

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

4TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

CONSTITUENT SERVICE CENTERS:

1540 Kuser Road, Suite A9
Hamilton, NJ 08619-3828
(609) 585-7878
TTY (609) 585-3650

108 Lacey Road, Suite 38A
Whiting, NJ 08759-1331
(732) 350-2300

2373 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3004
(202) 225-3765

<http://chrissmith.house.gov>



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Excerpts of the Statement by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)
Press Conference on the Arrest of Jiang Tianyong
The Capitol, Washington, DC
November 23, 2009

On his recent trip to China, President Obama had ample time to take a photo op stroll on the Great Wall and meet with Chinese students hand-picked by the Communist government, but had no time whatsoever—and apparently no inclination as well—to meet in Beijing with some of the best, brightest, and bravest human rights defenders in the world.

An extraordinary opportunity to boldly stand with the oppressed and persecuted was needlessly squandered. Secretary Clinton announced that human rights not “interfere” with peddling US debt or climate change. President Obama’s actions confirmed that this egregiously flawed strategy remains in place.

The President’s myopic and indefensible retreat on human rights in China begs the question: did President Obama even know, or care, that several leading dissidents were rounded up, harassed, punched, beaten, threatened, and detained immediately prior to, during and after the President’s visit while others languish in Laogai concentration camps?

Did the President know, or care, that they suffered precisely because of his visit?

Did he know that several human rights defenders earnestly sought a meeting with him?

Did President Obama protest to his hosts, including and especially Hu Jintao, that mistreating human rights defenders anytime, but especially in response to an American President’s visit was a gross misuse of political and police power, as well as a serious affront to all things decent, civilized, and humane?

Did all the diplomatic niceties surrounding the Summit, the warm and fuzzy hugs, pretty words, and high faluting flattery preclude serious and visible defense of the heroic Chinese human rights defenders, the women and men of China who every day endure

torture, humiliation, degrading treatment, starvation, and punishment of every kind for promoting freedom and democracy?

Did President Obama “sin by silence when he should have protested” to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln.

Thirteen days ago Jiang was here on Capitol Hill testifying on behalf of the victims of the worst violation of women’s rights in all of human history—China’s one child per couple policy and its reliance on forced abortion and forced sterilization to achieve its draconian child limitation quotas.

On November 10 Jiang joined others in testifying at a Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing, which I chaired, on “An Evaluation of Thirty Years of the One-Child Policy in China.” Jiang gave numbing details of savage beatings and forced abortion in Shandong province—we have his November 10 hearing statement here for you to take with you. In summary Jiang testified that:

“The victims of the one-child policy have no one to appeal to. Attorneys that had offered help to them are persecuted... In mainland China, a married couple has to have a birth permit to give birth to their first child; once they have a child, a couple must have [a] Pregnancy Permit and Birth Permit to have a second child. Otherwise, pregnant women will have to confront compulsory abortion. Nowadays, such tragedies caused by this family planning enforcement are continuing.

Jiang also shared the true life horror stories of pregnant women persecuted in China:

“Li Juan—a 24-year old pregnant woman from Linyi city, Fei county, Qiuzhen (county capitol)—was forcibly taken to a clinic. The officials held her on the bed and gave her a poisonous shot, despite that her due day was soon. The needle went through her belly to the nine-month old fetus. Li said, “At first, I could feel my child was kicking; after a while it stopped.” Ten hours later, Li gave birth to a dead baby. The official threw the dead baby into a bucket.”

Last week, human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong and other extraordinary human rights defenders asked for a meeting in Beijing with the leader of the free world who just happens to be this year’s Nobel Peace prize winner and were emphatically told “no.”

Such a meeting would have, should have, been the highlight of the trip.

As a direct consequence for attempting a conversation with President Obama at the US Embassy, the only meeting Jiang Tianyong got was harsh interrogation with Chinese police.

According to *Human Rights in China*, a non-government organization of Chinese scholars and human rights activists:

“In the early morning of Wednesday, November 18, [2009] a few hours after he returned home from a trip to the U.S., Jiang met several other rights defense lawyers and constitutional scholar Fan Yafeng at a restaurant near the U.S. embassy in Beijing. From there, Jiang called the embassy and told officials that he and this group would like to meet with President Obama because they had heard that the American president wished to speak with Chinese rights defense lawyers. Embassy officials told Jiang that it was not possible to set up a meeting. At around 9:50 a.m., Jiang was escorted away from the embassy area and was taken home by Chinese policemen....

...Jiang said that on November 19, at around 7:30 a.m., he was surrounded by at least four policemen in front of his building as he was leaving home to take his seven-year-old daughter to school. Jiang’s wife told HRIC that the policemen tried to block Jiang and their daughter, and then started grabbing Jiang. One of the policemen, Wang Tao, pushed her onto the floor when she tried to intervene. Later, after Jiang was taken away, another officer confiscated her cell phone.

Jiang said that the policemen then took him in their van to the nearby Haidian District Yangfangdian Police Substation, where he was interrogated in the basement...”

As he left them, a Chinese police interrogator told Jiang, “You have not seen the last of this yet.”

Now we have learned that over the weekend, surveillance has intensified: more police are around his house, and an additional police car has been added.

Today we call on you, Mr. President, to personally intervene with your close friend and strategic partner, Hu Jintao and ask him to cease persecuting Jiang Tianyong.

The dire consequences of President Obama turning his back on these remarkable human rights defenders must be reversed. Call Hu Jintao today, Mr. President.