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# Trends. China and Homosexuality: The Politics of Security

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According to The New York Times, the Chinese Psychiatric Association (CPA) is removing homosexuality from a list of mental illnesses in an upcoming diagnostic manual. This action may involve the latest developments in scientific research, the politics of scientific research, and even the politics of international security. It is to the last that we turn.

The CPA action may suggest a greater sensitivity to and embracing of civil and human rights. Given that such rights are and have been a significant bone of contention between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and many other nation-states and nongovernmental organizations, the CPA action could augur better relations on international security matters.

The CPA action may also suggest a repudiation of variants of religious belief and dicta that proscribe homosexuality as an abomination. Such a perspective would augur worse relations on international security matters with those who embrace its antithesis.

The tip off on security sequelae may be a statement from the CPA Vice President that [the CPA action] "has nothing to do with gays and lesbians in society." In other words, the change in the diagnostic manual may mirror changes in many PRC political documents--especially those easily perused by Western observers--that yield little of consequence in daily life. Thus the action suggests that gays and lesbians in the PRC have now graduated to the same arbitrariness in the rules of law and policy--the same disparities between official dictum and daily treatment--that affect their compatriots of other sexual orientations. Welcome to being treated as equals! (See Homosexuality not an illness, Chinese say. (March 8, 2001). The New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com>; Jones, R.H. (1999). Mediated action and sexual risk: Searching for 'culture' in discourses of homosexuality and AIDS prevention in China. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 1, 161-180; Open debate on homosexuality in China and CSSSM in 1997. (1997). Chinese Society for the Study of Sexual Minorities, <http://www.csssm.org/English/e3.htm>; Pan, S., Wu, Z., & Gil, V. E. (1994). Homosexual behaviors in contemporary China. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 7, 1-17; Ruan, F. F., & Bullough, V. L. (1992). Lesbianism in China. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 21, 217-226; Sleek, S. (September, 1998). Chinese psychiatrists debate meaning of sex orientation. APA back effort to end discrimination against homosexuals. *APA Monitor*, 29(9).) (Keywords: China, Chinese Psychiatric Association, CPA, Homosexuality.)