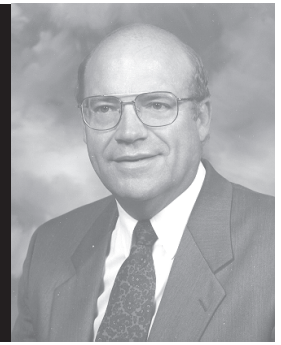




Dr. Fred Schwarz

The Schwarz Report



Dr. David Noebel

Volume 47, Number 3

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Inside

Whence Venezuela

by Jacob Laksin, Page 4

As Chavez moves the country to socialism, Laksin pities the Venezuelan people.



Terror Works

by Joseph Farah, Page 5

Amid the theories of "why terrorism?", Farah asserts, "because it works."



The People's Republic of China: Communist

by Don Feder, Page 6

With China's expanding economy and military, it is important to remember that China is a totalitarian state.

The Origin of Life

by Duane T. Gish, Ph. D.

In a letter to Engels, Marx writes, "During...the past four weeks I have read all sorts of things. Among others Darwin's work on Natural Selection. And though it is written in the crude English style, this is the book which contains the basis in natural science for our view." Marx expresses the same sentiment in a letter to Lassalle, claiming that *The Origin of Species* "is very important and serves me as a natural scientific basis for the class struggle in history." John Hoffman tells us that Marx so admired Darwin's work that he "sent Darwin a complimentary copy of Volume I of *Capital* and tried unsuccessfully to dedicate Volume II to him."

There were no human witnesses to the origin of life, and no physical geological evidence of its origin exists. Speaking of the origin of a hypothetical self-replicating molecule and its structure, Pross has recently admitted that "The simple answer is we do not know, and we may never know."¹ Later, concerning the question of the origin of such a molecule, Pross said, "... one might facetiously rephrase the question as follows: given an effectively unknown reaction mixture, under effectively unknown reaction conditions, reacting to give unknown products by unknown mechanisms, could a particular product with a specific characteristic . . . have been included amongst the reaction products?"² That pretty well summarizes the extent of the progress evolutionists have made toward establishing a mechanistic, atheistic scenario for the origin of life after more than half a century of physical, chemical, and geological research. It is possible, however, to derive facts that establish beyond doubt that an evolutionary origin of life on this planet would have been impossible. The origin of life could only have resulted from the action of an intelligent agent external to and independent of the natural universe. There is sufficient space here to describe only a few of the insuperable barriers to an evolutionary origin of life.

1. The absence of the required atmosphere.

Our present atmosphere consists of 78% nitrogen (N₂), 21% molecular oxygen (O₂), and 1% of other gases, such as carbon dioxide CO₂, argon (Ar), and water vapor H₂O). An atmosphere containing free oxygen would be fatal to all origin of life schemes. While oxygen is necessary for life, free oxygen would oxidize and thus destroy all organic molecules required for the *origin* of life. Thus, in spite of much evidence that the earth has always had a significant quantity of free oxygen in the atmosphere,³ evolutionists persist in declaring that there was no oxygen in the earth's early atmosphere. However, *this would also be fatal to an evolutionary origin of life*. If there were no oxygen there would be no protective layer of ozone surrounding the earth. Ozone is produced by radiation from the sun on the oxygen in the atmosphere, converting the diatomic

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead expose them. Ephesians 5:11

"Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye; forget the past and you'll lose both eyes." Old Russian Proverb

oxygen(O₂) we breathe to triatomic oxygen O₃), which is ozone. Thus if there were no oxygen there would be no ozone. The deadly destructive ultraviolet light from the sun would pour down on the surface of the earth unimpeded, destroying those organic molecules required for life, reducing them to simple gases, such as nitrogen, carbon dioxide, and water. Thus, *evolutionists face an irresolvable dilemma: in the presence of oxygen, life could not evolve; without oxygen, thus no ozone, life could not evolve or exist.*

