

ADDRESSING THE GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABUSES OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 22, 2005

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my profound concerns over the People's Republic of China's, PRC, persistent efforts to squash religious freedom and religious expression. As a senior member of the House International Relations Committee, I have worked—along with like-minded colleagues in the House and Senate—to send a strong, consistent message to repressive regimes like the PRC that membership in the community of nations requires a real commitment to support and advance democratic governance, political openness, respect for human rights, and promotion and protection for the freedom of speech and religion. Tragically, this message continues to fall upon deaf ears and the persecution of religious freedom continues; as best exemplified by the PRC's campaign of repression against members of the peaceful Falun Gong movement.

Many of us have become familiar with the case of the Falun Gong—also known as Falun Dafa—a religious movement which combines a regimen of exercise with meditation. According to its practitioners, the beliefs of Falun Gong are derived from qigong, a set of movements that stimulate the flow of vital energies throughout the body. As I understand it, the practice teaches the virtues of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance, while warning against moral degeneration and materialism.

Since 1999, because the members of this peaceful practice dared to ask their government for official recognition and their constitutional rights to free speech, press, and assembly, the PRC has systematically and ruthlessly cracked down on the practitioners of Falun Gong. Yet the Falun Gong were only one of many groups to face persecution. On October 30, 1999, China's National People's Congress promulgated an "anti-cult" law, retroactively suppressing the Falun Gong movement and thousands of other religious sects across the country; closing 67 teaching stations and 1,627 practice sites in Beijing alone.

Subsequently, the PRC detained and questioned over 30,000 followers nationwide, and charged Falun Gong leaders with numerous crimes, including: organizing superstitious sects, disrupting public order, leaking state secrets to foreigners, and engaging in unlawful assembly and publication. Between 150 and 450 group leaders and other members were tried and sentenced to terms of up to 18–20 years in prison; and an estimated 10,000 to 100,000 citizens have spent time in detention or "labor reeducation" camps solely because of their religious beliefs.

In fact, the U.S. State Department's International Religious Freedom Report of 2004 stated that "the Government [of China] continued its repression of groups that it categorized as 'cults' in general and of the Falun Gong in particular." Moreover, the arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Falun Gong practitioners continued as they respectfully refused to recant their beliefs. As a result, they are being continually subjected to harsh treatment

in prisons and re-education through labor camps—many times resulting in deaths due to torture and abuse. For example, in December 2003, Falun Gong practitioner Liu Chengjun died after reportedly being abused in custody in the Jilin Province. The report went on to state that the Chinese Government "tends to perceive unregulated religious gatherings or groups as a potential challenge to its authority, and it attempts to control and regulate religious groups to prevent the rise of groups or sources of authority outside the control of the Government and the CCP." The U.S. Department of State—for 6 consecutive years—has designated China as a "Country of particular concern" for "particularly severe violations of religious freedom," especially as it pertains to the persecution of Falun Gong members.

It is in part due to the brave and courageous writers at The Epoch Times—a Chinese-language newspaper and publisher of the Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party—that we have an accounting of this religious persecution and the numerous other dangerous activities of the PRC. The Commentaries present an uncensored and honest history of the Chinese Communist Party, CCP, effectively and poignantly detailing the brutal conditions under the CCP which have prompted over 3 million Chinese to make public statements renouncing all ties to Communism. By now, over 300 public forums of the Nine Commentaries and 100 public rallies—with tens of thousands of supporters—have been held in more than 50 major cities throughout the world. I applaud and commend their tireless efforts to show the world what is truly happening inside China.

Mr. Speaker, the right to religious freedom is firmly enshrined in both our own Bill of Rights as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18; and a nation's adherence to this principle is now widely understood to be a strong indicator of the good governance required to protect the rights of minorities and safeguards of social peace. The importance of promoting religious freedom cannot be overstated. In many ways, the promotion of religious freedom is intimately connected to the promotion of other fundamental human and civil rights, as well as to the growth of democracy. Once believers cannot convene, worship, and publish their literature, there is essentially no freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of press.

As we work to spread the ideals of democracy to areas of the world that have languished in the shadow of tyranny, we must also carry forward the simple but powerful message that every person has a right to religious freedom and fight to roll back the tide of religious repression whenever and wherever it threatens to spread across the globe.

To that end, I ask my colleagues to join with me to support efforts in the U.S. Congress that seek to highlight the plight of and express American support for all the innocent citizens who have been imprisoned unfairly; and to continue to stress to China's leaders that the American people are firmly committed to defending religious freedom throughout the world.

In closing, I would respectfully commend to my colleagues' attention an open letter to the world written by Yeong-Ching Foo to rescue her fiancé Charles Li, one of the many Falun Gong practitioners persecuted by the People's Republic of China; and I would like to have

the text of this letter placed into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my statement.

