



# Executive Memorandum

No. 764

August 10, 2001

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY ISSUES: HURDLES ON CHINA'S OLYMPIC TRACK TO RESPECTABILITY

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Now that the International Olympic Committee has awarded the 2008 Games to China, many Americans remain concerned that Beijing's penchant for repression of dissent at home and aggressive behavior toward its neighbors could compromise this well-loved symbol of international cooperation and goodwill. Indeed, few have forgotten the hardest lesson of the Olympics' checkered past: Merely awarding the Games—with the spirit of peace, fellowship, and humanitarianism that they engender in participants and observers—did not prevent at least two host countries from crushing the rights of citizens or committing aggressions against neighbors once the torch was extinguished.

The Games in China will not begin for another seven years, time enough for the United States and other freedom-loving countries to compel Beijing to adopt true Olympic values and to demonstrate good behavior both beyond its borders and at home by treating all people fairly. Their expectations, as well as any repercussions for China's belligerence, must be made clear.

**China and Human Rights.** Many consider China's worsening record on human rights, described in the last State Department human rights report, to be an affront to the ideals of the Olympics. In the past year, thousands of unregistered churches have been closed or destroyed, and several Protestant and Catholic churches were bulldozed into rubble just days before Christmas. On Good Friday 2001, authorities arrested not only a

Catholic bishop, but also some priests and 13 believers. In Buddhist Tibet and Muslim Xinjiang, China continues to repress religious observances in order to control groups seeking independence. At least 1,600 political prisoners were in jail at the end of 2000, including some in psychiatric hospitals on forced medication.

The recent arrests of Chinese-American scholars on clearly false espionage charges demonstrates the entrenched determination of China's thought-control apparatus. Though the detainees were eventually released, they are sad proof that a Chinese person can hope to have his minimal judicial rights respected in his native land only if he carries a foreign passport. Recent revelations in *The Washington Post* concerning China's routine use of torture and brutality against adherents of Falun Gong meditative practices—apparently for no reason other than the government's fear that the Falun Gong may become a subversive organization—underscore the depth of the regime's ruthlessness.

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Produced by the

Asian Studies Center

Published by  
The Heritage Foundation  
214 Massachusetts Ave., NE  
Washington, D.C.  
20002-4999  
(202) 546-4400  
<http://www.heritage.org>



This paper, in its entirety, can be found at: [www.heritage.org/library/excmemo/em764.html](http://www.heritage.org/library/excmemo/em764.html)

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**Aggressiveness Abroad.** Many consider China's increasing harassment of Taiwan an affront to Olympic values as well. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducts an average of three large-scale military exercises annually on the coast opposite Taiwan. Each year, these maneuvers have become more sophisticated and the equipment more advanced. China has deployed 200 short-range missiles within range of Taiwan targets and reportedly intends to have 5,000 missiles in place within five years.

On July 26, the PLA's newspaper declared, "the campaign to win the Olympics showed the world that there is now a brand new power that breaks through brambles and thorns and will not stop before reaching its goal." Then the paper vowed that "no foreign power will be successful in their attempts to use the Taiwan Question to interfere in China's internal affairs." This is hardly the language of a host that hopes to be seen as a model of international goodwill.

**Influencing China to Change.** The President, members of his Administration, and Congress can set the tone for international expectations of China as host. The message: that the purpose of the Olympics is to promote world peace, rooted in a belief that the human family is more alike in pursuing excellence than disparate, and militaristic urges are incompatible with that value system.

Secretary of State Colin Powell laid the groundwork for this effort during a July 28 visit to Beijing. He said, "the United States looks forward to seeing the changes in the next seven years that this historic event is bound to stimulate." If the United States expects to influence China to change its behavior, it must make these expectations clear before President Bush travels to China in October. For example, Washington should make clear to Beijing that the international community expects it to:

- Welcome rather than repress the profound contributions that religious beliefs, practices, and charitable works make to society;
- Encourage political reform;

- Commit to the rule of law based on international norms; and
- Eschew military bluster against Taiwan while accepting Taiwan's offers to discuss their differences as equals.

**What Washington Should Do.** To this end, America's leaders should:

- **Caution China that its use of force against Taiwan could spark an international boycott of the 2008 Games.** Moreover, egregious acts short of force could warrant Administration support for advertising and spectator boycotts.
- **Insist that visitors to China be free of official threats to their person and property because of their political, social, or religious views.** The State Department should stiffen its warning on travel to China, which merely cautions Americans of the risk of detention "if they have at any time engaged in activities or published writings critical of Chinese government policies."
- **Keep the focus on China's behavior.** Congress, for example, could require the State Department to make quarterly updates of its human rights reports on China as well as regular written reports on China's aggressive behavior toward its neighbors and nations littoral to the South China Sea. Such reports would indicate whether more concrete sanctions were needed.

**Conclusion.** Linking the 2008 Olympics directly to peace in the Asia-Pacific region would provide effective leverage over China's behavior for the next seven years. It also would demonstrate that Washington is committed to furthering human rights and democratic principles, and that affronts to those values will not be ignored.

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