2. All forms of raw energy are destructive.

The energy available on a hypothetical primitive Earth would consist primarily of radiation from the sun, with some energy from electrical discharges (lightning), and minor sources of energy from radioactive decay and heat. The problem for evolution is that *the rates of destruction of biological molecules by all sources of raw energy vastly exceed their rates of formation by such energy.* The only reason Stanley Miller succeeded in obtaining a small amount of products in his experiment was the fact that he employed a trap to isolate his products from the energy source.⁴ Here evolutionists face two problems. First, there could be no trap available on a primitive Earth. Second, *a trap by itself would be fatal to any evolutionary scenario*, for once the products are isolated in the trap, no further evolutionary progress is possible, because no energy is available. In his comments on Miller's experiment, D. E. Hull stated that "These short lives for decomposition in the atmosphere or ocean clearly preclude the possibility of accumulating useful concentrations of organic compounds over eons of time. . . . The physical chemist guided by the proved principles of chemical thermodynamics and kinetics, cannot offer any encouragement to the biochemist, who needs an ocean full of organic compounds to form even lifeless coacervates."⁵

3. An evolutionary scenario for the origin of life would result in an incredible clutter.

Let us suppose that, as evolutionists suggest, there actually was some way for organic, biologically important molecules to have formed in a significant quantity on a primitive Earth. An indescribable mess would have been the result. In addition to the 20 different amino acids found in proteins today, hundreds of other kinds of amino acids would have been produced. In addition to deoxyribose and ribose, the five-carbon sugars found in DNA and RNA today, a variety of other five-carbon sugars, four-carbon, six-carbon, and seven-carbon sugars would have been produced. In addition to the

five purines and pyrimidines found in DNA and RNA today, a great variety of other purines and pyrimidines would exist. Further, of vital significance, the amino acids in proteins today are exclusively left-handed, but all amino acids on the primitive Earth would be 50% left-handed and 50% right-handed. The sugars in DNA and RNA today are exclusively right-handed, but, if they did exist, sugars on a primitive Earth would have been 50% right-handed and 50% left-handed. If just one right-handed amino acid is in a protein, or just one left-handed sugar is found in a DNA or RNA, all biological activity is destroyed. There would be no mechanism available on a primitive Earth to select the correct form. This fact alone destroys evolution. Evolutionists have been wrestling with this dilemma since it was first recognized, and there is no solution in sight. All these many varieties would compete with one another, and a great variety of other organic molecules, including aldehydes, ketones, acids, amines, lipids, carbohydrates, etc. would exist. If evolutionists really claim to simulate plausible primitive Earth conditions, why don't they place their reactants in a big mess like this and irradiate it with ultraviolet light, shock it with electric discharges, or heat it, and see what results? They don't do that because they know there wouldn't be the remotest possibility that anything useful for their evolutionary scenario would result. Rather, they carefully select just the starting materials they want to produce amino acids or sugars or purines or whatever, and, furthermore, they employ implausible experimental conditions that would not exist on a primitive Earth. They then claim in textbooks and journal articles that such and such biological molecules would have been produced in abundant quantities on the early earth.

4. Micromolecules do not spontaneously combine to form macromolecules.

It is said that DNA is the secret of life. DNA is not the secret of life. Life is the secret of DNA. Evolutionists persistently claim that the initial stage in the origin of life was the origin of a self-replicating DNA or RNA molecule. *There is no such thing as a self-replicating molecule, and no such molecule could ever exist.* The formation of a molecule requires the input of a highly selected type of energy and the steady input of the building blocks required to form it. To produce a protein, the building blocks are amino acids. For DNA and RNA these building blocks are nucleotides, which are composed of purines, pyrimidines, sugars, and phosphoric acid. If amino acids are dissolved in water they do not spontaneously join together to make a protein. That would require an input of energy. If

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proteins are dissolved in water the chemical bonds between the amino acids slowly break apart, releasing energy (the protein is said to hydrolyze). The same is true of DNA and RNA. To form a protein in a laboratory the chemist, after dissolving the required amino acids in a solvent, adds a chemical that contains high energy bonds (referred to as a peptide reagent). The energy from this chemical is transferred to the amino acids. This provides the necessary energy to form the chemical bonds between the amino acids and releases H and OH to form H₂O (water). This only happens in a chemistry laboratory or in the cells of living organisms. It could never have taken place in a primitive ocean or anywhere on a primitive Earth. Who or what would be there to provide a steady input of the appropriate energy? Destructive raw energy would not work. Who or what would be there to provide a steady supply of the appropriate building blocks rather than just junk? In speaking of a self-replicating DNA molecule, evolutionists are reaching for a pie in the sky.