OPEN LETTER TO RESCUE CHARLES LI

FELLOW AMERICANS: My fiancé, a former post doctoral researcher of Massachusetts General Hospital, is jailed by a government which has inflicted on its own people wars, famine, tyranny, massacre, and terror. Now my fiancé's life and fate are at its disposal. Over two and a half years have passed since Charles was arrested in China. Since the very beginning of his arrest, every day has been a nightmare. I have not been allowed to hear his voice, but not once have I stopped thinking about how he is doing. I can't imagine the abuse he suffers and the brainwashing sessions he is forced to constantly attend.

Charles has been subjected to other forms of torture; I cannot list them all. He could have lost his life twice, and over 2½ years, the authorities have been trying to take away his soul with brainwashing. We should never have given them the chance to hurt him like that. Charles must be rescued back immediately.

In June 2003, after Charles had not had food in his stomach for almost eight days, Chinese guards shoved a tube into his stomach and left it there for 33 hours.

In July 2003, Charles was physically forced by inmates that were instigated by the authorities to attend a brainwashing class to renounce his belief in Falun Gong. They knocked Charles down to the ground and dragged him by the feet down a flight of stairs, causing bruises all over his body.

In December 2004, Charles was tortured until he experienced fast heart beats and shortness of breath. He was forced to sit up straight with his head facing forward and was not allowed to move for 4 to 7 hours each day. He was tortured like this for 48 consecutive days.

Charles went to China trying to stop the persecution of Falun Gong in China by trying to expose the atrocity and brutal persecution of Falun Gong that is based on lies. Persecution of Falun Gong is carried out in a large scale to the extent where the former communist ruler, Jiang Zemin himself handed the propaganda of Falun Gong to high officials outside China; building '6-10 offices', a Gestapo-like organization set up to eradicate Falun Gong throughout the whole world. This was confirmed by Hao Fengjun, a former policeman in the '6-10' office, defected to Australia. He verified that the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China is indeed extremely brutal (See <http://english.epochtimes.com/news/5-6-10/29446.html>).

For each hour that Charles is held captive in China, his life is endangered. My heart has been bleeding for over 888 days by now! All this time, I have been very strong and forbearing. Actually, without my practice of Falun Gong that teaches me Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance, I know I would have gone crazy.

Since Charles' arrest, I have appealed to you—Charles' fellow Americans—for support and help in rescuing him. The response has been overwhelming and we are both very grateful. Two summers ago, after a series of van tours across the U.S. when thousands of people expressed their support, Charles' treatment improved. But as public attention turned to other issues, his situation has worsened. As long as Charles is still in jail, I will not stop trying to bring him home, but I need your help.

The United States was founded on the principle of freedom of belief, as those who fled religious persecution in England were seeking independence in the New World. The Chinese people also seek spiritual independence

and an escape from the lies and hate that have plagued them under the CCP. I am proud of Charles for the risk he took to try and accomplish that in peaceful, non-violent way. I am proud of him for his courage.

Charles should be rescued back immediately, and unconditionally. I believe that, together, we, the American people and the US government, will not let him down.

"My family, friends and I are fortunate to have so much help and support from you ever since I have been illegally detained and persecuted. We all appreciate it very much. As time goes by, I believe that the truth will be revealed to you. The persecution of Falun Gong is totally illegal and brutal. And also, as Dr. King says, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Thank you very much! Yours Very Sincerely, Charles Li"—From a letter written in jail by Charles to US officials, May 16, 2003.

Let's rescue our fellow US citizen back from the hand of the Chinese Communist Party and let the moral value and conscience be awakened! Thank You!

Yours sincerely,

YEONG-CHING FOO.

MARCUS GARVEY—KEEPING HIS
LEGACY ALIVE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 22, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw attention to the life and legacy of a towering figure in the struggle for global human rights. Marcus Garvey is now widely viewed as one of the most crucial figures in the modern history of peoples of African descent, and is considered a national hero in his native Jamaica. The movement he started with the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) during the early 1900's is still the largest that the modern Black world has ever seen. During a bleak and oppressive period, he gave Black people in this country and around the world a pride in themselves and a hope for the future.

His efforts were a major impetus in the later movements that ended legalized discrimination in this country, and freed many parts of the Black World from the shackles of colonization. Indeed, his life and philosophy were embraced by influential leaders of the 20th century such as Kwame Nkrumah, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

Marcus Garvey has been an inspiration to me since I was a child. I was born, raised, and still live in Harlem, where Garvey established the Headquarters for the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Though I was born three years after Garvey was deported from the United States, his imprint on Harlem was still deep throughout my childhood and adolescence. I often met followers of Garvey's movement, known as Garveyites, who would preach his philosophy. Their words encouraged me to do my own research. As I grew older, I came to fully understand the importance of Garvey—both the man and his message—and the injustice of his wrongful conviction.

