

Lady Cox gears up a Hongkong crisis in U.S. Congress

by Kathy Wolfe

Two weeks after colleagues of Britain's Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury called for a "grassroots" movement to be launched inside the U.S. Congress against China, it has miraculously sprung up. Following Vice President Al Gore's trip to China, Lady Cox's Christian Solidarity International (CSI) will build a "bipartisan coalition in Congress" to paralyze President Clinton's China policy, CSI-U.S.A. President James Jacobson threatened on March 25. "Gore and Clinton are treating China like an ally and it's got to stop," he said.

A full-page advertisement in the March 30 *Washington Times*, sponsored by Gary Bauer's Family Research Council and signed by prominent single-issue groups, criticized President Clinton and Vice President Gore for condoning maltreatment of Christians in China. On the talk show circuit, Christian Coalition Director Ralph Reed, whose newsletters reach millions of Americans, announced the new Congressional campaign on "Fox News Sunday" on March 30. Most Favored Nation trade status for China must be revoked when it comes up in June, Reed stated. "If you look at the record of China in the area of human rights, if you look at the persecution of the Christian church . . . [it is] probably some of the most brutal oppression of religion anywhere in the world."

CSI, a pawn of the British House of Lords, in particular plans an "escalating drumbeat" to make an issue out of Hongkong's reversion to China, an aide to Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) said on April 2. This is timed to explode into a "sharp confrontation" at the July 1 reversion date, he said. Smith is on the board of Cox's CSI.

Between now and July 1, Smith's aide said, there will be at least three bills introduced into the U.S. Congress by congressmen close to London's CSI:

- A bill revoking China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status;
- The Hongkong Reversion Act, which imposes U.S. conditionalities on China over the issue of Hongkong;
- A bill to impose U.S. conditionalities on China's membership in the World Trade Organization.

Bipartisans for Britain

"MFN is going to be a very big debate," said Smith's aide. "Every year we've tried to stop it, but this year will be our first chance for the votes to override President Clinton. Previously,

the 'free-trade' Republicans, like Speaker Newt Gingrich, have voted in favor of MFN. But this year, with the scandal of Chinese influence-buying, and the grassroots rebellion over Chinese maltreatment of Christians, we can do it."

President Clinton is expected to certify China for MFN the last week in May (the deadline is June 4), and Congress then has 60 days to override him. According to Smith's aide, the "bipartisan effort" to override will be led by Smith, and include Reps. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Chris Cox (R-Calif.), Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), and Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.). Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) will "lead the charge" in the Senate, he said.

"The Congressional delegation which just went to China led by Newt Gingrich, took official letters from us," the aide said, "one from Rep. [Frank] Wolf demanding more religious liberty in China, and one from Representative Smith demanding China give up its 'one child' population policy. As soon as the delegation returns, we will demand to know the Chinese response to our letters. Then we go into action," he said.

The text of H.R. 750, the Hongkong Reversion Act, submitted on Feb. 13 by Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-Neb.) on behalf of Rep. John Porter (R-Ill.), passed the House on March 11, and is now before the Senate. It would have the U.S. demand conditions of China over the July 1 Hongkong reversion, which aid British plans for Sino-American confrontation. The bill states that its objective is to "outline circumstances under which the President of the United States could modify the application of United States laws with respect to Hongkong if . . . China fails to honor its commitment to give Hongkong a high degree of autonomy."

The bill complains at length about Beijing's decision to dissolve Britain's puppet legislature in Hongkong, and presents a list of ostensible Beijing threats to civil liberties. It also amends Section 202(a) and Section 301 of the existing 1992 United States-Hongkong Policy Act, under which the President of the United States is required to present findings to Congress related to Hongkong. It demands that the President document each year that a laundry list of U.S. demands is being met by China, including "whether the Hongkong government remains autonomous and free of corruption and whether the rule of law is respected in Hongkong"; whether there are any "efforts to annul or curtail the application of the Bill of Rights of Hongkong; efforts to prosecute for treason," and so on.

If the President cannot document China's "compliance" with all of these demands, then the United States is to suspend trade and other privileges for China, which could impact on all areas of U.S.-China relations.

CSI-U.S. head Jacobson said that the CSI will also be holding conferences in Hongkong, beginning on May 15, to disrupt the changeover. CSI will stir up the "Christian community in Hongkong," which is "terrified" that Beijing will halt religious freedom, as a sacrificial lamb to create victims to parade in Congress, he said.