

TELLING OLYMPIC LIES: SARS, THE IOC AND BEIJING 2008



Contents

Introduction	2
SARS and the Olympics	3
The IOC and SARS	4
Control of the media	5
The Internet	6
The IOC and Human Rights: the Iraq case	6
Human Rights in Tibet	8
Human Rights in China	9
Olympics and Human Rights: Speaking up for Human Rights	10
Main aims of the campaign	11
Points Raised During Meeting with IOC President	11
Recommendations to the IOC	12
Further information	13



COVER PHOTO: Australian protestor wears a SARS mask during anti-Chinese Government demonstration in Sydney, June 2003.
REUTERS/DAVID GRAY

ABOVE: Professor John Tam wears a protective face mask at a news conference on the SARS virus in Hong Kong, May 2003.
REUTERS/KIN CHEUNG

Introduction

Two years after the International Olympics Committee (IOC) made its controversial decision to award the 2008 Summer Olympics to Beijing, we are living in a grimmer world.

Fears of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism on the one hand, and of a new US imperialism on the other, are corroding trust between men and women of different faiths and nations. There is no end in sight to the "war on terrorism". In this oppressive climate, can the prospect of the 2008 Beijing Olympics reawaken and symbolise peoples' hope for a more peaceful future? Can the spirit of reconciliation that characterised the 2000 Sydney Olympics emerge again?

On the basis of the experience of the past two years, the answer must be a resounding no. The Chinese Communist Party, even under its much vaunted new leadership, has shown itself incapable of throwing off its 50 year habit of ruling by force, by fear and by propaganda.

This was dramatically illustrated by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome epidemic. For several months, the Chinese regime placed the lives of not only its own people but those of millions of people around the world at risk by covering up the existence and then the extent of the outbreak. Only the bravest of the Chinese media dared to challenge this ban. Only persistent pressure and questioning by an outside international body, the World Health Organisation, finally broke through the silence.

Where was the "greater openness" that supporters of Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympics had assured us would result from the IOC decision? Where was the Chinese government's awareness of its responsibilities as a global citizen? Where was the "New Beijing" of the Olympic bid?

They were nowhere to be seen. Instead, as this second annual Olympic report produced by Free Tibet Campaign demonstrates, the past year has seen a continuation of the patterns of human rights abuse which made Beijing a completely inappropriate choice as Olympic host city in the first place. In Tibet itself the execution of Lobsang Dhondup and the sentencing to death of popular Buddhist lama Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche have recalled the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

The Athens Summer Olympics are now only a little over a year away. After Athens, the world's gaze will shift inexorably to Beijing. So far, the IOC has refused to accept any responsibility for working to improve the human rights situation in China and Tibet by 2008. This is not just a matter of altruism or idealism: what will happen to the Beijing Olympics if another disease epidemic breaks out in 2008, or a major nuclear accident occurs, and the Chinese government tries to cover it up?

Now is the time for the IOC to follow the example set by the World Health Organisation - to set clear human rights benchmarks, beginning with media freedom, to monitor their implementation, and to speak out if sufficient progress is not being made.

The clock is ticking for Beijing and the International Olympic Committee.

Alex Butler, Chair of International Tibet Support Network Olympics Committee, July 2003

SARS and the Olympics

"That a written guarantee be sought from the Chinese authorities stipulating that the local and international media will have full and free access to China and Tibet in the run-up to and during the Olympic Games" (International Tibet Support Network recommendations to the International Olympic Committee, submitted December 2001)

"China's handling of the outbreak, particularly the cover up, has led to widespread concern over its ability to handle another possible disease epidemic in the months ahead of and during the 2008 Olympic Games" (AFP, 21/5/03)

Freedom of expression is a fundamental part of any well-functioning society. The freedom of the press is one of the most effective mediums for allowing debate to take place, for problems to be aired and for solutions to myriad problems to be debated. In China however, freedom of expression and freedom of the press are all subjugated to the needs of the Chinese Communist Party of China and its continuing hold over the 1.3 billion people of China.

Free Tibet Campaign as part of the international movement for change in Tibet has long argued that for the Olympics to act as force for change, the International Olympic Committee must turn its attention to ensuring that human rights standards are instituted into its planning processes. It need look no further than its own history in the 20th century to indicate that the Olympics can often provide a screen for regimes to crackdown on their own populace.

