

WHITHER HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA?

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Like everyone at this forum no doubt, I have the highest admiration for the people of China and their millennia of hard work, accumulated wisdom, success with agriculture, myriad inventions, international exploration, art, literature, philosophies and Confucian harmony earlier in governance.

In spite of its rich history, modern China continues to suffer from gross and systematic human rights abuses. While some have been highlighted in our Canadian media, their focus on China in recent years has been on business and economic features. My own research and discussions with many persons of origin in China, mostly living outside the country, paint a frightening picture of violence against various groups and individuals. We as Canadians who are engaging China should be interested in and know the full story.

Today I'd like to talk in part about trafficking in human body parts in China and to focus a little on how we might all attempt to pressure its government to end these and other crimes against its own people.

China is its people, not its government. The real friends of China everywhere distinguish between the people, who have suffered much from oppression, and their current unelected government in place for more than half a century. Paradoxically, a China basher today is someone who defends the regime in Beijing.

To expand on this briefly, Canadian friends of China might usefully study *Mao - The Unknown Story* by Jang Chang (author of the award-winning *Wild Swans*) and Jan Halliday. The book documents that Mao's secret goal was to dominate the world. In pursuing this 'unpeaceful rise', he caused the deaths of 38 million of the Chinese people in the worst famine in history. Well over 70 million nationals of China overall perished under his rule in peacetime.

The government in power since his death, as the authors note, "declares itself to be Mao's heir and fiercely perpetuates the myth of Mao". His portrait still dominates Tiananmen Square. Our focus at this forum is on what the government in Beijing has been doing both to its own people and internationally. One conclusion from what we heard today is that when individuals in any country suffer so does all of its population ultimately. We must each do what we can to encourage the development of economic and political pluralism in China-above all for the sake of its people, but also to build a better world with peace and respect for all human beings and the natural environment.

GOVERNANCE

China today lacks representative government, the rule of law administered by independent judges, basic human rights, freedom of the media, independent universities and research facilities and the right of workers to move freely, to form unions and bargain collectively. The constitution makes it clear that the CCP governs the country as it wishes without any constitutional limits or accountability to the Chinese people.

The party has improved its economic policies since Deng took supreme power in 1978, but a growing problem is how to develop further a pluralist market economy within an essentially totalitarian state. Successful market economies, in addition to the features mentioned above, have meaningful private property rights, commercial criteria only for bank loans, independent auditors applying binding accounting principles, a vigorous sceptical media, transparent corporate governance and an effective social safety net. None of these exist in China today either.

There are other challenges. For example, the yuan is currently maintained by the government of China at a level about 40% lower than it would have in normal foreign exchange markets. This gives exporters an unfair competitive advantage and helps to create huge trade surpluses each year. Something must be done about the level of the yuan and other features of its economy, including the damage it is doing to hundreds of millions of families, who must live in air- and water-polluted communities and work shifts of 10, 11 and even longer hours without work safety protection or social programs in order to live in grinding poverty, and the natural environment.

Recently, I took part in a Skype chat line with a number of Chinese inside the country. Through an interpreter, I heard one participant attack the rural population of the country, which I defended by pointing at the long blatant favouritism the CCP has shown towards cities like Shanghai and Beijing. Representative democracy in virtually any form would for obvious reasons soon end discrimination against the 700-900 million persons living in rural China. Unemployment for rural Chinese is also very high. Only 15% of the health budget is allocated to rural China where 70% of the population live. Others have noted that less than a fifth of workers overall in China have pensions; a tiny 14% are covered by unemployment insurance. Families have no choice in such circumstances but to save as much as they possibly can for their retirement, health and other social needs.

Another mayor problem is the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which with Deng's encouragement became in effect a conglomerate in the 1980s. Corruption became ubiquitous among military business leaders and remains part of the PLA DNA, including its active involvement with the human organ commerce I'll come to in a moment. In the courts, Hutton notes, a majority of the judges are retired military, who are more than willing to maintain the party's hegemony. The judiciary is directed by the party at every level.

The party remains in effect police, prosecutor, judge and jury for any and all cases it deems important. One of many examples was the blood bank scandal in Henan in the 1990s in which donors, who were invited to "sell your blood and become rich", received blood back minus its plasma from a general blood bank infected with HIV-positive blood. As many as 100,000 children were orphaned, but no corrupt party official responsible appears to have paid any penalty whatsoever.

What is equally outrageous in terms of accountability is that documents were later obtained which showed that branches of the Henan government knew that HIV was being spread through the blood scheme long before the trade was finally stopped.

