

CENTRO CHA RECOGNITION FOR  
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 15, 2004*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise proudly today to congratulate the Long Beach Community Hispanic Association, a Long Beach community non-profit better known as Centro CHA, for their valuable service to the community.

Formed in 1992, Centro CHA's mission is to provide enhanced quality of life to Hispanic/Latino youth, families, and neighborhoods in the City of Long Beach through health and educational programs, social and economic enrichment, cultural arts, and after school programs.

Centro CHA is recognized in the City of Long Beach as a leading Hispanic/Latino grassroots community-based organization. Centro CHA serves as an advocate in efforts to reduce the gaps in services to low-income, underserved Hispanic/Latino youth, families, and neighborhoods.

The City of Long Beach is now the second largest city in California, with a population of nearly 458,000 new immigrants creating significant changes in ethnic distribution and a considerable increase in diversity. According to the 2000 United States Census, the Hispanic/Latino population represents almost 40 percent of the city's total population.

Centro CHA connects the public with vital linkages and resources to access healthcare, civic leadership, and educational institutions. Through cultural community forums, collaboration, and civic leadership, Centro CHA helps local service providers to connect these services to the Hispanic/Latino community. To make the public more aware of the community's activism, Centro CHA created an annual award.

The Nuestra Imagen Award recognizes local individuals and companies for their contributions to local Hispanic/Latino communities. The award is in its eighth year, and it has grown to be one of the most widely attended non-profit awards dinners in Los Angeles County. The awards ceremony coincides with Hispanic Heritage Month, as well as Mexican Independence Day, and celebrates "the exceptional achievements of outstanding individuals and corporations, all of whom foster the development of children, families and communities in the Greater Long Beach area."

I look forward to working with Centro CHA in the future for the betterment of our community.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR  
FREEDOM IN HONG KONG

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES A. LEACH**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 13, 2004*

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 667, expressing support for democracy in Hong Kong. I would like thank the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. COX), as well as the distinguished Ranking

Member of the Committee on International Relations (Mr. LANTOS), for sponsoring this timely and important resolution.

As my colleagues are aware, this is the seventh year after Hong Kong's reversion to China. As the Department of State noted in an April 2004 report to Congress (as mandated by the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992), the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) remains an international city whose residents continue to enjoy protections of the rule of law and broad civil liberties.

As is also well-understood, the U.S. maintains substantial economic and political interests in Hong Kong and promotes Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under Chinese sovereignty. Washington works closely with the authorities in Hong Kong on a wide range of international issues, not the least of which is cooperation in the global campaign against terrorism.

Having said that, developments over the last year have raised serious concerns, in the former British colony as well as around the world, regarding Beijing's commitment to respect the "high degree of autonomy" it has promised Hong Kong.

From a Congressional perspective, it appears self-evident that advancing democratization and constitutional reform—including universal suffrage—would contribute to the city's political stability and economic prosperity. The authorities in Beijing should realize that a vibrant, democratic and prosperous Hong Kong would be a tremendous asset to China. Hong Kong will only become a threat if China makes it so.

Even though the Basic Law may not technically require fuller democracy by 2007–2008, wisdom as well as respect for autonomy dictates the embrace of democracy for Hong Kong. Having traveled to Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines earlier this year, all of which have held successful local and national elections, I see no reason why Hong Kong—with all its wealth and sophistication—cannot do so also.

The people of Hong Kong made plain their aspirations for greater democratic autonomy, aspirations fully within the framework of the "one country, two systems" formula, when they so impressively demonstrated on July 1 last year. In the aftermath of those peaceful demonstrations, the Hong Kong government appeared to listen to the people and withdrew controversial national security legislation pending additional consultations with the populace of the city. The people of Hong Kong again showed their keen interest in participatory democracy when they turned out in record numbers for District Council elections last November, and in another large and peaceful pro-democracy demonstration on July 1st of this year.

In addition, in elections held on September 12, turnout was a record 1.784 million voters (55.63 percent of registered voters). However, pro-democracy candidates, perhaps stung by scandal, managed to gain only three seats for a total of 25, a disappointing outcome since opinion polls indicated stronger results under Hong Kong's complex electoral system.

The election results notwithstanding, one has the sense that the pace of democratization in Hong Kong appears inconsistent with the desires of a majority of the Hong Kong people. Indeed, recent decisions by Beijing setting limits on constitutional development in

Hong Kong appear to be inconsistent with the "high degree of autonomy" promised by the central authorities in the 1982 Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

Equally dismaying has been a series of incidents in Hong Kong—from several political talk show hosts complaining of apparent threats against them, the appearance of a Chinese flotilla sailing through Victoria Harbor, an attack on the office of legislator Emily Lau, and recent allegations of harassment against the print media—that many perceive to be part of a campaign of intimidation against pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong. Likewise, a new element in the September elections has been the concern of pro-democracy groups that mainland authorities were attempting to influence the outcome of the vote.

Although mainland officials insist that they continue to support the Basic Law's commitment to universal suffrage in Hong Kong, Beijing's actions indicate that the central authorities are profoundly concerned about the extension of democratic rights in the HKSAR. It is hard to know precisely why China has resisted Hong Kong's democratic aspirations, but what might be termed Beijing's "three confusions"—that reform might spin out of control, that democracy in Hong Kong would create a potentially destabilizing precedent for China, and a mistaken conflation of the situation in Hong Kong with the situation in Taiwan—are all possible explanations.

Whatever the reasons, they are unconvincing. One has the sense that China is moving into the world with increasing sophistication, yet maintains major misconceptions about Hong Kong.

There is also a "fourth confusion" which the United States itself should seek to avoid in its policy toward Hong Kong. By that, I mean America needs to find ways to strongly support the Hong Kong people's desire for democracy, electoral reform and universal suffrage without precipitating unnecessary Sino-American confrontation, damaging the interests of the people of Hong Kong or inadvertently undercutting the cause of Hong Kong's democrats.

Like Beijing, the U.S. has an enormous vested interest in the success of the "one country, two systems" model in Hong Kong. In this context, I believe it would be unwise and counterproductive at this time for the U.S. to review Hong Kong's treatment under the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act, as has been suggested in some quarters.

America needs to keep perspective. While the speed and scope of political change may be frustrating, Hong Kong still stands out on the Asian landscape as an enduring beacon for the rule of law and civil liberties.

I stress this because often in relations between states well-intentioned positions can be considered counterproductive. The U.S. Congress is obligated to comment on the importance of the people of Hong Kong being permitted to determine the pace and scope of constitutional developments and to move forward with democracy and electoral reform. However, we have no desire to be confrontational.

What is critical at this juncture is that all parties take credible steps to restore dialogue, build confidence, and seek compromise.

Whether the 21st Century is peaceful and whether it is prosperous will depend on whether the world's most populous country can live