

First Global Meeting of Chinese Democracy Party Defines Mission, Elects Leaders

June 5, 2007 – Providence, RI – Over 40 exiled Chinese democracy leaders gathered at the first global meeting of the China Democracy Party this week to launch the party's overseas branch, define its mission, and increase external pressure for democratic change in China.

Party members and other democracy advocates at the First Party Congress called for the building of a "Third Republic" in China, based on democracy, equality, human rights, and the rule of law. One of the party's next steps will be to push for freedom of political association in China.

The summit, timed to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, was organized by Xu Wenli, a prominent Chinese dissident who was imprisoned for 16 years before being granted asylum in the United States in 2002. Mr. Xu, a party co-founder, was elected during the conference to be the China Democracy Party's first chairman.

"This congress will go down in the annals of Chinese history," Mr. Xu said, declaring that "the China Democracy Party is the first alternative to one-party rule in China."

Mr. Xu went further to call on the Chinese government to view the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 as a symbol of peace and to mark the occasion by releasing all Chinese political prisoners.

The First Party Congress's actions included:

- A unanimous vote approving the "Declaration of China's Third Republic" as the party's mission statement;
- Signature of the declaration by congress attendees – and, via email request, for democracy advocates in China and around the world;
- The election of party leaders;
- Political remarks from party leaders and democracy advocates from Australia, France, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Sweden, Taiwan, and the United States;
- The reading of a letter of support from US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as an in-person address by former US Senator Lincoln Chafee;
- A simulcast of the event over the internet and other communications with China, including remarks via cell phone from the relatives of political prisoners there;
- A statement of intent to work toward a coalition among various Chinese democracy groups;
- A Tiananmen photo exhibition and tribute to the mothers of the Tiananmen victims; and
- Awards for exceptional service to the cause of Chinese democracy.

The congress brought together key members of the renowned Democracy Wall Movement of 1978, survivors of the Tiananmen Square massacre, and Nobel Peace Prize nominees. These included some of China's staunchest advocates for a

representative Chinese government, including Xizhe Wang, Weibang Sun, and Qin-hua Gheng.

The China Democracy Party was founded inside China by Mr. Xu in 1998. Because of Chinese repression, it was never able to hold a public organizing meeting in China, although party members have been active both inside China and around the world, advocating a peaceful transition to a democratic government in China and raising awareness about human rights issues there.

Many of the activists at the summit have been loosely connected through the internet, establishing a blue-print and timeline for reform that has already been presented to the Chinese government, but there has never before been an official meeting to build a viable pro-democracy party.

"China has had two prior democratic republics: first for a short-lived period under Sun Yat-Sen in 1911, and then from 1937 to 1956," Mr. Xu said. "Today, we announce the founding of the Third Republic, which will restore to Chinese people the democratic principles that they have been denied under the current Communist regime."

In a letter read to the gathering, US House Speaker Pelosi congratulated the party for its first congress, commending its members for "leadership in the fight for freedom, democracy and human rights in China... We hope that one day the world's most populous nation can at last be called the world's largest democracy."

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