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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 48

43RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 1997

INTRODUCED BY

MANNY M. ARAGON

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING UNITED NATIONS AMBASSADOR BILL RICHARDSON AND UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE ALBRIGHT TO SEEK THE RELEASE OF TIBETAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND INNOCENT STUDENTS FROM FORCED DETENTION BY CHINA.

WHEREAS, for over one year the Chinese government has forcefully and illegally detained a seven-year-old Tibetan child, the Panchen Lama, against his will and as a political and religious hostage in order to further solidify Chinese authoritarian control over the autonomous nation of Tibet; and

WHEREAS, the Panchen Lama is the second most important religious figure in Tibet, and his abduction by the Chinese in May 1995 has politicized a traditionally internal religious matter and is viewed by the international community as a completely unacceptable intrusion into the most sacred and

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1 important of Tibetan rituals, the selection, religious training
2 and security of the next Dalai Lama; and

3 WHEREAS, as further evidence of the current crackdown in
4 Tibet, the Chinese just months ago sentenced a Tibetan musician,
5 Ngawang Choephel, to eighteen years in prison on charges he was
6 a "political spy" for the Dalai Lama; and

7 WHEREAS, this total disregard by the Chinese government for
8 basic human rights is a part of a new "Strike Hard" campaign
9 against Tibet by the Chinese communist party that has seen
10 political arrests rise to over two hundred in 1996, the
11 continued torture of Tibetan monks and the forced exile of the
12 Dalai Lama, winner of the 1989 Nobel peace prize; and

13 WHEREAS, New Mexico, home to many Tibetan refugees, has a
14 long tradition of support from our congressional delegation,
15 state legislature and governors for Tibetan religious freedom
16 and Tibetan independence from communist China; and

17 WHEREAS, with long-time New Mexico Congressman Bill
18 Richardson now confirmed as United States ambassador to the
19 United Nations and with Madeleine Albright now confirmed as
20 secretary of state, it is most appropriate for the New Mexico
21 legislature to petition them to assist in seeking justice and
22 religious and political freedom for both the Panchen Lama and
23 Ngawang Choephel;

24 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that United States Ambassador to the United

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1 Nations Bill Richardson and United States Secretary of State
2 Madeleine Albright be requested to take all necessary and
3 appropriate diplomatic steps to obtain the immediate release of
4 the Panchen Lama and Ngawang Choephel from unjust detention and
5 confinement by the Chinese communist government; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
7 transmitted to United Nations Ambassador Bill Richardson, to
8 United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and to His
9 Holiness the Dalai Lama.

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1 FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
2 FIRST SESSION, 1997
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5 March 18, 1997
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7 Mr. President:
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9 Your RULES COMMITTEE, to whom has been referred
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13 has had it under consideration and reports same with
14 recommendation that it DO PASS.
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16 Respectfully submitted,
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21 Gloria Howes, Chairman
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25 Adopted _____ Not Adopted _____
(Chief Clerk) (Chief Clerk)

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Date _____

The roll call vote was 5 For 0 Against

Yes: 5

No: 0

Excused: Aragon, Rodarte, Stockard

Absent: None

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