MATAS-KILGOUR REPORT: BLOODY HARVEST

China's totalitarian governance, combined with 'anything goes' capitalism, unfortunately has demonstrated that the party's capacity for violence and crimes against humanity remains unlimited. A declared 'enemy' of the party in mid-1999, only after the government had actively promoted its healthy lifestyle and meditation for several years, Falun Gong practitioners continue to be in effect murdered by medical personnel across China for their vital organs. The independent report on this new crime against humanity by David Matas and myself can be accessed in about 15 languages at organharvestinvestigation.net.

Our revised report of January with its appendices is 178 pages long in one edition, so I'll summarize here its major findings only briefly:

Since launching our independent investigation in May, 2006 at the request of the Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong in China, Matas and I have concluded to our horror that the government of China and its agencies in numerous parts of the country have "put to death a large but unknown number of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.

Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries."

Falun Gong practitioners do a combination of five physical exercises and spiritual principles based on "truth, compassion and forbearance". The latter contain similar principles as Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, which are major components of Chinese history. It grew in numbers from virtually nothing in 1992 to more than 70 million practitioners across China at the end of the nineties by one government estimate.

In the summer of 1999 for reasons which seem mostly rooted in totalitarian paranoia, the party unleashed a campaign of media vilification and persecution which continues to the present. The invented rationale was that Falun Gong was an "enemy of the state" and an "evil cult", although in reality its practitioners in fact were non-political until

attacked and have none of the characteristics of a cult.

Falun Gong practitioners have since been arrested in huge numbers; they are imprisoned in 're-education camps' almost always without charge or trial and many have been tortured and forced to work long hours in export manufacturing facilities until they renounce their beliefs. Thousands of named practitioners have died as result of torture. The UN rapporteur on torture, Manfred Novak, found last year that two-thirds of those tortured in prisons across China are Falun Gong practitioners. Only Falun Gong prisoners among the general prison population are regularly blood tested and physically examined for a terrible reason which is now evident.

Virtually all organs transplanted in China come from executed prisoners, but this group comprises both convicted individuals and Falun Gong practitioners. The latter are rarely convicted of anything. Unlike convicts, they are in effect murdered by doctors and nurses with toxic inoculations and scalpels to provide organs for tissue compatible organ recipients, who pay large amounts of money for the organs (ranging from \$30,000 US to \$180,000 for a kidney-liver combination).

NO SMOKING GUNS

The seizing of organs in China from Falun Gong practitioners is done in operating rooms. The victims are killed in the process and their bodies are cremated. The medical perpetrators of these acts are guilty of crimes against humanity and highly unlikely to confess. Fair-minded persons considering our evidence as a whole can, as we do, have 'gut level certainty', as one law professor referred to criminal convictions based largely on compelling circumstantial evidence, that these crimes have taken place and continue to occur. Smoking guns exist mostly on television.

Our terrible conclusion comes not from any one of the thirty three pieces of evidence we have now considered, but from the combination of all of them. All of the thirty three however, are verifiable and in most cases are incontestable. Five representative samples are these:

1- Falun Gong practitioners constitute a huge prison population which the government vilifies, dehumanizes, depersonalizes and marginalizes even more than prisoners condemned to death upon conviction for capital offences (numbering more than 60 offences, including tax fraud).

2-We had callers telephoning hospitals and other institutions across China, posing as family members of persons needing organ transplants; in a wide variety of locations the respondents said that Falun Gong prisoners were the source of the organs.

3-The ex-wife of a surgeon told us that he had personally removed the corneas from approximately two thousand Falun Gong practitioners in Shenyang city in northeast China during the two-year period before October, 2003 and we found her statement to be

credible.

4-Waiting times for organ transplants in China are astonishingly short-a matter of days or weeks, strongly suggesting a bank of living "donors" available for organ tourists. Everywhere else in the world waiting times are measured in months and years. Hospital websites in China self-incriminate by boasting of very short waits for all organs on payment of large fees.

5-Transplant recipients told us that military personnel do operations in both military and civilian hospitals. The website of the Organ Transplant Centre of the Armed Police General Hospital Centre in Beijing boldly says: "Our Organ Transplant Center is our main department for making money " One organ recipient in Asia told us that he was brought fully seven kidneys by a military surgeon before the eighth was found to be compatible with his body tissue and anti-bodies. Eight human beings died before he got his usable kidney.

In summary, the evidence that these crimes have been occurring across China is simply overwhelming. The government of China has to date produced no effective response to our report.

CONCLUSIONS CONFIRMED

By announcing on April 6th this year that as of May 1st there will be no more trade in human organs, the government of China unintentionally confirmed the grisly truth of the conclusion by many, including our report. Matas and I, of course, hope that this latest edict will stop the killing of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience both before and after the Beijing Olympic Games. Given the vast sums of money involved, the indications that the military operate outside the health system and the obvious linkage of this announcement to concern about the now indelibly termed "Genocide Olympics", we remain sceptical that much will change in a crime against humanity that has gone on across China now for about six years.

