

Statement of Congressman Christopher H. Smith
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
Hearing on Combating Human Trafficking in China: Domestic and International
Efforts
Monday, March 6, 2006

Thank you for holding this hearing today about the tragedy of human trafficking in China. Trafficking - the forcible exploitation for sex or labor of women, men and children - is one of the world's most serious and widespread human rights problems. It is slavery, and it is the denial of the very humanity of its victims. Sadly, human rights in China today are violated with impunity.

Since 1979, the People's Republic of China has imposed and implemented a cruel policy that has systematically rendered children illegal and dead unless authorized by a "birth allowance" certificate. The one child per couple policy imposes ruinous fines - up to ten times both husband and wife's salary - for a child conceived outside of the government plan. As a direct result of these ongoing crimes against humanity, China today is missing millions of girls, girls who were murdered simply because they are girls. A couple of years ago, the State Department suggested that as many as 100 million girls of all ages are missing - that is to say they should be alive and well but are not, a consequence of the one child government policy. China is the only country in the world whose systematic human rights abuses touch every family without exception. It results in the mass killing of people based on their gender. *Gendercide* in fact constitutes one of humanity's worst blights.

Two weeks ago the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations, which I chair, held a hearing on the Internet in China. At the hearing, we learned that the Chinese people have little access to uncensored information about any political or human rights topic, including information about China's intentionally coercive one-child policy and its devastating contribution to the growing problem of human trafficking. This is because totalitarian regimes are propped up by two essential pillars: the secret police and propaganda. The Chinese government maintains control of its people by limiting what they know and through brute force - both systematic abuses of human rights.

Even more disturbing, U.S. technology and know-how is being used by repressive regimes in China and elsewhere in the world to cruelly exploit and abuse the citizens of those countries. While the Internet has opened up commercial opportunities and provided people all over the world with access to vast amounts of information, in China it has also become a malicious tool -- a cyber-sledgehammer of repression in the hands of the government. That is why I have introduced legislation, H.R. 4780, the Global Online Freedom Act of 2006, which works to promote freedom of information on the internet by establishing minimum corporate standards for online freedom and prohibiting U.S. businesses from hosting an e-mail server or search engine within countries that systematically restrict internet freedom.

This hearing is particularly timely. BBC reports from January 2006 indicate that China may replace Thailand in the next few years as the region's trafficking hub, all at a time when the age of victims being trafficked is falling. With too much frequency we read news accounts of women and girls who are abducted in places like Burma, North Korea, and Vietnam and are trafficked and sold into slavery in China.

With more than one billion people in China, one must ask why there are so many women and girls being trafficked into China. After more than 25 years of coercive family planning, sex-selective abortions, infanticide, and the selling off of girl babies, there are more than 100 million missing girls. And in 2004, the most recent year for which we have statistics, 9,000 women and children were kidnapped in China. I

have met with numerous victims both in China and at hearings I have chaired who have told me their horrific stories of being forced to submit to the abortion of their children. Those stories help to explain why, according to a recent State Department Human Rights Report, one consequence of China's so-called "birth limitation policies" is that 56 percent of the world's female suicides occur in China. This is five times the world average and amounts to approximately 500 suicides by women per day.

The country's male-female sex ratio is now dangerously skewed. The 2000 census revealed that there were nearly 19 million boys more than girls in the 0-15 age group. This dangerous imbalance is fueling the trafficking of women and girls as well as the sale of babies. The Chinese government must do more than pay lip service to prevent trafficking; it must immediately end its barbaric one-child policy.

Another vitally important aspect of the trafficking problem is the repression and brutal treatment of the North Korean people that brings a flood of refugees to China. Women and children are increasingly the majority of refugees crossing the river into China, many of whom are abducted by ethnic Korean Chinese traffickers who sell them either to men as wives, concubines or prostitutes. Their price and destination are often determined by their age and appearance. Tragically, kidnapping and trafficking have become common ways that Chinese men acquire women. The serious imbalances in the male-female sex ratio at birth in China make purchasing a bride attractive. Once the women or girls are sold, they are subjected to forced marriage and rape. Some accept their fate; others struggle and are punished. In violation of the United Nations Refugee Convention, to which China is a state party, China arrests and returns North Korean refugees to North Korea where they face certain imprisonment and/or execution.

