

Ref: 2008-M20.5

May 5, 2008

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

City Council on April 28 and 29, 2008, referred the following revised Motion to the Executive Committee:

M20.5 Mayor Miller and Human Rights in China
Moved by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Palacio

SUMMARY:

The People's Republic of China (China) is currently engaged in violent retaliation against the people of Tibet and that country's latest protest against China's unlawful occupation of Tibet since 1949. The Dalai Lama, who was forced to flee Tibet in 1959, has condemned China's actions toward Tibet, including China's occupation and regular violation of basic human rights of its citizens.

The 2008 Olympic Games are to be held at Beijing, China, this July. Given China's past record on human rights, it was surprising that it was successful in winning its bid to hold the Olympics. Nonetheless, China has now committed further gross violations of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights by retaliating against Tibet, carrying-out its latest campaign of cultural genocide against Tibetans. Most hypocritically, China is an original signatory of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council.

In the past, countries have boycotted the Olympic Games for violations of human rights and/or sovereignty. In 1980, Canada, the United States, Japan, Israel, West Germany – and The People's Republic of China, all boycotted the Olympics in Moscow to protest the Soviet Union's December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. In total, 62 countries fully boycotted the 1980 Olympics. Presently, the United Nations Security Council is contemplating recommending a boycott of the 2008 Olympics.

As Canadians and Torontonians, we cannot be complicit in these ongoing and increasing violations of basic human rights in China and Tibet. We need to go on record as standing against these violations. We also need to be careful not to legitimize China's wrongdoing by sending emissaries to negotiate and promote business and trade with China.

Mayor David Miller is leading a team to China to negotiate increased trade. This trip should not be occurring because of China's abysmal record on human rights but especially due to the recent atrocities by China against Tibet and Tibetans. In today's context, any Canadian, most particularly an elected official in a democracy, who continues to encourage trade between Canada and China, proves to be ignorant and insensitive to the issues of basic human rights for the citizens of China and the captive citizens of Tibet. The only way to deal with a country in continuous violation of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights is to not deal with such a country until it complies. In effect, any further dealings with China, legitimizes their actions when they continue to commit these ongoing atrocities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Council petition the Government of Canada to condemn The People's Republic of China for their gross violations of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and to adhere to a strict international trade policy that precludes trade with countries in violation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
2. That Council petition the Government of Canada to consider a formal boycott of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, unless China ceases their current, aggressive campaign of cultural genocide against Tibetans.

Council also considered a communication (April 25, 2008) from Tsering C. Khangsar (M20.5.1).

for City Clerk

M. Toft/cd

Attach.

c. Tsering C. Khangsar