The government of China has a history in this area of announcing policies and laws which sound fine in principle to the international community but are then not enforced. This announcement will mean nothing if the practice of organ harvesting from non-consenting 'donors' for huge sums of money continues.

The Chinese Deputy Health Minister Huang Jiefu, speaking in Guangzhou in mid-November 2006, denounced the selling of organs of executed prisoners, saying, "Under-the-table business must be banned." Yet the practice had already been banned in law on July 1, 2006 and by policy long before that, so his speech was an official acknowledgement that the previous bans were ineffective. We worry that this announcement of a change in the law is nothing more than a political cosmetic, a piece of propaganda with its eye fixed firmly on cleansing the party's terrible human rights reputation before the 2008 Beijing Olympics in the minds of prospective foreign visitors.

"DRAW LESSONS FROM FACTS"

This brings me to *The China Fantasy* by an American, James Mann, which criticizes the common presumption that the CCP is bound to move towards democracy, political liberalization and respecting human rights. Mann thinks the elites in cities like Shanghai and Beijing might turn out to want to perpetuate authoritarian governance in China, contrary to the three decades-old assumptions of American politicians in both parties, business executives, sinologists and diplomats. His book argues that it is time to stop overlooking the party's human rights abuses, the crushing of political dissent at home and support for pariah regimes abroad.

The 'Soothing Scenario' promoted by many China 'experts' in the West has argued continuously during four decades that democracy is just over the horizon no matter what occurs. Both Deng Xiaoping and Hu Jintao, for example, suggested on coming to power that they favoured political pluralism, only to reverse themselves upon consolidating their positions. Deng permitted the 'Democracy Wall' in Beijing in 1978 only later to disallow it and jail dissidents. Hu permitted an open discussion of the 2003 SARS epidemic, treating the retired doctor (Jiang Yanyong) who exposed it as a national hero, but later placed him under house arrest for criticizing the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Dunn asserts that if China becomes a democracy the chances of a military confrontation of any kind anywhere would disappear immediately. As well, the 1.3 billion residents of China deserve the right to choose their own government rather than continue with an unelected party "with a long, unsavoury, violence-prone history, a love of its own privileges and a weakness for corruption."

POLICIES ABROAD

There is also the role of the CCP abroad, which, Dunn notes, undermines democratic values continuously. It gave Robert Mugabe an honorary degree in China and economic help to his government, although his regime is one of the most brutal and corrupt anywhere on earth. It is the principal backer of the military junta in Burma, where Aung San Suu Kyi continues under house arrest 16 years after she and her supporters won an open election. When Uzbekistan president Islam Karimov ordered a murderous crackdown on demonstrators in 2005, China's government shored him up. In Sudan, where reasonable people long ago concluded that the Bashir regime has been conducting a genocide in Darfur for years the CCP is one of his major backers, especially at the UN Security Council. Recently China sent several hundred "engineers" to Sudan, but no-one has any doubt that this sudden interest in stopping the ongoing killing and raping is related only to the "Genocide Olympics" about which Darfur supporters like Mia Farrow continue to raise public awareness.

As Dunn reminds us, a permanently authoritarian China would also undermine Russia's currently diminished commitment to democracy. For example, during the 1991 coup attempt by the Soviet military and intelligence officials against Mikhail Gorbachev,

China's government media gave positive and extensive coverage to the plotters, barely mentioning Boris Yeltsin or his democratic allies, and was left disappointed when the coup attempt failed. In short, principled leaders in the democracies should be working smarter and harder to encourage the creation of a China that is pluralistic and democratic. Dunn notes that every American president since Nixon has either given up on or ignored the issue of democracy in China.

The same is certainly true of leaders of most other democratic countries, including our own, although Prime Minister Harper said recently that our relationship with China will from now on be determined by both human values and commercial interests. We'll all watch with close interest what develops between the two governments. I should flag here an article, "China and Canada: A Relationship Reconsidered" (http://hrichina.org/public/PDFs/CRF.1.2007/CRF-2007-1_Canada.pdf) by Cheuk Kwan and published in China Rights forum.

OLYMPIC GAMES

Dunn thinks the media hype surrounding the 2008 Olympic Games will dwarf all earlier ones. China's government has already adapted a cute-and-cuddly image for them with its 'Five Friendlies'--doll-like characters, including a panda, designed to appeal to children, marketers and tourists. He asks pointedly if the "world's car manufacturers and beer companies (will) want to sponsor television coverage of the Olympics that dwells on the unpleasant side of China--the sweatshops, the poverty, the political prisoners, the corruption and the environmental disasters? Not likely." He queries if the Beijing games will follow the terrible precedent of the Berlin Olympics of 1936.

