

Statement from Attorney David E. Taylor on Delivering the Petition for Gao Zhisheng

On July 10, I went to the door of the Chinese Embassy and was greeted by an embassy staff person who inquired what I wanted. After telling her I had some documents for the ambassador, she invited me inside. Once inside, she wanted to see the documents. I told her that I really needed to give them to the ambassador, at which time she told me that he was not in. I laid the petition on the arm of a large sofa chair, and she became very agitated. She said "You can't leave them there." I told her that I was just putting them down for a moment because they were heavy. She then read the letter from ChinaAid to the ambassador over a walkie talkie to someone. Then she said, "I cannot accept these; take them away."

I told her that I would not take them away and insisted on seeing someone who would accept the petition for the ambassador. After, again talking to someone on the walkie talkie, she said she had to go upstairs and get the ambassador's secretary. She was gone only for a minute or two and returned alone. She asked me to leave, and to take the papers with me because no one would accept them. She was very agitated. I told her that if she did not accept the petition, I would legally serve the petition to the Chinese Embassy by placing it at the door. Since she had read the cover letter and glanced through the two volume set, I told her that I was certain that she knew what it was. She ordered me to leave immediately. As I was leaving, she was yelling that I could not leave the petition there, but I left it at the front door of the embassy. According to the law, leaving the petition on Chinese property, the embassy, amounts to 'legal service.' The Chinese Embassy was legally served with the petition even though they tried to avoid it.

As a trial lawyer from the U.S., I am proud to have my name associated with ChinaAid and its mission to advance the cause of human rights lawyers in China. It was a gratifying experience to have been requested to deliver the petition to the Chinese Embassy. To carry more than 100,000 signatures of real people who sincerely care about our brothers and sisters in China who are fighting courageously every day at great peril to themselves and their families, was a profound honor.

Though the petition was specifically aimed at release of kidnapped Christian attorney Gao Zhisheng, we all came to understand that the events that occurred after his kidnapping (and almost certain torture) extended to all human rights lawyers in China. I have no doubt that the Chinese government understands that as the signatures started to come in, they represented concern for all human rights lawyers in China who have recently been attacked in so many ways by the Chinese government. The Chinese government's latest tactic of refusing to renew licenses is blatantly transparent and provocative.

The Congressmen and Senators with whom we have talked needed no education about what is really going on in China. They know what is happening, and they do not like it. Several members of Congress echoed what my good friend Rev. Bob Fu and I have been saying for some time now, in words so similar to ours, that there is no question that the 111th Congress means to hold China accountable. Congressmen McGovern and Wolf even used the words "your brothers and sisters" when talking directly to me about our campaign to make clear that they understand that we have global responsibilities in return for the privileges granted to us to practice law in the U.S. and to enjoy human rights in general.

Then in the roundtable discussion of the plight of lawyers in China held before the Congressional-Executive Commission on China on July 10, 2009 before a packed audience, Professors Jerome Cohen, James Feinerman and Rev. Bob Fu raised the same points regarding particularly the obligation of American lawyers to assist our brothers and sisters in China who strive to protect and advance human rights in that country. These gentlemen are, without a doubt, foremost experts on China's legal system, and it was a tremendously inspiring experience to hear them speak the truth about the Chinese government.

I would like to add that I was struck beyond expression at Congressman Frank Wolf's statements that it is time that the religious leaders, and the churches and lawyers in America **get really involved** in this movement for the Chinese government to be called out and held accountable for its human rights violations. Congressman McGovern rightfully threw down the gauntlet to American lawyers to get involved in a real way to advance the cause of our brothers and sisters in China. He pointed out that American lawyers do not mind lobbying for their own interests, and it is time for them to realize that they have obligations beyond the shores of this country. I absolutely agree, and it is time that we, **the American lawyers** be heard, to lobby for that which is far more sacred than our own interests – the interests of real human rights across the world and, at this moment, particularly in China. **THE PETITION HAS BEEN SERVED, NOW LET ITS MEANING BE SERVED.** May President Obama hear the call and realize that China must be called out and dealt with **NOW**.