5. DNA could not survive without repair mechanisms.

DNA, as is true of messenger-RNA, transfer-RNA, and ribosomal-RNA, is destroyed by a variety of agents, including ultraviolet light, reactive oxygen species, alkylating agents, and *water*. A recent article reported that there are 130 known human DNA repair genes and that more will be found. The authors stated that “Genome [DNA] instability caused by the great variety of DNA-damaging agents would be an *overwhelming problem* for cells and organisms if it were not for DNA repair (emphasis mine).”⁶ Note that even water is one of the agents that damages DNA! If DNA somehow evolved on the earth it would be dissolved in water. Thus water and many chemical agents dissolved in it, along with ultraviolet light would destroy DNA much faster than it could be produced by the wildest imaginary process. If it were not for DNA repair genes, the article effectively states, DNA could not survive even in the protective environment of a cell! How then could DNA survive when subjected to brutal attack by all the chemical and other DNA-damaging agents that would exist on the hypothetical primitive Earth of the evolutionists?

What are the cellular agents that are necessary for DNA repair and survival? DNA genes! *Thus, DNA is necessary for the survival of DNA!* But it would have been impossible for DNA repair genes to evolve before ordinary DNA evolved and it would have been impossible for ordinary DNA to evolve before DNA repair genes had evolved. Here we see another

impossible barrier for evolution. Furthermore, it is ridiculous to imagine that DNA repair genes could have evolved even if a cell existed. DNA genes encode the sequences of the hundreds of amino acids that constitute the proteins that are the actual agents that are involved in DNA repair. The code in the DNA is translated into a messenger RNA (mRNA). The mRNA must then move to and be incorporated into a ribosome (which is made up of three different ribosomal RNAs and 55 different protein molecules). Each amino acid must be coupled to a transfer RNA specific for that amino acid, and the coupling requires a protein enzyme specific for that amino acid and transfer-RNA. Responding to the code on the messenger RNA and utilizing the codes on transfer RNA's, the appropriate amino acids, attached to the transfer RNAs, are attached to the growing protein chain in the order prescribed by the code of the messenger RNA. Many enzymes are required along with appropriate energy. This is only a brief introduction to the incredible complexity of life that is found even in a bacterium.

“Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?” (Job 12:9).

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Whence Venezuela

by Jacob Laksin

January of 1989 was a particularly grim month for Cuba's communist regime. An enfeebled Soviet Union was promising to make peace with the West and threatening to suspend aid—Cuba's economic lifeblood—to its client states. Communism was everywhere on the defensive. Sensing the changing tide, Fidel Castro gave an impassioned defense of his dictatorship, then already 30 years old, committing Cuba to a fight to the finish, to "socialism or death!" The record of Castro's crimes, its death toll likely stretching into the tens of thousands, has now revealed this to be a distinction without difference.

Fast forward to January of 2007: In Venezuela, Castro's reverent student, Hugo Chavez, seems determined to follow in his path. In a line that must have warmed the heart of the decrepit tyrant in Havana—assuming he is still alive—Chavez last week committed his country to Castro's course: "Fatherland, socialism or death," Chavez declared, "I take the oath."

It is rare for authoritarians of the Left to show their true colors so vibrantly. But where in the past it was possible to dismiss Chavez as a standard-issue demagogue, a charge his September bloviating at the United Nations about "the devil" President Bush did much to bolster, the latest developments make a compelling case that Chavez is what he always said he was: the next Fidel Castro.

