



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

EDWARD McMILLAN-SCOTT
VICE-PRESIDENT

Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP
UK Prime Minister

Brussels, 8 November 2010; by email

Dear David,

My reformist contacts in prison and tortured in China

I was a frequent visitor to China (and once to Tibet) while I was the European Parliament's *rapporteur* on the EU's China Strategy which was adopted in 1998. My approach then as now was "not just business as usual but also politics as usual". I believe that while commerce should flourish we should remain severe with the Beijing regime about its human rights record and the need for reform in China.

As you visit China this week I urge you to raise the specific cases of the reformers, dissidents and former prisoners of conscience with whom I had contact on my last visit to Beijing in May 2006. I was researching for a review of the EU's €160M *Democracy and Human Rights Instrument*¹, which I founded on the fall of the Berlin Wall. All were subsequently imprisoned and in some cases tortured:

Mr Gao Zhisheng, a Christian human rights lawyer, was convicted for 'subversion' in September 2006 and imprisoned. After international protest he was placed under house arrest. After he wrote open letters through me to the European Parliament² and to the US Congress in September 2007³, Gao was taken by security forces and tortured. He has not been seen since February 2009. He was expected to win the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize but did not, following controversial lobbying by Beijing.

Mr Hu Jia, HIV and environmentalist campaigner contributed by telephone link from Beijing to meetings I organised in August 2007 at the European Parliament's London office to mark the anniversary of his friend Gao's arrest, and at the European Parliament in October 2007 calling for a political boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. After he similarly gave evidence to the European Parliament's human rights subcommittee in November 2007 he was imprisoned. In 2008 the European Parliament awarded its Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Hu Jia.

His wife now fears that he has liver cancer and has six times pleaded for his release.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm

² <http://www.boycottbeijing.eu/4.html>

³ <http://en.epochtimes.com/news/7-9-27/60173.html>

In May 2006 I interviewed two former prisoners-of-conscience **Mr Cao Dong** and **Mr Niu Jinping**. The latter had come to plead on behalf of his wife **Zhang Lianying**, who at that time was being so severely tortured in Beijing Women's Prison that she had a coma. After her release she wrote me a description of the torture⁴ she suffered and was then re-imprisoned. Cao Dong was re-imprisoned, *inter alia* for having contact with a 'distinguished foreign' (myself) and last year began a hunger strike in protest at his torture. His wife **Yang Xiaojing**, also a former inmate of Beijing Women's Prison, died after persecution by the authorities in October 2009. All are practitioners of Falun Gong, a Buddha-school spiritual exercise regime which at one time had 70 – 100 million adherents, prompting the brutal Gestapo-style persecution since 1999. Gao Zhisheng's 2005 investigation into this activity is among his 'crimes': he was twice tortured to denounce Falun Gong, but refused.

The UN *rappporteur* on torture, Dr Manfred Nowak, asserts that two-thirds of the hundreds of thousands undergoing 'Re-education Through Labour' in China's *laogai* are Falun Gong. I have a list of some 3,400 practitioners who have died under torture since 1999, as well as the names of their torturers. This activity constitutes genocide under article 2 of the Convention. Today, happily, impunity is ending.

The house arrest last week of **Mr Ai Weiwei**, whom I had the privilege to meet last month at the preview of Tate Modern's evocative "Sunflower Seeds", highlights Beijing's continuing crack-down on reformists. In a short video with me for YouTube he says that 'the game is over' for the regime⁵. For China and the world, I hope so.

British politicians like Margaret Thatcher and her friend and mine the late Lord Bethell MEP, first chairman of our human rights committee, showed leadership to Europe and the world in democracy and human rights in the darkest days.

In a better world, I urge you to raise these cases with those who govern China, as exemplars, and to insist on the regime's compliance with the international agreements on civil and political rights which it has signed-up to. The Communist Party of China continues to be the most arbitrary, brutal and paranoid regime in world history, with at least 38 million of its own citizens as victims⁶.

Yours sincerely



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⁴ <http://www.boycottbeijing.eu/resources/Nowak+and+testimony+080708.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZIWSJPq3vY>

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mao:_The_Unknown_Story