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Source: NewCenturyNet, *NewCenturyNet*, <http://2newcentury.net.blogspot.com/2010/09/blog-post_4057.html>.

In the Name of National Security, Who Will Be the Next Liu Xia?

Dr. Chin-fu Hung

Liu Xia, a painter, a photographer, and the widow of the Nobel Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, left the People's Republic of China and arrived in Germany recently. Liu Xiaobo died of cancer in July 2017 after serving 11 years over his call for democratic reform in China. Liu Xia had been under house arrest for allegedly inciting subversion and had been closely monitored by the Chinese authorities since 2010 without any

formal criminal charges. Her release came right after a meeting between Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang. Rather than considering this a coincidence, it seems more likely there was a political deal between the two countries, which are also currently targeted by Donald Trump's trade tariffs. Even with Liu Xia's final release, the international community has not yet paid enough





attention to the worsening human rights record under Xi Jinping.

Liu Xia's freedom did not come without any conditions, as her brother is still in China under relentless investigation. Truly, there has been intense lobbying and a great deal of effort exerted by several human right organizations and government bodies to push the Chinese Communists to release Liu Xia. However, there are many more political dissidents and activists being detained and mentally tortured without legitimate charges. The human rights situation is deteriorating as we have seen a sweeping crackdown on civil society, where lawyers, NGOs, academics, and journalists have been unprecedentedly attacked.

We have to note that both Han activists and ethnic minority leaders are under high surveillance. No matter whether in exile or within China, the authorities are by no means giving way to those activities who dare challenge national unity, security, and regime stability. Those who cross the red line are severely penalized and punished. From Tibet and Xinjiang to Hong Kong and Taiwan, Chinese security officials are raising the "red" flag to fight a tough battle against separatist terrorism, in the hope of maintaining its governing legitimacy.

Different countries admittedly have different histories, cultures, and national circumstances; thus, different constitutional governance models and democratic standards must be adopted. Safeguarding human rights and restraining public power nevertheless are implacable basic principles in any constitutional

governance country and region. China in this regard is no exception.

The political manifesto of Charter 08 *per se* sheds light on respect for human rights and greater rule of law for both democracies and authoritarian regimes. While Xi Jinping has proposed the "China Dream," the "Dream" seems to have overstressed the great renaissance of the Chinese nation, the modern national revival, and the economic development with its affiliated economic indicators. Where is the Dream's value system? What exactly is the objective for social development? It is not clear in this "Dream" whatsoever. What is more important is for the Chinese authorities to completely live up to the promises stated in its Constitution, for this is precisely the key to China's long-term stability and prosperity.

Taiwan as a Beacon of Democracy in the World

Taiwan is widely recognized as a paradigm of a vibrant young democracy in the contemporary world. Like many other countries, Taiwan is under the real threat of China's sharp power amid the recent retreat of liberalism mostly in the West. In fact, China has become adept at employing sharp power to advance objectives to manipulate decision-makers in Western democracies and at using techniques, such as deception, posturing, soft annexation, and information warfare, to shape public opinion and compliance at home and abroad. Taiwan is surely a frontline state "with experience in resisting China's attempts to erode its democracy and defending fundamental democratic values" (former Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister



Francois Wu). In the severe fight against the growing influence of authoritarian powers, it is only when like-minded countries work and stand together that democracies continue to play a role in safeguarding the most-cherished democratic system, strengthening and energizing civil society, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The beacon of democracy could, but should not, be extinguished in the end; it ought to continue to inspire oppressed peoples around the world who are determined to free themselves. China under Xi Jinping is transforming into a digital authoritarian regime, with tightened social and media control. Strict monitoring and censorship both in cyberspace/social media or media-space are being relentlessly imposed. What is even worse, China is now an all-seeing state, as it has the world's largest camera surveillance network. Many of the cameras are actually filled with artificial intelligence, including facial recognition technology. One notable example is that, China's CCTV surveillance network took just 7 minutes to capture a BBC reporter. It shows China is dramatically becoming a very powerful digital police state with sophisticated and advanced types of monitoring systems that they have heavily invested in over the past few years. This truly enables the state and its police to do their job in a more efficient and effective manner.

Standing in Solidarity with Liu Xia and All Oppressed

"I hope that I will be the last victim of China's endless literary inquisitions and that from now on no one will be incriminated because of speech. Freedom of expression is the foundation of human rights, the source of humanity, and the mother of truth. To strangle freedom of speech is to trample on human rights, stifle humanity, and suppress truth. In order to exercise the right to freedom of speech conferred by the Constitution, one should fulfill the social responsibility of a Chinese citizen. There is nothing criminal in anything I have done. [But] if charges are brought against me because of this, I have no complaints." (Liu Xiaobo - I Have No Enemies: My Final Statement)

It may be too soon for the outside world to see the end to one-party rule in China. Yet, Taiwan, together with the free and democratic world, should indeed stand on the front line to defend democratic values and to reach out to the oppressed and disenfranchised by genuinely supporting them and exposing the realities behind the fantasy of the "China Dream."

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Editor's Note: The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Prospect Foundation.





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