Following Beijing's victory in winning the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games, both the Beijing team and the IOC made reassuring noises about media freedom being guaranteed. Wang Wei, the Secretary General of the Beijing winning bid said that *"the world's media will enjoy full freedom to report on all aspects of China if the 2008 Olympic Games is held in the city"* (China Daily, July 2001). However, as documented in Free Tibet Campaign's report on the Olympics of July 2002 (The IOC and China: Taking A Bet on the Olympic Ideal, 2002), the Chinese authorities very quickly demonstrated their lack of respect for media freedom and sought to restrict their promise of media freedom to the sports arena. Indeed, part of China's sophisticated campaign to win the Games involved turning the human rights argument on its head by suggesting that the Olympics would act as an incentive for human rights improvements. Rather it may act as a further incentive for crackdowns as demonstrated by the new Chinese leadership's handling of the SARS crisis.

SARS has been the most visible expression of the cost of a lack of freedom of expression and its consequences. *"Already China has been under fierce criticism, first for covering up the SARS outbreak, then for underplaying it. As the virus spread to other countries, there was growing anger over the secrecy and the slowness to co-operate with the World Health Organisation. Failure to contain SARS in Beijing has tarnished its successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games"* (Financial Times, Leader, 23 April 2003).



However, SARS in turn has provided the first demonstration to the IOC of the price that could be paid by entrusting the Olympic Games to an unaccountable regime. The impact of SARS on the preparations for 2008 are something that the IOC leadership are also aware of as it significantly published its letter to the Communist boss of Beijing stating that: *"the IOC is paying great attention to the updates regarding this epidemic"* (AFP, 21/5/03)

LEFT: Chinese police with fire extinguishers stand guard outside the Chinese National People's Congress in Beijing, March 2003.
REUTERS/ANDREW WONG

It is also not the first disease to display the Chinese leadership's ability to stick its head in the sand, leading to the loss of life. Press reports two years ago sought to uncover the scandal of thousands of peasants in Henan province being infected with the AIDS virus by commercial blood collectors who were backed by local officials who then sought to cover up the scandal. John Gittings of The Guardian also documented how courageous Chinese journalists have challenged the status quo and have been threatened and beaten up while covering industrial accidents such as mining tragedies that kill more than 5000 workers each year.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the global spread of SARS with 812 deaths and over 8000 people infected was that it could have been prevented if not for the Chinese authority's propensity for covering up bad news for fear of embarrassment. Two cover-ups were launched to hide first the emergence of the disease in Guangdong Province and then its move into epidemic proportions. As one Beijing journalist Lei Xiong wrote *"SARS has shattered the philosophy among some bureaucrats that silence on negative things might sustain their power"* (The Guardian, John Gittings, 9 June 2003).

The concern for human rights organisations like Free Tibet Campaign is not only the loss of life but the indications that the Chinese leadership will sacrifice everything in a vain attempt to save face as opposed to dealing constructively with problems *"The only certainty in this whole affair is that for the past six months or so the Chinese authorities have taken the world for a ride by failing to implement the necessary but quite straightforward measures to deal with the epidemic"* (The Guardian, Leader Comment, 1 May 2003.).

The SARS epidemic became one of the first tests for the new leadership of Hu Jintao as President and Wen Jiabao as Prime Minister. In the run up to the Party Congress in March 2003 at which both men would be appointed to their posts a "good news" edict was imposed which restricted reporting on SARS. However, this effective news blackout allowed SARS to reach Beijing with a case even happening within the top leadership's guarded compound. Gittings documented how one poor elderly lady who died may have been saved if she or her doctors had had access to the information via the internet, read English or listened to the rumours circulating that there was a deadly called SARS in existence. The US Congressional Executive Committee on China (CECC) also pointed out the link between a denial of freedom of expression facilitating the spread of this deadly disease in its May 7 report.

The future for China is uncertain under Hu as he has in recent years been spoken of as a reformer. However his past as the Party Secretary in Tibet in the late 1980s and early 1990s places a question mark on him given that he imposed martial law in Tibet in 1989 in which thousands of peaceful protestors were arrested (see <http://www.freetibet.org/press/hujintao041102.html> for copy of full report).

The question today is will SARS act as "a wake up call" for the new Chinese leadership of Hu Jintao as President and Wen Jiabao as Prime Minister to push them to move to a more accountable, transparent and accountable system? Indeed, will it act as a wake-up call for the IOC and its handling of a regime that places human rights and the safety of its citizens second place to maintaining the control of the Chinese Communist Party into all aspects of Chinese life?

