



Thugs Beat Citizens in China – and Here

I recently had lunch with a friend of mine who is a devout believer in American exceptionalism and the moral duty we have as Americans to police the universe, or at least that part of it that we can clearly identify as vital to our national security. I brought up the name of Ramsey Clark, a former attorney general whom Richard Nixon condemned as a conscientious objector in the "war on crime." Clark later went to Hanoi and pulled a Jane Fonda, broadcasting to our troops over Radio Hanoi, calling on American forces to lay down their arms and stop killing Vietnamese and standing in the way of the people's progress toward the worker's paradise.



My friend reminded me that Clark was also the most conspicuous American on Team Saddam, the lawyers who defended Saddam Hussein at his trial in Baghdad. But he not only defended him, my friend said, he claimed what Saddam did was right when he ordered his troops to destroy a village because his soldiers had been fired on from within it.

"Haven't our troops done the same?" I asked. My friend looked at me suspiciously, thinking I was trying to lure him into another argument over the invasion and occupation of Iraq in "Operation Watch Our Cakewalk."

"Let's not go there," he said.

Well, okay, let's not. Let's keep on condemning others for doing what we do ourselves and let's keep on ignoring the evidence that we are becoming more and more like the perpetrators of what we say we are fighting. As a famous cartoon character said, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Come to think of it, when *will* we change the national motto from "In God We Trust" to "Wars 'R' Us"?

Or maybe home raids are us or silencing dissent is us. Soon it may be hard to tell the Chinese security apparatus from our own Homeland Security operations. A recent news story said police in China beat up the wife of a provincial law-enforcement officer, mistaking her for a petitioner seeking redress of grievances. Chen Yulian was trying to enter her husband's office building that houses the Hubein provincial party headquarters when she was set upon by six public security officers, [the China Daily reported](#).

"Oh, ho ho!" you may say. That would never happen in our country. We have the right and the freedom to peacefully assemble and petition our government for redress of grievances. It's right there in the Constitution, in the very First Amendment in the 10 Amendments called the Bill of Rights. Hey, we weren't born yesterday, world. We know our rights.

And we also have the good sense not to exercise them in any meaningful way if our government finds that exercise inconvenient. We may all thank the heavens that we do not live within the long arm of the



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on July 25, 2010

law in the provincial capital, Wuhan, where the above-mentioned "public security officials" practice their law enforcement. China's leaders are said to be "obsessed" with maintaining social stability and "building a harmonious society." Well, of course. You beat people long enough and often enough and they're bound to get real harmonious. Pretty soon you won't hear a single discordant note out of them.

Thousands of petitioners take their grievances to Beijing every day, with many of the complaints stemming from land seizures and others about layoffs dating from massive bankruptcies in China's state sector in the 1990s, [Reuters reported](#).

Perhaps Chinese citizens, being somewhat new to the (limited) blessings of liberty, are more daring than we. They may not have learned that if they want to seek redress of grievances, the way to do it is to go to a government-designated "free speech zone" and demonstrate to their hearts' content, out of sight and out of the range of hearing from the very officials from whom they are seeking a redress of grievances. That's the way to make freedom relevant in the 21st century. After all, who do we think we are, for pity's sake, Thomas Paine (in the butt)?

"This incident is a total misunderstanding," the Communist Party chief of the district bureau explained to the *China Daily*. "Our police officers never realized that they beat the wife of a senior leader." No they would never beat the wife of a senior leader. The child or uncle of a junior leader, maybe, but not a senior leader. Or on the masses of followers who did not follow closely enough or who petitioned for a change in the way the march to progress was being conducted, such a one would be fair game for the Chinese thug force.

As it is, the Chinese government has given the world an inspired image of the heroism of the new Chinese proletariat police force, made up of new Maoist men. Six public security officers knocked Chen Yulian down and rained fists upon her for 16 minutes. The woman was then taken to police headquarters and yelled at when she requested medical attention. She suffered a concussion and damaged brain and nerve tissue.

Couldn't happen here, right? Not in a drug raid or anything. A SWAT team might come to the wrong house or apartment, knock down the door in the dead of night or the wee hours of the morning, burst in, point their automatic weapons at people, make everyone get down on the floor, handcuff them, threaten them ("Just give me a reason!") shoot the dog, kick the cat, and generally make shambles of the place. Then, when they realize they came to the wrong door, they up and leave without a word of apology, no offer to help repair the damage nor any admission of wrong doing. If we're lucky, they didn't kill anybody. And if they're lucky, they might have recovered a half a joint of marijuana to make it all worthwhile. Never has so much damage been done by so many for such small reward. Maybe tomorrow, if there are reports of mosquitoes, they'll come back with their elephant guns.

They may have learned a thing or two from Attorney General Janet Reno's siege at the Branch Davidian home Waco, Texas, in 1993 or from her Gestapo-style raid to kidnap Elian Gonzalez in 2000.

But at least this isn't China. We live in the "land of the free."



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