

**Statement of Senator Gordon H. Smith**  
**Congressional-Executive Commission on China**  
**February 27, 2008**

I wish to thank Chairman Levin for holding this important hearing. I also wish to thank our distinguished guests who will testify before the committee today. I appreciate their willingness to join the Commission today and answer questions as they may arise.

Two thousand eight is a crucial year for China as it hosts the Summer Olympics. The moment has finally come for Beijing to demonstrate to the world that it is a respectful and responsible member of the global community. China is quickly finding itself a dominant regional power with considerable influence around the world. But to become a world leader, Beijing must demonstrate its ability to lead in a responsible manner.

Two thousand eight is China's year of opportunity to prove that it can handle the benefits and responsibilities newly bestowed upon it. Benefits include a booming economy and reformed financial and industrial sectors. Responsibilities include the necessity of respecting human rights, adhering strongly to the rule of law, and abiding by the norms of the international community. It is vital Beijing end its political and economic support of rogue regimes around the world, from North Korea to Burma to Sudan. Unfortunately, China's behavior is troubling; opposition to strong UN action on Iran or Darfur, the mass relocation of people, suppression of dissidents, and the censorship of Chinese journalists are just a few of several recent troubling events.

Beijing must also take greater measures to respect the minority religions in the country. Religious persecution must end before China will ever be recognized as an honorable world power. The Chinese people should feel comfortable practicing their own religion in a fashion of their own choosing. I urge the Chinese government to allow all religious sects to worship freely and without fear of persecution.

The 2008 Summer Olympics will be an excellent opportunity for Beijing to demonstrate that China can be a responsible power with an open society, not only for the countless visitors, but for the Chinese people. I look forward to hearing our expert's projection on how the Olympics will impact China's society. While I would like to remain optimistic, I am not convinced the games will have the positive impact many are hoping for.