



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on August 16, 2017

## Lawmakers: Name Chinese Embassy Plaza After Dissident Liu Xiaobo

Every time U.S.-based diplomats for the mass-murdering regime ruling China go to or from work, or look down at their stationary, they may soon be reminded of one of their totalitarian employer's [most prominent victims](#). A growing alliance that includes leading U.S. lawmakers is working to rename the plaza outside the Communist Chinese embassy in Washington, D.C., after the late dissident Liu Xiaobo. The internationally renowned freedom activist, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate who died without proper medical care in Communist Chinese custody, has become something of a cause célèbre for human rights campaigners around the world. And now, if some U.S. lawmakers get their way, he may continue to haunt Beijing's agents from the grave. Apparently that has the dictatorship in China very upset.



The leading champion of the effort to rename the plaza in front of the Chinese embassy as “Liu Xiaobo Plaza” has been Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas; shown). Cruz first began his campaign in 2014. He introduced legislation to rename the plaza in the last Congress, too, and it passed the Senate unanimously last year. Unfortunately for freedom activists in China, though, the Obama White House, which [invited Communist Chinese troops to train on U.S. soil for the first time in history](#), threatened to veto it. The bill died without fanfare in the House of Representatives. This time, though, despite the regime's best efforts to pressure and threaten U.S. authorities, the Trump administration has so far refused to promise a veto of [the bill](#). In fact, the administration is pressuring the regime to release Liu Xia, Liu Xiaobo's widow, so that she can move to the United States.

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Liu Xiabo has been active as an anti-Communist Chinese dissident since the Tiananmen Square uprising, which culminated in the savage slaughter of protesters by the totalitarian Communist Party state. In 2009, he was handed an 11-year prison sentence for “subversive activities” for signing and co-authoring the Charter 08. The political document, among other demands, seeks an end to one-party rule and respect for individual rights. It was signed by over two thousand people. Setting aside concerns of KGB defectors that the Chinese Communist Party would seek phony reforms in a bid to dupe the world into believing China had become a “democracy,” the Charter 08 sent Beijing into a furious rage. Liu actually [was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 for “his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.”](#) Unsurprisingly, the regime did not let him out for the occasion. He died last month, still in custody.



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The saga inspired Senator Cruz and others to take serious action, at least in the battle for public opinion. In late June, while Liu was sick with liver cancer but still alive, Cruz released [a statement praising Liu](#) and calling on U.S. officials to quickly pass his bill to rename the plaza. “I am deeply saddened by the news of Dr. Liu Xiaobo’s cancer diagnosis and I hope that the United States will utilize any and all points of leverage with China to free Dr. Liu so that he can receive the medical treatment he needs,” the liberty-minded senator from Texas said in a statement. “Sadly, forcing such a champion of freedom to fight this grim disease in shackles is what we have come to expect from the People’s Republic of China. But this is what authoritarian regimes do — seek to strangle the vibrancy of liberty and extinguish individual freedom.”

Cruz, who has given multiple speeches on the Senate floor denouncing the Chinese regime’s abuses, also explained why renaming the plaza after Liu would be an effective tool. “Dr. Liu sought to shine a light into the darkness of Communist China at great cost to his personal well-being and his family’s safety, especially that of his wife, Liu Xia,” Cruz said. “His fight should not be over. While we know that Communist China will do nothing from the goodness of its heart, thankfully we have an immediate point of leverage to effect his release if the Senate will swiftly take up and pass legislation to rename the street in front of the Chinese embassy Liu Xiaobo Plaza. I hope that my colleagues will stand for freedom in China and pass it again. We are running out of time to save China’s greatest voice for freedom.”

As Liu’s condition was deteriorating further, Cruz [took to the Senate floor on July 12](#) — one day prior to Liu’s death — again calling for his release. “Liu Xiaobo and his wife Liu Xia are the faces of liberty in China today, having sacrificed comfort and normalcy to chart a path toward political liberalization. For that, they have been detained, imprisoned, and abused,” the Texas senator declared, thanking Trump for pressing the dictatorship to release Liu. “Motivating Dr. Liu’s tremendous courage and self-sacrifice was a determination to remember what the PRC desperately wants the world to forget: Tiananmen Square.” Cruz also noted that the Chinese regime was preventing the Liu family from receiving the monetary award associated with winning the Nobel Prize — money that would have allowed them to seek medical care and live out their days peacefully and in freedom in the United States.