Consider Chavez's pledge to turn Venezuela into a "socialist state." This is not, to be sure, the first time that Chavez has staked his country's future on a discredited ideology. Never before, however, has he moved so dramatically to put his radical vision into practice. "All of that which was privatized, let it be nationalized," Chavez announced this week.

He left little doubt about his sincerity. Private properties have already been seized for redistribution. Now power and telecommunications companies have been forced under state control; four prominent oil projects, currently administered by foreign companies, are next in line for official expropriation. Venezuela's central bank also bids fair to become a holding of the state.

Such legally suspect measures are bound to provoke criticism and opposition. Chavez has therefore also sought to silence dissenting voices. With that aim in mind, the government has refused to renew the broadcast license of Radio Caracas Television. Ties to the political opposition have evidently made the television network intolerable for Chavez, who seems intent on turning the country's media into personal p.r. agencies. Taken together with previous attempts to muscle private networks off the air and the scandalous Law on the Social Responsibility of Radio and Television of 2004—one

of whose provisions imposed 20-month prison sentences for the crime of "disrespect" to government authorities—an unmistakable pattern of government attacks on free expression and press independence emerges.

As if the writing on the wall were insufficiently clear, Chavez has also decided to spell it out—in the country's constitution. Last week brought news of Chavez's plan to ask the National Assembly, Venezuela's equivalent of Congress, for power to pass a series of "revolutionary laws." (Seeing as the assembly is packed with Chavez loyalists, who are unlikely to refuse their leader anything, the entire consultative process is so much political theater.) One of these laws would eliminate presidential term limits, enabling Chavez to seek office after his final term expires in 2012. Of course, with immanentizing the eschaton being a notoriously time-consuming process, Chavez has already confessed his preference for remaining in office until 2031. Venezuela, meet your new president-for-life.

Predictably, Chavez still has his defenders. In the United States, the task of condoning every new attempt to consolidate power as an affirmation of people's democracy in action has been taken up most prominently by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Economic and Policy Research. The center's co-director, Mark Weisbrot, has reliably praised Chavez's Venezuela as a "democratic" country and hailed the alleged success of the government's economic policies.

In an interview with *FrontPageMag.com*, Weisbrot struck the same theme. In Chavez's attempt to do away with private property, to silence opposition media and indefinitely to extend his political prospects, Weisbrot saw "nothing too radical." Since many of the enterprises seized by the state were "previously state-owned," Weisbrot explained, "there is nothing all that radical about returning them to state ownership." That private owners were unwilling to part with their companies did not impress Weisbrot, who admitted that he was "not sure what the complaint is—and what it has to do with democracy." The bottom line, Weisbrot argued, was that "Chavez ran on a program of '21st century socialism,' and won 63 percent of the vote, the largest majority of 9 elections in Latin America last year. So it should not be cause for surprise, or alarm, that the government would attempt to deliver some of what Venezuelans voted for."

One may reasonably dispute whether the backing of slightly over half the population can be construed as *carte blanche* for turning the country into a communist backwater. Still, there is no gainsaying that Chavez had the support of a

sizeable segment of the population. How that has come to pass, however, does Chavez—and those who continue to applaud him—little credit.

First, Chavez has plied the impoverished country with government largesse. Included in the welfare package are government-provided food, housing, gasoline, healthcare, and education through the university level; the constitution even contains special benefits for “housewives.” In other words, Chavez has used the country’s vast oil wealth to buy his people’s support. Not the least of the problems with this approach is that it’s entirely dependent on oil prices and, as such, unsustainable. As much was confirmed last month by the World Bank’s Global Economic Prospects report. Pointing out that “the government’s antibusiness posturing” has produced a drop-off in oil production, the report predicted that Venezuela could not maintain its current rate of economic growth. The good times cannot last.

