



Testimony Before the California Senate to Examine the Religious Persecution in China and the Most Favored Nation Trading Status to China

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Sacramento, California, May 19, 1997



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
1400 HRS CALIFORNIA MAY 19, 1997



Mr. Chairman: Thank you for this opportunity to present you with the situation of the on-going religious persecution in China.

In my presentation, I will focus on the Roman Catholic Church. Other religious communities such as Protestantism, Muslim, and Buddhism have undergone the same degree of persecution and also suffered greatly under the Chinese Government.

Mr. Chairman, while billions of Christians celebrated Christmas and Easter, there was no public celebration for the underground Roman Catholic Church across China. It may be a surprise to some Americans that Roman Catholics have no open churches in China because they are underground. Religious services can only be secretly conducted in private homes or deserted fields. The Chinese government deem these gatherings as illegal, unauthorized, subversive and punishable by exorbitant fines, detention, house arrests, jail or labor camp.

In April and May last year, 5000 soldiers supported by dozens of armored cars and helicopters sealed off a tiny village called Dong Lu in Hebei Province where a national Catholic Marian shrine is located. The soldiers destroyed that shrine. They confiscated the Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They arrested Bishop Jacob Su, the bishop of this Diocese. He is now missing. They also arrested his auxiliary bishop, arrested the pastor of the Marian shrine, and a number of other pastors in the same area. These pastors are currently either in jail, in hiding, or under house arrest.

Please try to visualize this: 5000 soldiers, armored cars, helicopters, beatings and arrests -- all against unarmed, defenseless villagers. Doesn't that sound as if Tiananmen square was repeated all over again on a smaller scale in that tiny village? The only difference is that there were no reporters, and no cameras. The Chinese Government had a free hand in rounding up the villagers, beating and torturing them for 10 months without the outside world knowing it. That is until the New York Times and the Washington Times reported in January this year.

Mr. Chairman, this incident is not an isolated case of brutality of the Chinese government.

Bishop Thomas Zeng Jingmu was caught offering a Holy Mass without government permission. He was 75 year old and sick at that time, yet he was sentenced to three years in a labor camp.

Bishop Joannes Han Dingxiang, Bishop of Yong Nian, near Beijing, was offered a bribe by a local government official to leave the Roman Catholic Church and to join the government sponsored Patriotic Association's church. He refused the bribe. His answer to the official was that he had only ONE soul, and that soul was NOT for sale. He too went to jail. Bishop Han is 60 years old. One third of his life was spent in the Chinese gulag.

On November 20 of last year, 120 Catholics were arrested in Jianxi province.

In late March of this year, a few days before Vice President Gore's visit, the government ransacked the home of Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang, a Jesuit. He is the administrator of the Shanghai diocese of the underground Roman Catholic Church. Bishop Fan is 79 years old. He spent 30 years in jail and labor camps. They not only confiscated his religious statues, religious books, and holy articles for Mass, but also took away 20,000 Yuen, about US \$ 2,500. No warrant or receipt was issued.

Earlier this year, we obtained and released worldwide an internal document of the Chinese government detailing procedures on how to eradicate the underground Roman Catholic Church.

This document Urges the leadership to employ "resolute, decisive and organized measures...to eradicate the illegal activities of the underground Roman Catholic Church."

This communist document removes any remaining doubt about the government's role in the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church, and about the government's ultimate goal.

All reports indicate that the current persecution is the most severe during the past two decades.

Mr. Chairman, the persecution persists and worsens at a time when China is making significant economic progress, and at a time when China is working hard to secure its status as an important member of the international community.

The economic improvement in China and the interaction of China with the international communities did not bring about the expected improvement in Human Rights.

Why? Because the Chinese Government does not believe that "freedom of religion" should be open to the free choice and conscience of an individual. Rather, it must be submitted to the government's choice. For Catholics, the government's choice is not the Roman Catholic Church, but the "Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association" created by the government in 1957. Anyone who remains faithful to the Pope and refuses to join this government sponsored Patriotic Association is considered a criminal in China, and therefore is subject to harassment and arrest.

China continues its oppressive religious policies because it knows that MOST governments in the free world are not serious about their demands of human rights improvement in China.

With all the above examples of religious persecution, how could we expect China to honor any agreement it made with the free world?