If Cruz’s bill is signed into law, it would not be the first time U.S. officials have honored a victim of a communist dictatorship in such a fashion. In 1984, in an effort led by then-Senator Al D’Amato and others, the U.S. government renamed the D.C. street outside the embassy of the mass-murdering regime ruling the Soviet Union as “Andrei Sakharov Plaza,” in honor of persecuted Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and famous dissident Andrei Sakharov. ([Prominent KGB defectors alleged that Sakharov was a controlled “dissident” being used to manipulate the West.](#)) Pointing to that historic effort, Cruz said renaming the plaza outside the Chinese embassy could be similarly effective in using truth to shame a totalitarian regime for its barbarism.

“The end goal has never been to merely rename a street, but rather to use that action to shine light on the Lius and to pressure the PRC to do the right thing,” Cruz said on the Senate floor last month, pointing to Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and others for using the same tactic in 1984 in honor of Sakharov. “Senator Grassley led that effort under Ronald Reagan, and when the street was renamed, it meant any time a Soviet had to write to their embassy, they had to write Sakharov’s name. It meant any time you had to pick up the phone and call the embassy and say ‘where exactly do find the embassy,’ they had to give the address and highlight the dissident. For the PRC, they do not want to highlight Liu Xiaobo because he is a powerful voice for freedom and against tyranny.”



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“Just as it worked against the Soviet Union and Reagan demonstrated public shaming, shining light, telling the truth can bring down the machinery of oppression, so too, can public shining light, secure Dr. Liu’s freedom,” Cruz continued, speaking the day before the dissident passed away. “As we stand here today, we don’t know if Xi is going to allow Dr. Liu to come to freedom, to live out his last days in peace, and to receive the Nobel Peace prize that he was so justly rewarded. If Xi does the right thing, we can all commend that action, but if not, I am announcing my intention to continue to press this bill.” Cruz also noted that if Liu died in custody — and he did die, the very next day — he would “continue to fight until the day when the street is named in front of the embassy and the Chinese communist can bow their heads in shame at their injustice.”

Despite some opposition from apologists for Beijing in the Democrat Party, Cruz’s bill eventually passed the Senate unanimously in the previous Congress. This year, the measure, known as [S. 1187](#) in the Senate and [H.R. 2537](#) in the House, remains in limbo so far. If approved, it would also require that signs be posted including the name. In the House, the bill was co-sponsored by Representative Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) and has two co-sponsors so far, as does the Senate bill.

According to media reports, while the Trump administration quietly presses Beijing to release Liu’s widow so she can come to the United States, the Communist dictatorship is demanding that Trump try to bury the bill. The regime’s “Foreign Affairs minister” even raised the issue in a call with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. So far, the administration has not complied with Beijing’s demands. Supporters of the measure hope it will become law in the not-too-distant future. But the mass-murdering Communist Chinese regime and its fronts, unfortunately, have many friends and enablers on Capitol Hill. A [petition on the White House website](#) is urging lawmakers to get the job done, too.

While America’s Founders wisely advised against interfering in the domestic affairs of foreign governments, or going abroad seeking monsters to destroy, there is nothing wrong speaking truth to barbaric power using the weapon of truth here in the United States. As Senator Cruz put it, if the brutal regime does not wish to be publicly shamed, it should quit perpetrating shameful acts. Beyond merely standing for liberty publicly, though, U.S. officials [must also quit enabling the Communist Chinese tyrants at every turn](#). Allowing the status quo to remain in terms of U.S. foreign and domestic policy will ensure that Liu Xiaobo is not the regime’s last victim. In fact, [freedom around the world may be under mortal threat](#).

*Photo of Sen. Ted Cruz: Michael Vadon*

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