The IOC and SARS

The IOC's President Jacques Rogge met the new Chinese President Hu Jintao and the Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing on 2 June in Lausanne. One can imagine that the issue of China's handling of the SARS crisis and its implications for its handling of the Games was very high on the agenda. A promise of stability in this case did not necessarily mean that things would work smoothly given the over-riding desire of the regime to cover up all bad news and consequently not put in place strategies to



RIGHT: Demonstration demanding the resignation of Hong Kong's Chief Executive over the handling of SARS, May 2003 .
REUTERS/BOBBY YIP

effectively deal with problems. From that point of view one may take Hu's analysis of the IOC's perceptions of how China has handled SARS somewhat ironically. "*With the series of decisive measures taken by us, the atypical pneumonia situation has initially been put under control*" (Xinhua news agency, reported on BBC 3/6/03). Hu also stressed that the Chinese government would provide "*vigorous support*" for the Beijing Organising Committee. That "*vigorous support*" may come in a variety of forms and certainly not coincide with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the numerous international human rights conventions that China has signed.

Indeed if it had not been for world pressure, the work of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the world's media looking at the situation and some very brave Chinese medical and media professionals, the situation of SARS may have got a lot worse because of the secretive way that the Chinese system works.

Control of the Media

China detains more journalists than any other country in the world as more and more journalists dare to defy stringent censorship laws and attempts to have the media self-censor their own work. In June 2003, the Committee to Protect Journalists documented that 36 journalists were imprisoned, including fourteen Internet journalists. John Gittings in The Guardian reported that censors had blocked a CNN report on SARS whilst it was being transmitted in May 2003.

The Southern Weekend newspaper was also criticised for publishing "state secrets" in writing articles about the SARS crisis. A new editor was appointed to the paper in order to toe the party line and send a clear signal to other journalists that their output was being clearly monitored. Additionally, the Economic Observer newspaper was censured for its reporting on SARS, particularly its criticisms of former health minister, Zhang Wenkang, who covered up the epidemic and Gao Qiang, a deputy health minister who defended Zhang. Furthermore all reporting on Jiang Yangkong, the doctor who revealed the scale of the epidemic was banned. Jiang had written to the government to accuse it of covering up the epidemic and had become the subject of intense press interest.

On June 19, the Chinese authorities again sought to wrest back control of the news agenda by closing one paper, the Beijing New Times and firing all the editorial staff. The paper had published a list of the seven "*most nauseating things*" in China which criticised the rubber-stamp approach to decision making by the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Consultative Conference. All publications were ordered to stop reporting on sensitive topics.

The Propaganda Ministry also banned reporting on the case of Sun Zhigang who died in police custody in March in the southern city of Guangzhou. Sun was detained after he had failed to have his identification card as required under a vagrancy law. That same vagrancy law was struck down on June 18 by the State Council yet the very same authorities are desperate to stop all critical reporting especially on human rights issues.

Worryingly one of the developments emanating from the media concentration on SARS has been the manner in which human rights abuses have continued on almost unreported internationally. Frank Lu, a Hong Kong based human rights campaigner quoted in AFP stated, "*China news is 99 percent about SARS, and there's almost nothing about human rights, so they think it's a good opportunity to deal with dissidents*" (AFP, Peter Harmsen, 29/5/03). The example that he was referring to was the sentencing in May of four young Chinese writers to between eight and ten years for "inciting subversion" by posting messages on the internet calling for the reform of Chinese society. The link between the sentencing and the outbreak of SARS was angrily denied by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

The 2008 Olympic Games will present the Chinese leadership with a global platform for its handling of the country. However, without encouragement and enticements from the international community to improve human rights and proactively encourage improvements in this area, the Chinese leadership will go out of its way to launch crackdowns on human rights and dissent.

The Internet

"The Chinese authorities continue to progressively restrict the Internet in violation of the right to free expression. Broadly worded decrees prohibit posting of information that violates the constitution, undermines the unity of the country, threatens social order, spreads rumours, promotes superstition, or injures the reputation of state organs" (Human Rights Watch briefing to 59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, 27 February 2003, pg 3)

The control of the internet has been China's biggest challenge. China joined the global internet in 1994 but it was not until 1995 that it became commercially available and it is predicted to become the largest user in the world within four years (Amnesty International Report, State Control of the Internet in China, pg 2). By June 2002, internet users numbered 45.8 million which was an increase of 72.8% in a year.

