

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 19

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding United States opposition to the prison sentence of Tibetan ethnomusicologist Ngawang Choephel by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 21, 1997

Mr. MOYNIHAN (for himself, Mr. HELMS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. DODD, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KOHL, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MACK, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. COATS, Mr. INOUE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. REED, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BRYAN, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. DORGAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

MARCH 4, 1997

Reported without amendment

MARCH 11, 1997

Considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding United States opposition to the prison sentence of Tibetan ethnomusicologist Ngawang Choephel by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Whereas the Chinese Government sentenced Ngawang Choephel to an 18 year prison term plus 4 years subsequent deprivation of his political rights on December 26, 1996, following a secret trial;

Whereas Mr. Choephel is a Tibetan national whose family fled Chinese oppression to live in exile in India in 1968;

Whereas Mr. Choephel studied ethnomusicology at Middlebury College in Vermont as a Fulbright Scholar, and at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala, India;

Whereas Mr. Choephel returned to Tibet in July 1995 to prepare a documentary film about traditional Tibetan performing arts;

Whereas Mr. Choephel was detained in August 1995 by the Chinese authorities and held incommunicado for over a year before the Government of the People's Republic of China admitted to holding him, and finally charged him with espionage in October 1996;

Whereas there is no evidence that Mr. Choephel's activities in Tibet involved anything other than purely academic research;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China denies Tibetans their fundamental human rights, as reported in the State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and by human rights organizations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, Asia;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China is responsible for the destruction of much of Tibetan civilization since its invasion of Tibet in 1949;

Whereas the arrest of a Tibetan scholar, such as Mr. Choephel who worked to preserve Tibetan culture, reflects the systematic attempt by the Government of the People's Republic of China to repress cultural expression in Tibet;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China, through direct and indirect incentives, has established discriminatory development programs which have resulted in an overwhelming flow of Chinese immigrants into Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai, and have excluded Tibetans from participation in important policy decisions, which further threatens traditional Tibetan life;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China withholds meaningful participation in the governance of Tibet from Tibetans and has failed to abide by its own constitutional guarantee of autonomy for Tibetans;

Whereas the Dalai Lama of Tibet has stated his willingness to enter into negotiations with the Chinese and has repeatedly accepted the framework Deng Xiaoping proposed for such negotiations in 1979;

Whereas the United States Government has not developed an effective plan to win support in international fora, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to bring international pressure to bear on the Government of the People's Republic of China to improve human rights and to negotiate with the Dalai Lama;

Whereas the Chinese have displayed provocative disregard for American concerns by arresting and sentencing prominent dissidents around the time that senior United States Government officials have visited China; and

Whereas United States Government policy seeks to foster negotiations between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama, and presses China

to respect Tibet's unique religious, linguistic, and cultural traditions: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) Ngawang Choephel and other prisoners of
3 conscience in Tibet, as well as in China, should be
4 released immediately and unconditionally;

5 (2) to underscore the gravity of this matter, in
6 all official meetings with representatives of the Gov-
7 ernment of the People's Republic of China, United
8 States officials should request Mr. Choephel's imme-
9 diate and unconditional release;

10 (3) the United States Government should take
11 prompt action to sponsor and promote a resolution
12 at the United Nations Commission on Human
13 Rights regarding China and Tibet which specifically
14 addresses political prisoners and negotiations with
15 the Dalai Lama;

16 (4) an exchange program should be established
17 in honor of Ngawang Choephel, involving students of
18 the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts and appro-
19 priate educational institutions in the United States;
20 and,

21 (5) the United States Government should seek
22 access for internationally recognized human rights
23 groups to monitor human rights in Tibet.

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