



Written by [Ann Shiber](#) on June 2, 2009

China and Pelosi Celebrate Anniversary of Tiananmen Square

All of this is done with the imprimatur of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who traveled to China to give them a personal thumbs up and to speak on ... climate change — because it's oh, so much more important than human rights issues.

At 5 p.m. in China on June 1, a [broad range of websites became inaccessible to computer Internet users](#). Blocked were MSNSpaces, Hotmail, Flickr, Bing, Twitter, and BBC Tiananmen Square reporting. Even print magazines were censored, with anything related to the Tiananmen massacre ripped out.



Why is a 20-year-old story still being blocked by China's government? It's not ancient history as far as Chinese citizens are concerned. At least 30 of the hundreds jailed in 1989 are still in jail, and [families of killed protestors and dissidents](#) are still being targeted by the government for ill treatment. One such dissident was seized Saturday at his home after releasing a letter that charged officials with targeting former prisoners for extra hardships — both economic and medical.

Wu Gaoxing was taken away and his computer confiscated one hour after a letter he wrote went public. Wu, a writer and teacher, was jailed for two years in 1989 when he joined in pro-democracy protests. Wu says anyone sentenced for political reasons is singled out for harsh treatment: "In this society that claims to be harmonious, we have become 'citizens of the three have-nots waiting to die': we have no regular jobs, no pensions, and no health insurance."

Mao Guoliang, sentenced to four years for "counter-revolutionary activism" — he was convicted of posting seven poems that painted the student protesters at Tiananmen Square in a good light — has had 17 different jobs, but always ends up being fired.

The police detained Zhou Dou on Saturday after being interviewed by a journalist. Zhou, a former sociology professor, spent one year in detention for sending a letter to Chinese authorities demanding they not use violence against unarmed protestors. Since then he lost his job and has been unable to find another. "Everywhere I go, a few steps in front of me is an invisible wall I can't go around," he said. "The only thing I've done these past 20 years was reflect on what happened during that time. Before June 4, I was never involved in anything political and I could have never imagined myself a dissident. But now that I am on this track, I can't get off."

On the other end of the spectrum sits House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who claims that she is committed to human rights, but there's little evidence that she is, except for a few words she issued in 1991. She defends her lack of attention to the atrocities of Communist China concerning human rights by saying, "I will continue to speak out for human rights in China and around the world." But a copy of the speech she was to give in China tells all:



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Indeed, protecting the environment is a human rights issue. We hope to send a clear message that transparency, accountability, enforcement, and respect for the rule of law are essential if we are to protect our planet.

Pelosi labels it “environmental justice.” She parrots the current administration’s rhetoric perfectly, saying she is entering into a new era of communication and engagement with the Chinese.

Even liberals noted the change in Pelosi’s rhetoric, with Brookings Institution’s Richard Bush III saying, “She’s certainly softened her tone.”

[When asked by an NPR reporter if she was overlooking the human rights issue](#), she reportedly bristled back, “I’m not overlooking it. We have brought up human rights.... Twenty years ago — I guess it’s 18 years ago — I stood in Tiananmen Square with a banner.” She added, “I am now speaker of the House and have the opportunity to speak directly to the president of China, to bring up the subject, on behalf of the entire Congress. We want to increase our communication.”

Reminiscent of Hanoi Jane during the Vietnam war, police kept protesters — the commoners who had gathered throughout various parts of the city with banners in tow — away from Pelosi during her visit abroad, while she hobnobbed and exchanged pleasantries with local and high-level dignitaries including Wen Jiabao and Hu Jintao. One protester’s banner read “Welcome Pelosi. Pay close attention to human rights. SOS.” One hopes that her visit did not cause any undue hardship, imprisonment, or torture for any of the dissidents, while she totally reneged on discussing real human rights issues.



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