- All Internet Service Providers were required from January 2002 to monitor the content and record personal information of users as well as preventing the transmission of "subversive material". They are obliged to report such individuals to the authorities.
- In August 2002, Google search engine was blocked for several weeks. It was also reported that altavista.com was blocked for its website content.
- In September 2002, a new filtering system was introduced based on key words with certain words being prohibited such as "Tibet", "human rights", "Taiwan", "Tiananmen", "Falun Gong". Access to sites with these words were denied.
- China is also trying to get internet companies to censor their search engines with the introduction of new laws.
- In March 2002, the Internet Society of China issued The Public Pledge on Self-Discipline which entered into force in August 2002. Signatories agree to "refrain from producing, posting or disseminating pernicious information that may jeopardise state security and disrupt social stability, contravene laws and regulations and spread superstition and obscenity". By July 2002, over 300 signatories signed the Pledge including the US based search engine Yahoo!
- The authorities have also sought to control the numerous internet cafes that sprang up initially unregulated. They used the opportunity presented by a fire in one internet café in Beijing which unfortunately killed twenty five people in June 2002, to close down the 2,400 internet cafes in Beijing for safety reasons. Officials in Shanghai and Tianjin also took similar action. Government checks and filtering software were installed in these cafes.
- According to Reporters Without Borders it is thought that around 30,000 people are employed to monitor and censor the web. ("Living Dangerously in the Net, Censorship and surveillance of Internet Forums, 12 May 2003. http://www.rsf.fr/article.php3?id_article=6793)

The IOC and Human Rights: the Iraq case

The IOC has argued that the general issue of human rights does not fall within its sphere of power. However, the case of Iraqi athletes was a more direct example of human rights and sport coinciding. A number of Iraqi athletes had claimed that they had been tortured and imprisoned by Uday Hussein who was the President of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee (NOC). It was a British NGO called Indict who put forward a complaint to the IOC's Ethics Committee in December 2002 on this matter. The IOC President, Jacques Rogge had stated that "*we have a moral obligation to try and find the truth*" (AFP, 19/2/03). However, what this process demonstrated was that the IOC has to clearly be called to account for its lack of procedures and the political will required to take on human rights questions without outside pressure.

That "moral obligation" has resulted in the IOC announcing on 17 May 2003 that it would reconstruct the National Olympic Committee of Iraq ensuring that no person who took part in the human rights violations carried out against Iraqi athletes be allowed to participate in the reconstruction of the NOC. It has also taken the step of working with the United Nations and "other competent authorities" as well as sending a mission to Iraq. In particular it condemned the abuses carried out by the former President of the Iraqi NOC.

Free Tibet Campaign in the meeting with the IOC president in October 2002 and all previous correspondence had

pressed the organisation to bring on board human rights advisers in recognition of the gap in knowledge vis a vis human rights. FIFA had actually sent investigators to Iraq in 1997 to follow up possible complaints. Obviously all the athletes interviewed could not speak truthfully of the abuses that they had suffered, given that the regime was still very much in power at the time.

Working with the National Olympic Committee (NOC)

"The NOCs must work to maintain harmonious and cooperative relations with appropriate governmental bodies...As sport contributes to education, health, the economy and social order, it is desirable for the National Olympic Committees to enjoy the support of the public authorities ...Nevertheless, the NOCs shall preserve their autonomy and resist all pressures of any kind, including those of a political, religious or economic nature, that may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter"
(Olympic Charter, Chapter 4, point 5)

The relationship between a National Olympic Committee, the state and the IOC and its emphasis on "harmonious relations" could jeopardise the ideals of the Olympic Charter in the Chinese context given the authority's undoubtedly intention to prevent dissent in the run-up to the Olympic Games. This could well run foul of the principles of ensuring the "fundamental dignity" of the human person contained in the IOC Charter and one would hope the Host City Contract. However, the IOC also makes a claim for "political neutrality" of the Games which in China is an interesting concept. Ostensibly it would mean that for a politically aware IOC in China it is an acceptance of the status quo. That the status quo in China means that individual human rights are repressed, that thousands are unfairly imprisoned often without charge or due process, that the death penalty is used indiscriminately and as a blunt political tool, that freedom of expression and a free media are subject to unbearable scrutiny. This is too high a price for the Chinese and Tibetan people to pay for the 'greatest show on earth'.