The Chinese media will stress patriotism at home throughout 2008 and probably before. Their coverage of the October, 1999 fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Peoples' Republic of China, which featured a parade intended to demonstrate the military power and the achievements of the CCP, is a likely template. John Pomfret of the Washington Post wrote chillingly about that day in Beijing:

"No random spectators were allowed to view the scores of gaily coloured floats that coursed for two hours down to the Boulevard of Eternal Peace. No overweight children were among the goose-stepping young students, Woman participants were picked for their beauty; soldiers were carefully selected for height, polish and marching skill. And all were chosen on the basis of their 'love of the motherland', Chinese officials said."

The presence of a huge international media corps in Beijing could help to spur political demonstrations by democracy activists, religious groups, including Falun Gong, Tibetans, Uighurs, aggrieved workers and farmers, but only if they can penetrate the security designed to keep them away from the television cameras. Dunn: "Would-be protesters will be kept out of Beijing (or if they live in the city, they may be thrown out of Beijing). Crowds will not be allowed to gather; if they do, they will be dispersed before they can make it to any public space. The police will be especially rough on groups seeking access

to Tiananmen Square, which has been off limits to protests since 1989."

The real test will come after the foreigners have left Beijing, says Dunn. How many of the changes in China's political system hinted at on the eve of the Games will be implemented? Will the democratic world now all but about 45 dictatorships across the planet successfully integrate China to our norms? Or will the business community in Canada and elsewhere have to continue to explain why they are kowtowing to a regime that rather recently ordered tanks to fire on unarmed citizens and which since 2000 has been killing Falun Gong prisoners of conscience without trial and selling their organs for cash to organ tourists? Is this corporate social responsibility to some CEOs?

Dunn stresses that the real problem with the business community is "Who's integrating whom?" How many Canadians have lost their livelihoods as a result of this integration, including, for example, 800 Goodyear Tire employees near Montreal who saw their tire plant close a few months ago because someone thinks they can manufacture tires more cheaply in China?

MIA FARROW'S "GENOCIDE OLYMPICS"

A word here about Mia Farrow, whom Sports Illustrated magazine's columnist Rick Reilly has already nominated as first hero of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Reilly eloquently reminds readers that UNICEF goodwill ambassador Farrow has been pressuring the government of China to face up to its role in the genocide being carried out in the Darfur region of Sudan. "These are the Genocide Olympics. China is funding the first genocide of the third millennium", says Farrow.

Judging by the speed with which China's president Hu Jintao subsequently sent an official to Khartoum, seeking to persuade the Sudanese government to accept the 20,000 UN peacekeeping troops who stand ready to enter Darfur, the leverage of 'star power' on the peoples of various countries in respect of pre-Games China is enormous. The question for all of us across the world concerned about the murder of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners for their organs is how to obtain the commitment of "Marvellous Mia" and other celebrities for the various profound human rights causes which bring us to this forum today.

RECOMMENDED INITIATIVES

Among the initiatives that each of us might take to pressure the government of China on a host of human rights issues over the next year or so are these five:

1-If you know a media celebrity other than the ones who are already linked to a human rights cause in China or elsewhere, try to solicit their public commitment to one or more of the human rights issues that brings us all here today.

2-Use the Internet and emails strategically to raise public awareness about your own particular human dignity issue in China. The 1997 Nobel Peace laureate Jody Williams

(International Campaign to Ban Landmines) noted that emails sent around the world were the secret weapon to obtain enactment of the Land Mines Convention in Ottawa in the late nineties.

3-In future, let's all work together in respect of human rights in China, using the fast-approaching Games as the best available fulcrum. If, say, one community is demonstrating against the visit of a minister from China (E.g. Chinese Commerce Minister Bo this week in Ottawa), why don't other groups come out to show solidarity.

4 -Leave no stone unturned on these vital causes. Be tireless. Speak, write, listen and strategize.

5-If it becomes necessary to call for a boycott together or separately of the 2008 Olympic Games, let us all be fully understanding of all the training and sustained effort put into their sport by Olympians everywhere. But let us be vigorous. The International Olympics Committee should, given that human rights have deteriorated across China since it was awarded the Games, never have given the games to Beijing. If the IOC will not push harder on the host government to improve human rights in China than it has done to date, the IOC will be partly responsible for the calls for boycott. We did not know about the Holocaust before the Berlin Olympics in 1936, but the international community does know what the government of China is doing now both internally and internationally. Human dignity is ultimately indivisible today just as it was in the 1930s.

Thank you.