

EIGHT CHINESE PERFORMERS MAY WANT POLITICAL ASYLUM

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Body

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - **Eight Chinese performers** have been missing for a week since they left a group returning to China, but U.S. immigration officials said Tuesday no one had contacted them on behalf of the entertainers. "All I can tell you is they haven't walked into this office and applied for any relief," said David Ilchert, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Four other **Chinese** citizens have chosen to defect in San Francisco since the June 4 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing. If the **eight** entertainers who fled the Kun Opera company last week seek **political asylum** in the United States, it would be the largest single defection of **Chinese** citizens since the 1950s. The **performers** left the 28-member opera over a two-day period last week while the company was in San Francisco en route to Shanghai following a series of performances in the United States. The opera company flew back to Shanghai on Sunday, according to Officer Larry Higgins, coordinator of VIP travel at San Francisco International Airport. A spokesman for the **Chinese** consulate confirmed the **eight performers** did not leave with the company. "They were influenced by people with ulterior motives," said spokesman Wang Shaohua. The missing entertainers include Hua Wen-yi, a famous opera singer in Shanghai. Two other singers in the group, Chen Tong-shen and Zhan Ping-ping, also are well known in Shanghai. Zhan is a famous television and film star as well as an opera **performer**. The others were identified as Qui Huan, Chen Chi-ping, Ma Xin-bao, Peter Chong and Lou Sei-long.

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