma could not implement their attacks without Chinese weaponry.

In terms of North Korea, the Chinese government targets North Korean refugees who fled to China and sends them back to certain torture and likely death at the hands of the North Korean officials. If the Chinese government refused to deport North Korean refugees and instead allowed, as they should under their international commitments, UNHCR to assist and resettle the refugees, it would undermine the North Korean government. China's actions against refugees directly helps the brutal North Korean regime.

The Chinese government must understand that statements that it does not interfere in the internal affairs of other nations is belied by its actions. If the Chinese government wants to curtail criticism of its actions, then it needs to implement long-term, lasting changes that improve the lives and protect the freedoms of the Chinese people and other peoples around the world.

I sincerely hope that China's hosting of the Olympics is the first step towards an era of new openness and positive change that will benefit the Chinese people and others. However, only time will tell. I stand with those Chinese journalists, peaceful religious leaders, peaceful political activists, and NGO leaders who continue, with great courage, to fight for change in China.

I look forward to hearing from our very distinguished witnesses and receiving their insights and recommendations on steps the U.S. Government should take to further support the people of China.