

**Statement of
Congressman Joseph R. Pitts
Hearing on the Accession to the World Trade Organization of the
People's Republic of China (PRC) and Related Rule-of-Law Issues
February 7, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing on China's *Accession to the World Trade Organization of the People's Republic of China and Related Rule-of-Law Issues*. Also, I would like to thank Mr. Mike Jendrzeczyk, Mr. Xiao Qiang, Professor James V. Feinerman, and Professor William P. Alford for sharing their expertise and insight with us today.

Addressing rule of law issues in China, as reported by many scholars and human rights experts, is vital to establishing international human rights standards in China. Unfortunately, as noted in the testimonies this morning, recent incidents, particularly related to freedom of speech and freedom of conscience, reflect the intense battle within Chinese society between those who wish to live in freedom and those who wish to exert extreme control over the society and individuals, their actions, speech, and even their thoughts.

As our government gives assistance to the Chinese government for civil society development, we must be specific in our assistance targeting areas in which a real, practical difference can be made. For example, it is vital that as just rule of law is developed in China. It is also vital that the distinction be made that criminal action be dealt with under established criminal law, but that no new laws are needed to limit freedom of religion. Official PRC Government documents make it clear that the drive to maintain control over religious believers in China remains strong. In one report regarding a meeting of Chinese officials, the officials were charged to "' Quickly gather the essential personnel and find out the development and activities of this cult in our province. Carefully gather all the information and try to catch all the members in one blow. Pay attention to keep it confidential and work without talking.' Comrade, the head of the Ministry of Public Security, emphasized specifically that 'we need to work more and talk less and smash the cult quietly'." This is not the statement of officials who aim to protect the freedom of conscience of their people.

In one case from December 2001, reports suggest that Mr. Gong Shengliang was accused of "crying out to his followers to 'fight a bloody battle with the devil (referring to the government) till the end, so that the Satan's (referring to the Communist Party) authority will be destroyed and the kingdom of the ever-lasting God will be established.'" The Communist Party's accusations against Mr. Gong Shengliang are reminiscent of those against Pastor Xu Yongze, also a Protestant church leader, accused of instigating his followers to fight against the devils and demons in power. According to various reports, neither of these men were attempting to engage their fellow religious believers in a physical battle against anyone. The Communist Party, however, has their own interpretation.

Mr. Chairman, these brief examples, along with the others reported today, underscore the importance of continuing to address these issues in deliberate, practical ways.