

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... (Engrossed as Agreed to or Passed by House)

HRES 364

H. Res. 364
In the House of Representatives, U.S.,
March 17, 1998.

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, although the 1997 Country Reports note several `positive steps' by the Chinese Government such as signing the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and allowing the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention to visit China, Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck has testified regarding those reports that `We do not see major changes [in the human rights situation in China]. We have not characterized China as having demonstrated major changes in the period over the course of the last year';

Whereas, in 1990, 1992, and each year since then, 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 on February 23, 1998, the European Union (EU) agreed that neither the EU nor its member states would table or cosponsor a resolution on the human rights situation in China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

Whereas on March 13, 1998, the Administration announced that it would not seek passage of a resolution at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights addressing the human rights situation in China;

Whereas without United States leadership there is little 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 an important component of the 'expanded multilateral agenda' that the Administration promised as part of its 'new human rights strategy' toward China; and

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': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

(1) urges the President to reconsider his decision not to press for passage of a resolution on human rights violations in China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights;

(2) expresses its profound regret that the European Union will not table or cosponsor a resolution on human rights violations in China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; and

(3) urges all members of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to support passage of a resolution on human rights violations in China at the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Attest:

Clerk.