

Award-winning 'New York Times' writer speaks about Tienanmen Square

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Oregon Daily Emerald

Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent Nicholas Kristof, who served as the *New York Times'* bureau chief in Beijing during the Tienanmen Square protests in 1989, spoke on campus Tuesday night to promote his book, *"China Wakes"*.

Kristof won the prize jointly with his wife, Sheryl WuDunn, for their coverage of the protests that claimed the lives of approximately 500 Chinese students.

"I've sometimes thought that it was the Pulitzer Prize not for journalism but for stamina. I remember sometimes not sleeping for three days. I thought that, above the byline, it should read, 'this reporter hasn't slept for three days, so take this article with a grain of salt,'" he said.

Kristof prognosticates a healthy future for the world's largest nation, saying that the lack of democracy and ongoing human rights abuse too often overshadow China's progress.

"The most important thing going on in the world right now is the economic boom in China," he said. "China is on a course to overtake the U.S. as the biggest economy in the next few decades."

"The Communist Party fights leprosy as energetically as it fights dissidents. It has a wonderful public health program," he told the crowd.

"How do you write about a place like this? If you focus on the human rights, it's going to be all these bad things. If you focus on public health, you'll have all these great improvements to write about."

Although his coverage of Chinese politics positioned him to win a Pulitzer Prize, Kristof explained that his most satisfying accomplishment was helping an imprisoned student leader defect to the United States.

The 19-year-old student, Kristof explained,

escaped from prison and appealed to him secretly for help. The student now works for Sprint in Washington D.C.

"The last thing I should be doing was meeting with an escaped fugitive, let alone helping him escape from China," Kristof said. "Can you think of anything more unprofessional?"

Kristof pointed out that, while the student was imprisoned for pro-democracy activities, the fact that he was able to escape from prison — presumably with the assistance of average Chinese — reflects the nation's progress towards democracy.

"It used to be like a desert, where there was no place to hide. Now it's like a rain forest, with all sorts of foliage and places to clear out a space for yourself. I think is what we're seeing is the beginning of a civil society in China."

"Communism is collapsing in China. What you have is not a totalitarian regime, but a classic authoritarian regime like the other East Asian countries. The attitude of the Communist Party is more like, 'We'll stay in power, and everything else is negotiable,'" he said.

"Ideology is pretty much dead," he told the audience.

Kristof, who grew up in Oregon, studied Political Science as an undergraduate at Harvard College in Massachusetts. University President Dave Frohnmayer sat on a Rhodes Scholarship selection committee that sent Kristof to Oxford University in England, where he studied law.

Kristof currently resides in Yamhill, Ore., where he is studying Japanese. He will take over the *Times'* Tokyo bureau at the end of the year.



KRISTOF

Officials will create inmate work program

SALEM (AP) — The voters have decided that Oregon prison inmates should be gainfully employed while spending time behind bars.

Now, it's up to Oregon corrections officials to draw up an ambitious, idealistic prison work program the like of which has never really succeeded in other states. They have until April 1, 1995.

Passage of Measure 17 last week means jobs must be found for about 1,500 inmates. Other inmates are already working or are in school or vocational training. Others are too ill or too dangerous to be allowed to work.

The problem is there aren't enough jobs for the prisoners. Corrections Industries, which puts inmates to work ranging from the manufacture of blue jeans to building furniture, employs about 400 people throughout the prison system.

Although Measure 17 loosened restrictions on Corrections Industries to compete with private businesses, finding jobs for inmates presents its own set of problems.

The skill level among inmates

varies widely, and many of them serve short stints. Officials always must worry about security, and most inmates can't commute to their jobs.

"We're going to have to keep looking and figuring out where to create the work opportunities," says Fred Nichols, administrator of the Corrections Industries Division. "To a large degree it will have to come to us. We can't go out to it."

One of Corrections Industries' most prominent projects is its Prison Blues jeans made at a garment factory at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton.

But even innovative programs such as Prison Blues are difficult to create and expensive to maintain.

Despite international media attention and distribution, the Prison Blues line has consistently lost money since it was unveiled in 1990.

According to research by the Legislative Fiscal Office, Measure 17 will cost the 1995-97 state general fund budget \$40.4 million.

At least 16 states have some sort of law calling for inmates to

work.

But prisons have found it difficult to run meaningful work programs successfully.

"The whole effort has been fraught with many difficulties," said Allen Breed, a former director of the National Institute of Corrections.

"The most ambitious states have not been able to carry out the programs they wanted to."

"The problem has been that the work just isn't there," he says, except make-work. "'Go dig a hole, fill it up and dig another hole,' which serves no purpose."

State Rep. Kevin Mannix, D-Salem, who sponsored the prison-work measure, said there will be tight legislative scrutiny of the new program.

"This program will only fail if the people in charge are incompetent," he said.

As for the inmates themselves, many are eager to work.

"I just can't see myself sitting down and not working," says Oregon State Prison inmate Ricardo Rodriguez, 31, as he checks finished prison-made furniture for nicks and defects.

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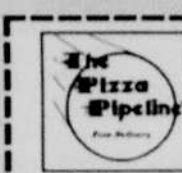


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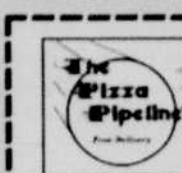
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