

UNITED STATES CONGRESS
S.J. RES. 43
WASHINGTON, DC. DECEMBER 11, 1995

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Helms (for himself, Thomas, Mack, Pell, Feingold, Moynihan, and Simon) introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign relations

Reported by Mr. Helms, with an amendment to the preamble

JOINT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress regarding Wei Jingsheng; Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the next Panchen Lama of Tibet; and the human rights practices of the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Whereas on November 21, 1995, the Government of the People's Republic of China formally arrested Wei Jingsheng, who is known internationally as the father of the democracy movement in China;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has held Wei Jingsheng incommunicado and without charge since April 1994 and has rebuffed international calls to release him;

Whereas Wei Jingsheng has spent all but 6 months of the last 16 years in detention because of his unwavering support for freedom of speech and the development of democracy in China;

Whereas at an October 1995 meeting in New York between President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin of China, the Administration urged the Government of the People's Republic of China to release political prisoners and specifically included Wei Jingsheng and others among such prisoners;

Whereas the treatment of Wei Jingsheng by the Government of the People's Republic of China raises concern over the future of other jailed dissidents in China, including Wang Dan, a student leader in the 1989 pro-democracy movement in China;

Whereas on May 14, 1995, His Holiness the Dalai Lama announced recognition of 6-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the next Panchen Lama;

Whereas recognition of the successor to the Panchen Lama in Tibet has always been within the authority of the Dalai Lama;

Whereas for the first time in Tibetan history, the Government of the People's Republic of China has imposed on Tibet its own candidate for a new Panchen Lama and has rejected the new Panchen Lama selected by the Dalai Lama;

Whereas Gedhun Choekyi Nyima and his family have been missing for 6 months and are reportedly being held by authorities of the Government of the People's Republic of China;
Whereas Chatrel Rinpoche, who is the head of the original search committee for the new Panchen Lama and who refused to denounce the Dalai Lama's selection of the new Panchen Lama, is also

missing and believed to be held by authorities of the Government of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas the Panchen Lama is one of the highest-ranking religious official of Tibetan Buddhism;

Whereas the rejection of the Dalai Lama's selection of Panchen Lama by the Government of the People's Republic of China, and the selection of its own candidate for Panchen Lama, is seen by many Tibetans as politicizing a purely religious affair and as a violation of fundamental Tibetan human rights;

Whereas since the invasion of Tibet in 1949, the Government of the People's Republic of China has taken any expression by the Tibetan people of their distinct religious or cultural identity as a direct challenge to that government's political control of Tibet;

Whereas Chinese official have repeatedly maintained that the Tibet Autonomous Region is entitled to manage its own cultural and religious affairs, and the intervention of Chinese government authorities in the selection of the next Panchen Lama is a clear violation of the principle:

Whereas for 3 consecutive years, the United States has been a primary sponsor of resolutions criticizing the human rights practices of the Government of the People's Republic of China in China and Tibet at the annual meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva;

Whereas these resolutions call upon the Government of the People's Republic of China to take measures to ensure the observance of all human rights, invite that government to cooperate with all special Rapporteurs and working groups, and request the Secretary General of the United Nations to prepare a report for the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the human rights situation in China and Tibet;

Whereas at the March 1995 meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the resolution lost by only 1 vote;

Whereas it is important to maintain international pressure on the Government of the People's Republic of China in order to induce that government to respect internationally-recognized standards of human rights; and

Whereas in May 1994, the President of the United States pledged strong support for efforts at international forums to criticize the human rights practices of the Government of the People's Republic of China: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That the United States Government should --

- (1) press for the immediate and unconditional release of Wei Jingsheng and other political prisoners by the Government of the People's Republic of China;
- (2) urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to respect the wishes of the Tibetan people by supporting the selection of the new Panchen Lama by His Holiness the Dalai Lama;
- (3) work to ensure the safety of the new Panchen Lama as selected by the Dalai Lama; and

- (4) sponsor and aggressively push for the passage of a resolution regarding the human rights situation in China at the annual meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva scheduled for March 1996.

(This resolution was adopted on December 13, 1995)