The IOC President's refusal in a face to face meeting in October 2002 with Free Tibet Campaign and the Norwegian Tibet Committee to remove the proviso contained in the Olympic Charter and possibly the Host City Contract that "no political meetings or demonstrations are allowed to take place" during the Olympics places the IOC firmly in the camp of the Chinese Government. This is exacerbated by the IOC's apparent unwillingness to take a proactive stance on human rights.

One of the scenarios it would be interesting to explore with the IOC is how it would handle a dramatically deteriorating human rights situation in China. If another Tiananmen Square were to happen would the IOC's response be to play on with the Games? Or to call for protests to be silenced? How will the IOC handle a situation in which China brings disrepute on the Olympic Games because of its continuing crackdown on human rights in the run-up to the Games?

Human Rights in Tibet

- Tibet was invaded by China in 1950 by 40,000 Chinese troops. Since 1950, the Tibet Government in exile estimated that 1.2 million Tibetans died as a direct or indirect result of the occupation.
- Although freedom of religion is guaranteed in the 1982 Constitution, in reality there is no real freedom of religion in a country which is overwhelmingly Buddhist.
- There are over 180 political prisoners, held mainly for peaceful protest. Almost all Tibetan political prisoners are held at the capital's notorious Drapchi Prison where female political prisoners stand a 1 in 18 chance of dying as a result of the beatings and ill-treatment they receive.
- Though seven political prisoners were released early from their sentences, China began 2003 by executing Lobsang Dhondup in the first politically motivated execution of Tibetan in over a decade in January 2003. He was accused of taking part in a series of bomb explosions. No evidence has ever been produced. A respected Buddhist religious leader, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche was also accused and is

currently being held at a secret location under a two year suspended death sentence. All the men held in connection with this case have been denied proper legal counsel, effective due process and there are credible reports that all have been tortured and ill-treated. .

- A crackdown on religious freedom has been underway in Sichuan Province since 2000. The continued detention of a respected Buddhist leader, Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche is one illustration of this.
- China contravened the spirit of international law with the forced deportation of 18 Tibetans from Nepal to China on 31 May 2003. The vast majority of these Tibetan refugees were aged between 14 and 18 years of age. There are fears about their current condition, whether they are being detained and are consequently at high risk of torture.
- The Chinese authorities continue to deny access to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the young boy recognised as the Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama in 1995. He was abducted with his family and despite international requests, no independent impartial observers have been allowed access to him or his family to check on how they are. The most plausible reports of his whereabouts indicate that he could be held in the vicinity of Beijing and would be 19 years old at the time of the 2008 Olympic Games.

China in 2002 and 2003 sought to become more adept at off-setting international criticism of its continued occupation of Tibet and the deteriorating human rights situation by making concessions timed to coincide with major international meetings whilst continuing to bolster a system which denies fundamental human rights.

So though Free Tibet Campaign welcomes the early release of seven political prisoners and the beginnings of a dialogue process with visits by envoys of the Dalai Lama in September 2002 and May 2003 to China and Tibet, it is essential to look for a sustained and qualitative improvement in both the laws that govern Tibet and how the people are treated in Tibet.

Human Rights in China

"The Party's authority rested primarily on the Government's ability to maintain social stability: appeals to nationalism and patriotism; party control of personnel, media, and the security apparatus" (US State Department Report 2002, China Country Report)

"Measures aimed at strengthening the rule of law and judicial institutions continued to be undermined by political campaigns against those suspected of opposing the government. Appeals to nationalism, state security and social stability were used to justify the crack-down on ethnic and religious minorities in outlying regions as well as unofficial religious and spiritual groups across China" (Amnesty International 2002 Report).

There are no independent domestic NGOs in China allowed to openly monitor or comment on human rights in the country. Media organisations are subject to tight controls. There are also no independent political parties allowed to function.



RIGHT: Protesters in Sydney try to raise awareness of what they call a cover up by the Chinese Government of the SARS problem, June 2003.
REUTERS/DAVID GRAY

Detentions and Torture

- There are two forms of administrative detention which have increased considerably according to Amnesty International. Over a million people are detained. They are drawn from the most vulnerable sectors of society- migrant workers, vagrants and homeless children. The last figures available in 2001 indicated that 310,000 were held at "re-education through labour" camps and it was thought that the 2002 figures would be even higher due to the crackdown on Falun Gong and the "strike hard" campaign against crime.
- 1300 people remain detained under the Law of Counter Revolutionary Activity, a law which no longer exists (US State Department Report 2002, China Country Report).

