

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 364

Urging the introduction and passage of a resolution on the human rights situation in the People's Republic of China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 1998

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. GEPHARDT, Mr. WOLF, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. NORTON, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. TIERNEY, and Mr. CLAY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

RESOLUTION

Urging the introduction and passage of a resolution on the human rights situation in the People's Republic of China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Whereas the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1997 state that "[t]he Government [of China] continued to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms," including extrajudicial killings, the use of torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, forced abortion and sterilization, the sale of organs from executed prisoners, and tight control over the exercise of the rights of freedom of speech, press, and religion;

Whereas, according to the State Department, “Serious human rights abuses persisted in minority areas [controlled by the Government of China], including Tibet and Xinjiang [East Turkestan], where tight controls on religion and other fundamental freedoms continued and, in some cases, intensified [during 1997]”;

Whereas, according to the 1997 Country Reports, the Government of China enforces its “one-child policy” using coercive measures including severe fines of up to several times the annual income of the average resident of China and sometimes punishes nonpayment by destroying homes and confiscating personal property;

Whereas, according to the 1997 Country Reports, as part of the Chinese Government’s continued attempts to expand state control of religion, “Police closed many ‘underground’ mosques, temples, and seminaries,” and authorities “made strong efforts to crack down on the activities of the unapproved Catholic and Protestant churches” including the use of detention, arrest, and “reform-through-education” sentences;

Whereas, each year since 1990, the United States has participated in an unsuccessful multilateral effort to gain passage of a United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution addressing the human rights situation in China;

Whereas the Government of China has mounted a diplomatic campaign each year to defeat the resolution and has succeeded in blocking commission consideration of such a resolution each year except 1995, when the United States engaged in a more aggressive effort to promote the resolution;

Whereas China's opposition to the resolution has featured an attack on the principle of the universality of human rights, which the United States, China, and 169 other governments reaffirmed at the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights;

Whereas United States leadership is critical to the possibility of success for that resolution;

Whereas, in 1994, when the President announced his decision to delink Most Favored Nation (MFN) status for China from previously announced human rights conditions, the Administration pledged that the United States would "step up its efforts, in cooperation with other states, to insist that the United Nations Human Rights Commission pass a resolution dealing with the serious human rights abuses in China" as part of the Administration's "new human rights strategy";

Whereas a failure vigorously to pursue the adoption of such a resolution would constitute an abandonment of the "expanded multilateral agenda" that the Administration promised as part of its "new human rights strategy" toward China;

Whereas Chinese democracy advocate and former political prisoner Wei Jingsheng has stated that "[t]his [United Nations Commission on Human Rights] resolution is a matter of life and death for democratic reform in China"; and

Whereas a broad coalition of human rights organizations, including Amnesty International USA, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Physicians for Human Rights, International Human Rights Law Group, International League for Human Rights, Jacob Blaustein

Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, and the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, have stressed “the critical importance of a multilateral effort to pursue a resolution on China at this year’s session of the [United Nations Commission on Human Rights]”:
Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives urges
- 2 the President to initiate an immediate and determined
- 3 United States effort to secure passage of a resolution on
- 4 human rights violations in China at the 54th Session of
- 5 the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

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