Second, Chavez has ruthlessly exploited the ethnic resentments of the *pardos*, the dark-skinned majority that by some estimates makes up 80 percent of the country’s poor. Indeed, a central component of Chavez’s popularity has always been his skill at stoking contempt for the lighter-skinned elite, the so-called *mantuanos*, who are held up in the popular imagination as a malignant fifth column. Chavez himself has made a generous contribution to this perception, using campaign stumps to rail against the hated “oligarchs”—widely understood as a reference to the white business class—and other “enemies of the people.” Chavez’s apologists on the Left prefer not to dwell on this history, and no wonder: The great “progressive” hope of Latin America, the reviler of George W. Bush, has fueled his political career on the fires of old-fashioned prejudice.

Not so long ago, policy wonks downplayed the impact of Chavez’s provocations. Venezuela’s democratic institutions, the reasoning went, would constrain his worst excesses. That view is becoming increasingly untenable. The military, the judiciary and the attorney general’s office have become appendages of the government; the National Assembly, boycotted by opposition parties, is effectively a rubber-stamp legislature. Should Chavez get his way—and in this political climate it would be foolish to bet otherwise—governance will soon become the exclusive privilege of a single party, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. If this is democracy, there is nothing democratic about it.

“We’re heading toward socialism, and nothing and no one can prevent it,” Chavez said this week, in another tribute to his Cuban mentor. All the evidence indicates that he has Castro’s ambition. If he should also end up having his success, one can only say: Pity the Venezuelan people.

—*FrontPageMagazine.com*, January 16, 2007

Terror Works

by Joseph Farah

It’s becoming popular to talk about “the root causes of terrorism.”

Lately, we’ve heard:

- The root cause of terrorism is foreign domination and control of Muslim resources.
- The root cause of terrorism is the hatred of the Western way of life.
- The root cause of terrorism is alienation.
- The root cause of terrorism is poverty and illiteracy.
- The root cause of terrorism is the moral decadence of the West.
- The root cause of terrorism is the West’s support for Israel.

Do you know what I think is the root cause of terrorism? It works.

By that I mean those using terrorism in the world today do it because it achieves their objectives.

Simple. And I think beyond dispute.

No place does it work more effectively than in Israel—once seen as a bulwark against Islamist terrorism. If you want a case study in the enabling of terrorism, the encouraging of terrorism, the feeding and cultivation of terrorism, look no further than the Jewish state.

Let’s look at the cost of unrelenting terrorism in the Jewish state over the last six years since Ariel Sharon was elected as a hard-line prime minister to put an end to attacks but who betrayed his constituency:

- 56 percent of Israelis support negotiating even with Hamas, a terrorist organization sworn to the Jewish state’s destruction;
- 75 percent of Israelis believe their country is struggling for its very survival;
- The more Israel has acceded to the demands of terrorists, the more terrorism has increased;
- The more Israel has unilaterally retreated from lands won in hard-fought combat, the more emboldened its attackers have become;
- The more accommodating Israel is with the terrorists, the higher become the demands on the Jewish state by international busybodies who blame their own problems with terrorists on Israel.

It’s a vicious cycle. But it is a cycle benefiting the terrorists—demonstrating its effectiveness as a tactic.

What do the terrorists want besides killing and terrifying people?

Ultimately, it is very simple. They want the entire world

subjugated to Islamic rule and law.

There are only two ways to stop the terrorism:

- Surrender and live under the domination of Islam.
- Soundly defeat the Islamic jihad.

You can't talk to it. You can't buy it off. You can't understand it. You can't win it over with compassion. You can't reason with it. You can't negotiate with it. You can't bargain with it. You can't appease it away. You can't wish it away.

In fact, this is an enemy that cannot be seduced by expressions of "tolerance" and gestures of goodwill. It is actually repulsed by such moves—seeing them as weakness to be exploited further and signs that their strategy is winning the day.

Need I remind you this is a conflict with some history.

It didn't begin Sept. 11, 2001, or even with the first World

Trade Center bombing or the Iranian revolution of 1979.

This is a war President Jefferson fought.

This is a war that led to Christopher Columbus' voyage west and, ultimately, the discovery of America.

This is a war that nearly led to the conquest of Europe before that.

And it may well lead to the conquest of Europe in the 21st century.