McDonald Douglas Corp had its share of nightmare. It shipped to China in 1994 some highly technical and sensitive equipment and had an agreement with China to use them for making civilian jetliners only. However, the machines were secretly diverted 800 miles away to a military complex that builds missiles and fighter aircraft.

The current policies of the United States government to delink human rights from trade send a clear, but wrong, message to China that we will tolerate human rights abuses for the sake of profits and trade. This policy also gives the Chinese Government the confidence that it can continue persecuting religious believers without affecting its

international relationships. Thus, the religious persecution continues and intensifies in China.

"Zero Tolerance" is the buzz word that U.S. corporations often allude to in their policies of zero tolerance of discrimination of any kind, conflicts of interest, sexual harassment, child labor, and others. These policies are directly related to the upholding of human rights principles. Yet, the strong commitment to zero tolerance of human rights violations, or, for that matter, even a minimal tolerance has not found its way into the policy of those U. S. Companies doing businesses in China.

According to the congressional record of February 15, 1996, Chrysler fired an employee because he was arrested by the Chinese government for praying without authorization. Only after an intensive international human rights campaign was waged was he rehired.

It is very wrong, bordering on hypocrisy, for any corporation to demand of its employee a strong commitment to human rights, when it is more than willing to relinquish this policy once the company is 20 hours away in China. It is even more hypocritical that hiding behind President Clinton's policy of delinking trade from human rights, these companies turn a blind eye to the atrocious religious persecution in China in exchange for their "thirty pieces of silver".

The United States of America was founded because our forefathers suffered, fought, and worked hard to gain this God given right of freedom. This freedom must not be exclusive to the United States. Rather, it is a fundamental entitlement and should be enjoyed by all people around the globe.

This basic right of freedom was the reason why our country took great risks and sacrifices to help liberate Europe from Nazism, to play a major role freeing Eastern Europe from Communism, and to help victims of apartheid, war and famine. Our foreign policy on China should not be anything less. To do so otherwise would be an insult to the spirit and principle of our founding fathers and would be yet another example of double standard in our foreign policy.

The President cannot guard and foster American values in one corner of the world and neglect these values in another corner of the world, namely China. To do so, America will not only lose its credibility among all nations, but also lose its sense of true values at home, which would be a grave disservice to all the people of this nation.

While the MFN trading status given to China is an important foreign policy of the United States Government, the principles of freedom and human rights must play a decisive factor.

It is an established fact that there is no freedom in China. It is also an established fact that the contemporary human rights record in China is one of the worst in many years as reported by our own State Department.

We must send a clear and unequivocal signal to China that the United States cannot tolerate such violations of human rights as religious and political persecution, forced abortions, and slave labor camps; neither can we tolerate such misdeeds as protectionist trade practice, weapon proliferation, and the questionable illegal Chinese political contributions.

To renew the MFN trading status to China under the current situation would again send a wrong message.

Contrary to the Chinese government claims and to certain fellow Americans, America will not be forcing its values on China by helping its people achieve freedom. There are about 100 million religious believers who cry out for religious freedom. There are millions of silent dissidents crying out for freedom of speech. There are not millions, but hundreds of millions of child-bearing women together with their spouses crying out for their second babies who are being slaughtered even before they are born. All these people constitute a huge majority of the population in China. They are all helplessly demanding freedom and their human rights. The Chinese people fully subscribe to the same values that we ourselves espouse. The only difference is that Americans can pursue freedom and enjoy it, even if sometimes some Americans seem to be taking this liberty for granted. On the other hand, the Chinese people are voiceless and suppressed. We have a moral duty to help them.

It is, therefore, imperative that President Clinton and Congress take responsibility, as Americans, to strongly protest with the end to stop China's religious persecution, the most basic violation of human rights. This mandate needs to be incorporated into the United States foreign policy.

America must use all legal, ethical, and economic power to promote religious freedom in China and elsewhere throughout the world. Only in this way can America safeguard its own principles and values for our own children.

We therefore urge the President and Congress to revoke the MFN trading status to China this year. The American conscience demands that they do so.

The American spirit dictates that the altar of freedom, and the altar of human rights must be higher than economic considerations. Anyone arguing otherwise, in support of the renewal of MFN status to China, betrays the noble founding principle of our great nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman