THE CHINESE GLASS HOUSE

This past weekend, the Chinese Communist government organized a protest demonstration in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing. Under the watchful eyes of Chinese security agents and police, the young protestors were encouraged to throw stones at the embassy in protest over the latest Japanese history textbook continuing to omit mention of Japanese atrocities in China during World War II.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, on a charm offensive in India at the time of the protest, told reporters in New Delhi that “Only a country that respects and takes responsibility for history can win over peoples’ trust, in Asia and the world at large… (the protest in Beijing) should prompt deep and profound reflection in Japan.”

Perhaps it should. On April 5, Japan’s Ministry of Education announced its approval for next year’s junior high school textbooks, including a history text by Fuso Publishing and written by a group of academics who say Japan should no longer be “masochistic” about its past.

The book uses euphemisms instead of the word “invasion” to describe Japan’s military aggression against China in the 1930s, and thickly whitewashes atrocities such as the Rape of Nanking of 1937. Instead of stating the disclosures of the International Military Tribunal, that between 200,000 and 300,000 civilians were slaughtered and untold numbers of women were horribly raped by Japanese soldiers, the text describes the Nanking massacre as an “incident” in which “many” Chinese were killed.

Nonetheless, a Japanese response to the Chinese accusations will soon be forthcoming. There will be bland public statements, such as Prime Minister Koizumi’s to the Kyodo News Agency: “Any country can face criticism, but it is not good to let confrontation heighten because of that. What is important is to control emotions and consider bilateral friendship.” Then there will be the unofficial response. Here is one version, soon to be spread throughout China by Taiwan Chinese agents who have gotten a copy:

> His Excellency Wen Jiabao
> Premier, State Council, People’s Republic of China
> Beijing PRC
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> Dear Premier Wen,
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> It is understandable that many Chinese remain angry at the crimes committed by Japanese soldiers in China prior to and during World War II. It is further understandable that their anger would be inflamed by a textbook refusing to acknowledge this history.

It is, however, not useful to attempt to instill in Japanese today a sense of guilt over actions committed not by them but by their forefathers, not by their democratic government but by a militaristic regime of the past. The Japanese feel quite strongly that the generation who committed crimes against humanity paid for them in full at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Further, since the end of the war, Japan has enjoyed a democratic government instead of suffering under a totalitarian dictatorship. Japanese have had freedom for almost six decades: freedom to assemble, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and all other freedoms taken for granted in normal modern democracies.

Thus I must ask you, Premier Wen: how many of these freedoms do the people of China enjoy? The answer, quite frankly is: none. The government of Japan was once a dictatorship and is no longer. The government of China still is.

I, along with many of my fellow Japanese citizens, must admit to being astounded at your admonishing us to “take responsibility for history,” and to engage in “deep and profound reflection” on our history. Astounded because you pretend not to see how much this advice applies to you and the Communist Party of China.

There is an old English proverb of which I am sure you are aware: People who live in glass houses should never throw stones. The government of the People’s Republic of China is such a glass house. There is a book published in England which is one of the most widely read on earth: The Guinness Book of World Records. Under the heading of Crime: Mass Killings, the founder of your government is listed as the greatest mass murderer in the history of humanity. The man whose picture adorns your currency and remains enshrined in a mausoleum in Tienanmen Square, Mao Zedong, oversaw the deaths of 26.3 million Chinese - not foreigners but his and your fellow citizens - between 1949 and 1965.

To put this in perspective, the Guinness Book records that Adolf Hitler’s *Endlösung* or “Final Solution,” what history knows as the Holocaust, killed 5.8 million Jews between April 1941 and May 1945. Mao killed 4 ½ times as many Chinese as Hitler killed Jews. The German people have repudiated this monstrous history. It is time for you to repudiate yours.

But of course you can’t. Because the same regime which committed these atrocities in China is the same regime ruling China today. To take responsibility for your history would mean your government - and you personally - would have to relinquish power, and let the Chinese people be free to judge what you have perpetrated upon them.

For this is not confined to atrocities of the past, but the dictatorship of the present. To this day, China has no democratic freedoms. As you are reading this, thousands of political prisoners who did no more than ask for these freedoms languish unjustly in the *Laogai*

concentration camps of the Chinese Gulag.

Premier Wen, history does not stand still. It is moving, and moving in the direction of democracy. From Iraq to Georgia to Ukraine to Kyrgyzstan, people are choosing democracy over dictatorship. The time will soon come when the people of China will make the same choice.

On the very day your government orchestrated violent protests assaulting my government's embassy, 60,000 people rioted in the town of Huaxi in Zhejiang Province of southwestern China. Their violence was directed at your government, destroying police cars and beating up officials, because their lives are being ruined by the pollution of 13 government-owned chemical factories nearby. There are hundreds - hundreds - of riots, disturbances, and public protests against your government taking place in China *every day* now. Your grip on power cannot last much longer.

I understand that you see the solution is to redirect the people's anger towards a "foreign devil" such as us and away from you. This effort will fail, because Japan lives in the future of democracy and freedom and we want China to do so as well. We want for the Chinese people what you deny them: living in a free future, instead of a totalitarian past.

This is the reality which you cannot keep hidden from your people. This is the reality that "should prompt deep and profound reflection" within you.

Most Sincerely,

Junichiro Koizumi
Prime Minister
Government of Japan

This letter, on Koizumi's official letterhead, is going to be faxed, emailed, mass-reprinted and covertly distributed to millions of folks in the People's Republic. It's all part of the on-going effort to democratize China - which means, to shatter the Chicoms' glass house.