As I have said before, it would not be inaccurate to say this conflict has defined world history for the last 1,300 years.

In the 20th century, we witnessed the high cost of appeasement. We saw it with Nazi Germany. We saw it with the Soviet Union. We saw it with Communist China. And, lately, we see it in the Middle East and in the war with jihadism.

—*WorldNetDaily.net*, January 20, 2007

The People's Republic of China: Communist

by Don Feder

The single most important thing you need to know about China does not concern its economy—impressive though that is.

- Most countries have difficulty sustaining 5% annual growth for any period of time. China's economy has grown at an annual rate of almost 10 percent for 30 years—virtually unheard of in the course of modern history.

- On January 11, 2006, Beijing announced that its trade surplus *tripled* in 2005—rising from \$32 billion to \$102 billion. During the same period, the nation's exports climbed to a record \$762 billion.

- The U.S. trade deficit with China also hit a record \$230 billion in 2005.

- Of course, China's prosperity is in part driven by industrial wages as low as 30 cents an hour, the massive transfer (in some cases theft) of Western technology and the worst pollution in the world.

The most important thing about China isn't its military expansion—in many ways, comparable to the re-arming of Germany in the 1930s.

- The PRC has also experienced double-digit growth in military spending for 17 straight years. China's 2006 military budget increased 14% over 2005—and that's what Beijing admits to.

- China's military expansion is the reason 60% of the U.S. fleet is now stationed in Asian waters.

- A Department of Defense review, published last February, observes: "Of the major emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that over time

offset traditional US military advantages absent US counter strategies."

- Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy told a congressional hearing last year, "I believe the PRC's aim is to inexorably supplant the United States as the world's premier economic power and, if necessary, to defeat us militarily." Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Aso calls China a "considerable threat."

But neither China's booming economy nor its alarming military growth is the root of the problem. In any discussion of China, the place to start is with an understanding of the reality of political power on the Mainland.

The People's Republic of China remains what it was at its inception in 1949, at the end of the civil war—a ruthless, totalitarian state. As the name implies, a totalitarian regime attempts to exert near-absolute control over the lives of its subjects.

China is controlled by the Communist Party. Ostensibly, political power resides in the 3,000-member National People's Congress. But the Congress is a rubber stamp. In reality, power is exercised by a 9-member standing committee of the CCP politburo. In other words, 9 individuals decide the fate of 1.2 billion people.

The *New York Times*—never known for hard-line foreign-policy positions—says of China's current leader, Hu Jintao, that he "governs sternly and secretly, almost never grants interviews, and has overseen an unrelenting crackdown on journalists, lawyers, and religious leaders who defy one-party rule."

- In its latest report, Freedom House observes, "The Chinese government continued to restrict political rights and repress critics of the regime in 2005. Restrictions on communications became more severe." Also, Freedom House notes, "The Chinese state closely monitors political activity and uses vaguely worded national security regulations to justify detainment or imprisonment of those who are politically active with-

out party approval.”

- In 2003, Amnesty International reported that in Chinese prisons, “Torture and ill treatment remained widespread Common methods included kicking, beating, electric shocks, suspension by the arms, shackling in painful positions, and sleep and food deprivation. Women in detention were vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse.”

- In China, there are over 1,000 “re-education-through-labor” camps scattered about the country.

- There are credible reports of organ harvesting from executed prisoners.

- In the People’s Republic, no fewer than 65 offenses carry the death penalty.

- China’s one-child-per-family policy has led to forced abortions, infanticide and a booming sex industry.

- Former CIA Director James Woolsey describes China as “the worst of the worst” dictatorships.

The communist regime has a morbid fear of opposition to its authority and the independent institutions from which such opposition could arise.

In China, all media are state-owned. There are no independent labor unions. The judiciary is a handmaiden of the regime. In politically sensitive cases, verdicts are directed by the Party. Religions not controlled by the regime are harassed or suppressed—witness the home-church movement and the Falun Gong.

Beijing regularly blocks websites it deems subversive. In 2005, the government shut down over a quarter of the nation’s 573,755 websites.