Last October, I chaired a hearing on the horrific problem of North Koreans trafficked in China. Mrs. Kyeong-Sook CHA, told us how the Food Distribution Center in Pyongyang stopped distributing food at the end of June 1995. In October 1997 she jumped into Tumen River to find her daughter who had gone to China looking for food. Much later, she found out all Chinese living close to the border were involved in human trafficking. They bought and sold North Korean girls with the help of North Koreans. Mrs. Cha was hired as a maid in Hwa Ryong City along with several other North Korean women who were regularly raped. Another man bought her daughter for 4,000 Yuan (about \$400), and they worked for him as servants at his house. They escaped again, but were eventually were kidnapped by human traffickers two months later. Eventually Mrs. Cha and her daughter were sent by the Chinese police to a North Korean detention center, where she found out her second daughter had also been trafficked. Mrs. Cha and her three children finally found her way to South Korea in June 2003.

Trafficking victims in China are not only from North Korea. Last year according to the Chinese Xinhua News Agency, the number of known cases of women and girls trafficked from Vietnam to China doubled. One hundred twenty-five cases of Vietnamese trafficked into China's Guangxi (guong-shee) province alone were detected, and these numbers represent only the cases reported; we do not know the stories of countless others trapped in the tragedy of trafficking.

The crime of trafficking does not affect solely women and children either. Chinese men have been trafficked for forced labor to Europe, South America, and the Middle East. A large number of Chinese men and women are smuggled abroad at enormous personal financial cost and, upon arrival in the destination country, are subjected to cruel sexual exploitation and slave labor to repay their debts.

Any serious discussion of trafficking in China must examine why thousands are trafficked every year outside China's borders despite its government's alleged commitment to eliminate the scourge of trafficking. According to reports from Harry Wu of the Laogai Research Foundation, Chinese men and women pay a fee of about \$2,000 to traffickers, who with Chinese police escort, are taken to ports where they board fishing vessels destined for American shores. The ability of the traffickers to take as many as

250 people at a time out of sea ports rests on the traffickers' ability to bribe the police to allow them unhindered movement. Once in America, or other destinations, the victims are forced to work for years to pay an estimated \$25,000 to \$50,000. It is clear that without the assistance of the Chinese authorities, traffickers could not easily send their victims abroad.

Chinese gangs traditionally involved in prostitution in the U.S. are now bringing people here from China to work as laborers or prostitutes. The traffickers are notorious for their brutal treatment of victims who cannot come up with the money for payment. Their tactics include ransom, extortion, repeated rapes, and torture. Often, traffickers will only transport people with family ties so that their victims can be held hostage if payment isn't forthcoming or the victim is uncooperative.

We must loudly condemn the horrific practices which continue in China that literally and psychologically destroy human life and spirit. By way of illustration, Mrs. Gao Xiao Duan, a former administrator of a Chinese Planned Birth Control Office, testified before my Subcommittee in 1998 about China's policies. She explained, "Once I found a woman who was nine months pregnant, but did not have a birth-allowed certificate. According to the policy, she was forced to undergo an abortion surgery. In the operation room I saw how the aborted child's lips were sucking, how its limbs were stretching. A physician injected poison into its skull, and the child died, and it was thrown into the trash can. . . . I was a monster in the daytime, injuring others by the Chinese communist authorities' barbaric planned-birth policy, but in the evening, I was like all other women and mothers, enjoying my life with my children. . . . to all those injured women, to all those children who were killed, I want to repent and say sincerely that I'm sorry!"

Abortion and trafficking are the twin tragedies under which China is staggering. William Maddox, in a USA Today December 2004 article entitled "China's 'daughter dearth,'" but which could apply equally well to China's trafficking scourge, calls China's one-child policy a "humanitarian tragedy that is robbing its people one family at a time," and laments that "hundreds of millions of Chinese men will never experience the unique pleasures (of being) the father of a daughter." He concludes, "...while I know that America can hardly stand in judgment of China's policies, somehow still I wish the Chinese could love their daughters, too." It is also my fervent wish that China will end its daughter-hating policies, restoring life and dignity to its people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, again for the opportunity of testifying today before the Commission about this vitally important issue.