Despite his future impact, he lived in an early 20th century America that was very resistant to change. Many became threatened by the size and implications of his movement, and he soon became the target of significant government harassment, led by a young J. Edgar Hoover.

Hoover became determined to rid the country of Garvey and his message. After many failed attempts to impugn his reputation and his motives, he ultimately became the victim of an unjust prosecution and conviction by the United States government in 1923, on a single count of mail fraud. So great was the outcry regarding the suspect nature of the conviction that President Calvin Coolidge would commute his sentence in 1927.

The actions of J. Edgar Hoover in his capacity as FBI Director are well documented, and have been the source of much public objection. Indeed, we now know of the efforts he made to undermine and discredit Dr. Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement.

Outside the issue of J. Edgar Hoover however, the case of Mr. Garvey highlights a regrettable period in American history—when groups and individuals inexcusably used the American legal system to assail innocent people, especially African Americans. Many, like Garvey, who had achieved great fame and success, were victims of such malevolence.

Jack Johnson, the famous African American Boxer, is one example. His wrongful prosecution and conviction, which occurred little more than a decade before that of Marcus Garvey's, has elicited a bi-partisan effort in the Congress to bring about his exoneration.

Since 1987 I have sought to clear the name of Marcus Garvey by seeking Congressional recognition of the injustice done to him, and securing a Presidential pardon of his conviction. I have continued this effort in 109th Congress with H. Con. Res. 57, and have received the most support for the effort since I first introduced legislation nearly 20 years ago.

The case of Henry O. Flipper gives me optimism as I move forward with the current Garvey effort. Flipper was West Point's first Black graduate, and the Army's first black officer. But he was also the victim of an unjust, and racially motivated court-martial. President Clinton's 1999 exoneration of Mr. Flipper has cleared the way for other such posthumous Presidential pardons.

In addition, I am also heartened by the fact that individuals and groups in the U.S. and around the world continue to ensure that the deeds and legacy of Marcus Garvey is preserved for future generations. UNIA, the organization which Marcus Garvey established nearly 100 years ago still exists today, and continues Marcus Garvey's message of self improvement and self awareness, through various education and service programs around the country. The organization will actually be having a 91st anniversary celebration here in Washington, DC on July 30th, which will serve to further illuminate the life and message of this important man.

Other groups and organizations, such as the Connecticut-based International Foundation for the Exoneration of Marcus Garvey, have been active in spreading awareness of Marcus Garvey's wrongful conviction, and building support for the exoneration effort. I thank all of them for everything they continue to do to seek justice for Marcus Garvey and keep him alive in our hearts and minds.

Marcus Garvey once asserted that, "Action, self-reliance, the vision of self and the future, have been the only means by which the oppressed have seen and realized the light of their own freedom." This message transcends any race or group; it is a universal human American ideal. It is why the world must never forget Marcus Garvey.

TRIBUTE TO COL. ROBERT A.
ROWLETTE, JR.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 22, 2005

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Colonel Robert A. Rowlette, Jr., Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers for the Louisville District. On July 29, 2005, after 26 years of distinguished and dedicated military service to our country, Colonel Rowlette will retire from his post as commander. I believe it is important to highlight the honors he has received and the assignments in which he has dutifully served.

Born in Berea, Kentucky, Colonel Rowlette was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers upon graduation from the University of Kentucky in 1979. At the University of Kentucky he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. He returned to the University of Kentucky to earn a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering in 1990. Additionally, he is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College. Colonel Rowlette is registered as a Professional Engineer in the Commonwealths of Virginia and Kentucky.

Colonel Rowlette has received many honors and awards for his service to our Country. His military honors include the Meritorious Service Medal with seven Oak Leaf Clusters, The Army Commendation Medal, The Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Prior to becoming the Army Corps of Engineers' Commander for the Louisville District, Colonel Rowlette's tour of duty included assignments in the continental United States and Hawaii. He has previously served as a project manager and assistant chief Army Programs in the Louisville District. Following his assignment to Louisville District he served with the 46th Battalion at Ft. Rucker, Alabama as a company commander and operations officer.

Colonel Rowlette's next assignment was at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York where he served as an instructor and an Assistant Professor of Mathematical Sciences. Following his time at West Point attended the Command and General Staff College. Following graduation, he served as the Executive Officer for the 84th Engineer Battalion at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He next served as the Operations Officer for the 416th ENCOM FWD cell at Fort McPherson, GA.

I had the pleasure of meeting and working with Colonel Rowlette when he arrived in Charleston, South Carolina to serve as Commander of the Charleston District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in my Congressional District. He followed his tenure in my home state, as the Engineer Colonel Assignments Officer with the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command and attended the Canadian Forces College in Toronto, Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in celebrating the 26-year career of Colonel Robert A. Rowlette, Jr. His leadership has been characterized by excellence and service. He has been a great asset to his profession and a role model for all of those who follow him in the United States Army Corps of Engineers. I wish him a very happy retirement and Godspeed.