The same mentality that sent tanks rolling over demonstrators in Tiananmen Square 18 years ago (killing more than 3,000) continues to guide policy toward dissent.

According to Beijing, there were over 87,000 incidents which it terms “public order disturbances” in 2005, up 6.6% from the previous year. These range from scuffles with police to mass protests over land confiscation.

- In a demonstration last July, in a suburb of Hangzhou, riot police used electric batons to break-up a crowd of 3,000 Christians protesting the demolition of a home church.

- Last January, as many as 10,000 riot police were deployed in the village of Panlong in Guangdong province to counter a protest over the confiscation of land for a factory. At least 60 villagers were wounded and a 13-year-old girl was killed.

- In December, 2005 as many as 30 were killed in the village of Donzhou, when security forces fired into a crowd protesting the decision to locate a coal-fired power plant in their midst.

- In China, you can go to jail for taking part in a demonstration, for applying for a permit to hold a demonstration, for reporting on a demonstration, for posting information about a demonstration on the Internet and—if you’re an attorney—

for representing someone arrested at a demonstration.

- Last year, a former garment worker at a plant in Shandong province was sentenced to 5 years in prison for trying to collect wages owed to him by a bankrupt state company. You can imagine the punishment for those who really get out of line.

Now, multiply all of this by hundreds of thousands and you begin to have an idea of the status of human rights in the People Republic.

The shimmering skyscrapers of Shanghai, the Western hotels in Beijing and the myriad products rolling off Chinese assembly lines to eventually find their way into American homes often obscure this grim reality.

In 1949, political power was seized with a gun. (Was it not Mao who said power comes from the barrel of a gun?) In China today, political power is literally maintained at gun-point.

America has a government. Britain has a government. Taiwan has a government. China has a regime. The only difference between the Chinese Communist Party and the Mafia is that the former is more successful at what it does, while the latter lacks an ideological rationale for its crimes.

Ergo, totalitarianism must be the starting point in any discussion of China. This is so because totalitarian regimes are inherently unstable. Totalitarian regimes are paranoid. Totalitarian regimes are expansionist. And totalitarian regimes require external enemies.

Again, Beijing is obsessed with maintaining near-total control of the populace and eliminating institutions or groups which could become independent power-bases, even if it’s only a remote possibility. Hence, the PRC’s paranoia.

China has decided that America is its enemy, despite the fact that the U.S. is also its major trading partner and is largely responsible for China’s modernization.

In a 2005 speech in Singapore, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld mused: “China’s defense expenditures are much higher than Chinese officials have publicly admitted. It is estimated that China’s is the third-largest military budget in the world and the largest in Asia. Since no nation threatens China, one wonders: Why this growing investment?”

The answer is simple: Because China views America as its adversary. Because China sees America as the major obstacle to the realization of its goals. Because China believes it will fight a war with America early in this century—a war it has every intention of winning.

The flash-point will probably be Taiwan.

Taiwan lies 82 miles from China, across the Taiwan Strait. It has a population of 23 million and a land area of 36,000 square miles, roughly the size of the Netherlands.

Taiwan has also experienced astonishing growth in the past 30 years. It has the world’s 17th largest economy and is the 16th major trading nation—not bad for a country of 23 million with almost no natural resources.

More important, Taiwan is a democratic success story. In the course of 20 years, it has transformed itself from an oligarchy ruled by an elite that fled the Mainland in 1949, to a genuine democracy with free elections, an independent judiciary, a free press and widespread respect for human rights. Freedom House rates Taiwan one of the two freest countries in Asia.

To say that China is obsessed with Taiwan is like saying that Iran is obsessed with Israel.

China says Taiwan is its sovereign territory, even though its connection to the island is tenuous at best. Taiwan was ruled by the mainland for roughly four of the last 100 years. It was never part of the People's Republic.

Still, the communists insist that Taiwan's fate is China's *internal affair*—which is another way of saying the communist party's internal affair.