Death Penalty

"The death penalty continued to be used extensively, arbitrarily and frequently as a result of political interference. The increased use of the death penalty witnessed after the launch of the "strike hard" campaign, under which defendants were more likely to be sentenced to death for crimes which were previously punished by imprisonment, continued throughout 2002, especially in the run-up to the November CCP Congress." (Amnesty International 2002 Report).

- There were 1,921 death sentences and 1060 executions in 2002 though the figures are thought to be much higher and the Government regards the exact number as a state secret (US State Department Report 2002, Pg 5).
- There are now 65 capital offences which include financial crimes such as counterfeiting, embezzlement, and corruption, as well as some property crimes (US State Department Report 2002, pg 17).

International Censure for Human Rights Abuses

For the first time in many years, there was no resolution critical of China's human rights record at the annual UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. The war on Iraq and China's support for the war against terrorism meant that no western governments were willing to publicly criticise China at this forum.

Olympics and Human Rights: Speaking up for Human Rights

"There are six years between now and the Summer Games in 2008, during which business, government and NGOs can engage in a meaningful and action-oriented dialogue on human rights and business issues surrounding the Games" (www.cecc. Congressional Executive Commission on China 107th congress second session, pg 77, 18/11/02)

On July 13 2001, the International Olympic Committee voted to award Beijing the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games. It was a convincing win for China despite the human rights concerns that were voiced at the time from inside China and around the world. Free Tibet Campaign as part of the International Tibet Support Network opposed the bid. Following the award of the Games, the movement sought to press the IOC to engage constructively with the human rights community in order to help facilitate the improvement of human rights standards in Tibet and China in advance of the Games.

The main aims of the campaign around the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games are as follows:

1. Press the IOC to institute human rights standards into its planning processes for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games
2. Press for full media freedom to be guaranteed.
3. To press for the TOP sponsors to act as levers for human rights change.

Points Raised During Free Tibet Campaign and Norwegian Tibet Committee with the IOC President

One of the most interesting things revealed in a BBC Hard Talk interview with Dr Rogge was when questioned he assured the BBC's Tim Sebastian that there were provisions within the Host City contract to guarantee human rights : *"we have in the host city contract a lot of provisions where we have to approve and we have to sign and we have to take decisions"* (BBC Hard Talk interview, 23 April 2002)

During the meeting with the IOC President on 25 October 2002, Free Tibet Campaign and the Norwegian Tibet Committee pressed the IOC President for access to the Host City Contract or at the very least to reveal what human rights provisions were contained within the Contract. A claim of commercial confidentiality was used to reject our requests.

Request	Response
Access to Host City Contract	NO
Reveal what human rights clauses are contained within the Host City Contract	NO
Remove proviso that all political demonstrations or meetings are not allowed in week running up to, during and after the Games.	NO
Appoint human rights advisers into planning process	NO
How will they ensure media freedom	UNCLEAR

The IOC has seemingly sided with the tactics of the Chinese authorities when it comes to issues of transparency and accountability on the human rights front. Ironically at the 114th IOC Session in Mexico City which had reform of the Games as its main agenda, the IOC failed to acknowledge its part in the 1968 massacre of Mexican students who were protesting at a corrupt regime ten days before the Olympics were to begin. Between 100-325 Mexican students were killed when they dared to challenge the regime. The then IOC President Avery Brundage threatened to withdraw the Games if the protests did not stop. Troops were then ordered into suppress protests resulting in the deaths. There is great fear that the IOC's inability to acknowledge its past means that the future games could also be tainted with human rights abuses. As Duncan McKay of The Guardian stated *"It would be a major scar on Rogge's record if he were to allow history to repeat itself in Beijing"* (Duncan MacKay, The Guardian, 28 November 2002.ibid)

