

Bob Dole



NEWS

U.S. SENATOR FOR KANSAS

FROM:

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, July 31, 1995

Contact: Clarkson Hine  
(202) 224-5358

## HARRY WU & U.N. CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

WASHINGTON -- Senate Majority Bob Dole today introduced an amendment to the State Department Reorganization Bill to withhold \$3.5 million for international conferences unless the Secretary of State certifies no U.S. funds were expended to finance the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Women's Conference while Harry Wu is detained. Senator Dole's remarks follow:

I send an amendment to the desk relating to funding for international conferences. S. 908 is an important piece of legislation. It provides for a massive "reinvention" of our foreign affairs bureaucracies -- and because of this, the Democrats have decided to filibuster. Chairman Helms, Subcommittee Chairperson Snowe and all members of the Committee deserve credit for bringing this landmark measure to the floor.

Regardless of what happens on the cloture vote tomorrow, there is an issue we should address today: the United States' plan to attend the fourth United Nations Conference on Women, scheduled for September in Beijing, China. My amendment would withhold \$3.5 million -- 50% of the total account -- unless the Secretary of State certifies no U.S. funds were expended to finance a U.S. delegation to the Women's Conference while Harry Wu is detained in China.

As you know, since June 19th, Harry Wu has been detained in China. Consular access to him, guaranteed under the terms of our 1982 agreement with China, was originally delayed. Last week, a suspicious tape was released by Beijing with Harry Wu "confessing" that his past exposes on human rights abuses in China were untrue. On July 9th, Harry Wu was charged with offenses which could carry the death penalty. In light of his years of experience in the Chinese gulag, there is ample reason to fear for Harry Wu's safety.

Our relationship with China is at a crucial crossroads. We have many disputes with Beijing including trade, proliferation, human rights, and Taiwan. We must, however, choose our course of action carefully. As Dr. Henry Kissinger said before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this month, "The danger of the existing roller coaster toward confrontation to the United States and China is incalculable." I share Dr. Kissinger's concern over the dangers of a full scale confrontation.

However, the most fundamental duty of a government is to protect the rights of its citizens -- and Harry Wu is an American citizen. I urge the Chinese to release him. No improvement in relations will be possible as long as he is detained.

There are many problems with the fourth United Nations Conference on Women. I share the view recently expressed by Senator Kassebaum and Congressman Hamilton on U.N. Conferences: "...The United Nations is in peril of becoming little more than a road show traveling from conference to conference. If an issue is serious, a conference will not solve it; if it is not serious, a conference is a waste of time." In my view, the U.S. should stay away from any U.N. Conference with goals and agendas which do nothing to promote American interests -- whether they are held in Beijing, Brussels or Boston.

There are many reasons to stay away from the U.N. Women's Conference -- from the systematic exclusion of certain non-government organizations to the irony of holding a human rights conference in a country with a poor human rights record. The tilt toward anti-Americanism and radicalism -- always present in "lowest common denominator" U.N. conferences -- was particularly pronounced for the Women's Conference. There was even a controversy over the definition of gender in the preparatory meetings of the Conference.

(more)

There should be no doubt that China will use the Women's Conference to enhance its prestige and international image. It is our view that the United States should not be a party to what will surely be a propaganda exercise as long as Harry Wu is detained. It would be wrong to attend a human rights conference when an American citizen is unjustly detained.

We should be realistic. The administration can use already appropriated funds to go to Beijing. We cannot stop that today. However, we can make our position clear. The choice in this amendment for the administration is simple -- stay away from the Women's Conference while Harry Wu is detained or lose 50% of your ability to fund such conferences in the future.

###

\* Remarks delivered on Senate floor, approximately 3:35 p.m.