In 1996, during Taiwan's first direct presidential election, the People's Liberation Army "test-fired" missiles in the direction of Taiwan, in an obvious intimidation tactic. It now has over 800 medium-range missiles targeting Taiwan, an arsenal that grows at the rate of approximately 100 missiles a year.

In July 2004, the PLA conducted war games meant to simulate an invasion of Taiwan. Over 18,000 troops, fighter planes and tank brigades took part in these widely publicized maneuvers.

In March of 2006, the National People's Congress passed its notorious Anti-Succession Law, providing a legal pretext for a military conquest of Taiwan. In essence, the law states that the PRC is justified in using force against Taiwan whenever the Taiwanese take unspecified steps toward "independence."

In the past 12 years, two high-raking Chinese generals have threatened to launch a nuclear war against the United States if we interfere with China's plans for the "reunification" of Taiwan.

In 1995, the man who's now the deputy chief of the PLA general staff told a visiting US official that America should worry more about losing Los Angeles, in a possible nuclear exchange, than in saving Taiwan.

In 2005, another Chinese general told a group of journalists from Hong Kong that if Washington interferes with the annexation of Taiwan, "We will be determined to respond." To be sure that no one missed the point, he casually added that Beijing was prepared to sacrifice every city in central China, but America must be willing to lose "hundreds" of its cities in turn.

In August, Hu Jintao—he's the guy, you may recall, who "governs sternly and secretly" and "has overseen an unrelenting crackdown on those who defy one-party rule"—warned, "We totally have the determination and the ability to crush any attempt to separate Taiwan from China."

Why Taiwan, and why now? (By the way, Mao never obsessed about the so-called reunification of Taiwan, never threatened war over Taiwan.)

Certainly, the PRC would love to have Taiwan's economy, not to mention its strategic location, which would

give it control of one of the world's major sea-lanes and allow it to project its power south and west.

But there's more involved here.

Taiwan enables China to focus popular discontent on an alleged threat to Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity. As a bonus, it gets to paint America as the "imperialistic" power that's trying to undermine Chinese sovereignty and compromise its territorial integrity.

It's no coincidence that Beijing's obsession with Taiwan parallels Taiwan's development as a democracy. For all of the years the island was under martial law, Beijing basically ignored it—no threats, no military buildup aimed at "re-unification," and no dire warnings of a nuclear holocaust if America intervened.

But now Taiwan is a democracy. It has all of the things many Mainland Chinese yearn for—democratic elections, a free press, an independent judiciary and the rule of law. Moreover, it is the first democracy in 4,000 years of Chinese history.

Chinese on the Mainland can look across the Strait and see how other ethnic Chinese govern themselves, how they can change governments, and how they can express themselves freely without fear of reprisal.

In short, Taiwan provides a challenge that the People's Republic finds intolerable. China's communist rulers view Taiwanese democracy as plague bacillus that could, at any moment, break out and infect the Mainland.

So, why not just let China have Taiwan—I mean besides the matter of Taiwan being our historical ally and America being pledged to aid in the defense of the island through the Taiwan Relations Act? Also, with Americans fighting and dying ostensibly for democracy in the Middle East, it would be ironic if we allowed one of the few democracies in the Far East to die without a whimper.

Taiwan is the beginning, not the end, of China's ambitions. After Taiwan—what? Vietnam? Cambodia? The Philippines? Mao believed China was destined to rule all of the peoples of Asia—or to dominate them if it didn't rule them directly.

This brings us back to that overriding political reality I mentioned at the outset—China is a totalitarian state.

Absent that, its booming economy would pose less of a problem. Absent that, there would be no reason for its relentless military buildup. Absent that, China would have no desire for territorial expansion. Absent that, Taiwan's status would be decided by the people of Taiwan.

By all means, we should learn as much as we can about China's economy and military expansion. But the place to start in any evaluation of the role China will play in the 21st century is with the realization that China is a totalitarian state—with all that implies.

—Don Feder delivered this speech to *The Awakening Conference* on January 7, 2007, at *The Cloister, Sea Island, Georgia*. It originally appeared at *GrassTopsUSA.com*.