Summary of IOC's Response to Free Tibet Campaign since June 2002

2002

June	Letter to Rogge, again requesting response to recommendations. Faxed response from Hein Verbruggen received 20 June 2002. No detailed response on the recommendations made by Tibet groups (see appendix).
August	Faxed request for meeting with IOC President, Jacques Rogge whilst he was in the UK for the Commonwealth Games held in Manchester. Meeting in UK not possible but offer of meeting with IOC President at a later date.
11 September	Letter to Kevan Gosper, IOC Chair of the Press Commission regarding questions on what steps the IOC is taking to ensure media freedom vis a vis Beijing 2008. No response.
25 October	Meeting between Free Tibet Campaign and Norwegian Tibet Committee with Jacques Rogge in Lausanne.
October-December	Numerous requests for copy of tape apparently made of meeting with IOC President in October in Lausanne. No tape forthcoming.
25-29 November	Free Tibet Campaign media work at IOC 113th session in Mexico. IOC debates reform of Olympic Games. No public mention made of human rights in a city which had witnessed the IOC's most public failing in 1968 when protestors were killed for daring to oppose the regime ten days in advance of the Olympic Games in the city.

Recommendations to the IOC (submitted December 2001)

- That a written guarantee be sought from the Chinese authorities stipulating that Chinese citizens and Tibetans will not be arrested for voicing dissent or any other public opinions about the Olympic Games in the run-up to, during and in the aftermath of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.
- That representations be made on behalf of any Chinese citizens arrested for actions related to the Beijing bid (Shan Chengfeng was given two years in a labour camp in February 2001 for daring to protest against the bid).
- That a written guarantee be sought from the Chinese authorities stipulating that the local and international media will have full and free access to China and Tibet in the run up to and during the Olympic Games. Wang Wei, the Secretary General of the Beijing bid at the time stated that "*the world's media will enjoy full freedom to report on all aspects of China if the 2008 Olympic Games is held in the city.*"
- That sports stadiums where ritual public humiliation and executions of alleged criminals have taken place be ruled out of the site plans for the Beijing Olympic Games.
- That a code of conduct be drawn up to guide IOC members, officials and sponsors in their role in the period running up to the Games and during the Games to prevent the IOC becoming a propaganda pawn for the Chinese authorities.
- That a mechanism for raising human rights abuses carried out by the Chinese authorities explicitly in the name of providing "a better Olympics" be established. These abuses may include arrests, detentions, torture or ill-treatment of those protesting about Beijing's preparations for the Games; coercion in Tibet

or China in order to promote the Olympic Games; security crackdowns in Tibet in the name of security and "fighting terrorism".

- That a mechanism for regular consultation and a channel of communication with human rights advisers and NGOs, including the ITSN be established, that enables the IOC to keep itself up-to-date with human rights violations in Tibet and China.
- That benchmarks be set by the IOC to determine the basis for an eventual reconsideration of the location of the 2008 Olympics in the event of a lack of improvement or further deterioration of the human rights situation in China and Tibet.
- That the case of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, be taken up by the IOC with the Chinese authorities. The Panchen Lama, one of the most senior figures in Tibetan Buddhism, was last seen in public in 1995. Despite repeated calls from the UN and governments around the world for information on his whereabouts and condition, the Chinese authorities have so far failed to respond. The case of the Panchen Lama is one of the central issues of the Tibet-China conflict. In the spirit of the Olympic Charter and the Olympic Truce Resolution adopted by the 54th UN General Assembly on 24 November 1999, the IOC should use the opportunity of the Olympic Games to press for independently verifiable information about the Panchen Lama. (The 1999 UN resolution, co-sponsored by 180 member states, including the People's Republic of China, urges member states to *"abide by the Olympic Truce, individually and collectively, and to pursue, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the peaceful settlement of all international conflicts through diplomatic solutions"*)

Further Information

Published 7 July 2003 by

Free Tibet Campaign
PO Box 18487
London EC1B 1DY
Tel: 020 7833 9958
Fax: 020 7833 3838
Email: mail@freetibet.org
Web: www.freetibet.org

Free Tibet Campaign stands for the Tibetans' right to determine their own future. It campaigns for an end to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and for the Tibetans' fundamental human rights to be respected. Founded in 1987, Free Tibet Campaign informs and educates people about the situation in Tibet, to generate active support. It is an international organisation, funded by its members and supporters. It is independent of all governments. Free Tibet Campaign does not use or advocate the use of violence.

Free Tibet Campaign is a member of the International Tibet Support Network (ITSN). The ITSN is a body of Tibet related non-government organisations with a political mandate. Its purpose is to maximise the effectiveness of the worldwide Tibet movement, which is dedicated to ending human rights violations in Tibet and to actively support the Tibetan people's right under international law to determine their future political, economic, social, religious and cultural status.

