WILL RELIGION FLOURISH UNDER CHINA'S NEW LEADERSHIP?

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BEFORE THE

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WILL RELIGION FLOURISH UNDER CHINA'S NEW LEADERSHIP?

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2003

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:40 a.m., in room 2200, Rayburn House Office building, Representative James A. Leach, [Chairman of the Commission] presiding.

Also present: Senator Gordon Smith and Representative Joseph R. Pitts.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES A. LEACH, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM IOWA, CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Chairman LEACH. The Commission will come to order.

Let me first make a comment. Senator Hagel cannot be with us this morning. He is meeting in a sudden circumstance with the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority.

In addition, Secretary Powell is meeting—and I just broke up with it and he is not finished yet—in the International Relations Committee room on the Liberian matter.

Without objection, I am going to place in the record a statement of Senator Hagel.

[The prepared statement of Senator Hagel appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Let me just say, in terms of opening, that the Commission convenes this morning to hear several distinguished witnesses give us their thoughts on the current condition and treatment of religious believers, practitioners, and groups in China.

We have asked them to look ahead to the potential of change under China's new leadership and explore the options open to the United States to prompt the development of new attitudes and policies toward religion in China.

Religious freedom around the world remains among the most important issues of concern for most Americans. For that reason, freedom of religion has been a central topic in our human rights discussions with China for many years.

Religious freedom issues, for example, were a key part of discussions last year between President Bush and then-Chinese President Jiang Zemin in Crawford, TX. Following that meeting, President Bush told reporters that he had reminded President Jiang of the importance of China freeing prisoners of conscience and giving fair treatment to peoples of faith.

President Bush also raised the importance of respecting human rights in Tibet, and encouraging more dialogue with Tibetan leaders.

This year, the State Department included China in its list of countries that deny religious freedom, a finding that the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom [CIRF] also supported. We are happy to welcome witnesses from both institutions this morning.

China's Constitution guarantees protection of normal religious activity. Despite this guarantee of the Chinese Government, the Communist Party requires that religion be congruent with patriotism, which has resulted in widespread repression of religious practice.

In Tibetan and Uighur areas where separatist sentiment is often interwoven with religious conviction, repression of religion is particularly harsh.

Chinese authorities often see separatist sentiment as a precursor to terrorism, even when religious practitioners express such sentiment peacefully.

The Chinese Government requires religious practitioners to meet in government-approved mosques, churches, monasteries, and temples. Authorities oversee the selection of religious leaders and monitor religious education.

The Chinese Government often labels unregistered religious groups and movements as cults, and those who engage in such activities can be arrested with charges of disturbing social order. In many cases, local authorities enforce regulations that are more restrictive than those enforced at the national level.

Despite these risks, a growing number of religious believers choose to worship outside the government-controlled religious framework.

More broadly, the Commission is particularly keen to learn from our witnesses whether or not they think that the rise of a new group of Chinese leaders in the past few months holds any promise of a change in government policy toward religion.

Some observers, for example, have commented that the new leadership group may wish to encourage the social services activities of religious groups so that faith-based groups would take up some of the critical social services that governments at all levels in China can no longer sustain.

While we all might prefer that religious beliefs, practices, organizations, and social action be allowed on their own merits, the Commission, for its part, would welcome any significant relaxation of current strictures, whatever their motive.

With these comments in mind, let me welcome our panel of distinguished witnesses. The first panel is composed of the distinguished Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Mr. Randall Schriver, who will present the Department's perspective.

Mr. Schriver.

STATEMENT OF RANDALL SCHRIVER, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the work of the Commission, and thanks for inviting me here this morning to discuss this very important topic of religious freedom in China.

I do have a full statement. I might ask that that be submitted for the official record, and I will just make a few observations this morning.

Chairman LEACH. Without objection, your full statement, and those of all of the other panelists, will be placed in the record.

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you.

Chairman LEACH. You may summarize and commence as you see fit.

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you. I will make a few observations in just the following areas. First, just a general description of the current conditions in China as we see them, and then addressing very specific areas of interest and concern.

I will then talk about the issue you just mentioned, the Chinese leadership transition, and the prospects that may hold for a change in how China deals with religion.

Then, finally, I will talk briefly about the U.S. Government, our policies and our actions and what we plan to do in the near term.

Let me say up front that President Bush and this entire Administration are deeply committed to achieving progress on religious freedom in China. We are very concerned about the situation, as we see it.

The President and Secretary Powell often raise this in their meetings with the Chinese interlocutors. You noted, of course, that the President raised this in Crawford.

The President has also been very public about this. In his speech at Qinghua University in February 2002, the President said the following: "Freedom of religion is not something to be feared, it is to be welcomed, because faith gives us a moral core and teaches us to hold ourselves to high standards, to love and to serve others, and to live responsible lives."

This is something that should be endorsed by all governments around the world. This is not just an American value, not only a Western value. What the President noted is something that should be embraced by everyone.

So with the President's lead and with this Administration's commitment, freedom of religion is a top foreign policy goal for us, and in the case of China, one of the highest priorities in the bilateral relationship.

So let me briefly summarize the current state of religious freedom in China as we see it. Mr. Chairman, you noted that the Secretary of State did designate China as one of six countries of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act. I think it is important to know that the other countries are North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Burma, and Sudan.

The company that China is keeping here does not reflect well on her. This exclusive club is made up of some objectionable countries. It is also interesting to note that there is also reason to believe that

Iraq will be coming off this list before China. So, again, this does not reflect well on China.

The Secretary made this designation because we found the government in China "is engaged in or tolerates particularly severe violations of religious freedom" in a manner that is "egregious, ongoing, and systematic." Those are pretty powerful words. I think the evidence that we observed in China supports that kind of powerful language.

What we have seen in the last 12 months, the government's respect for freedom of religion, freedom of conscience remains very poor overall, especially, as you mentioned, for independent, unregistered groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong.

Thousands of believers, Catholics, Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists, Muslims, members of the Falun Gong, and other groups remain in prison for seeking to exercise their religious or spiritual views, some of them tortured, and many have been abused.

Given that very poor backdrop, there are some modest positive signs which I would also like to highlight, because this is important work. We need to find the opportunity to highlight areas where there are positive developments and see if we can get further progress in those areas.

One of those areas, as you mentioned, is the growing number of believers in China. We believe the official documents suggest the numbers of people who are practicing and exercising their religious faith is growing. We believe the unofficial numbers are probably much higher than that, and we take that as a positive sign.

So although the overall record is certainly poor, it is a situation that we hope to find areas of progress and where we can get even further progress in the near future.

Let me address some of the specific areas. The registration requirements, Mr. Chairman, that you mentioned. The government does require all religious groups to register with state-sanctioned religious organizations. These organizations, of course, monitor and supervise religious activities.

Naturally, this makes people very uncomfortable in China. Many believers feel that they would have to either make compromises, or even worse, would be subject to state action and oppression if they did register, so many choose not to, for understandable reasons.

Officials have continued the selective crackdown on these unregistered or underground groups, churches, temples, and mosques.

We have found, however, that the degree of restrictions does vary significantly depending on the region in China. In some localities in southeastern China, for example, some underground churches have been allowed to operate without registering in sort of a tacit acquiescence on the part of the Chinese. But even in those cases, often the leadership is informally vetted by the Chinese Government.

We have asked the government to relax or eliminate this registration requirement and to allow any religious or spiritual groups who wish to practice their faith to do so freely.

We view the increase in the number of unregistered groups being allowed to operate freely and without oppression is a positive intermediate step before the government eventually does away with these restrictions.

Another area of particular interest is concerning minors and their ability to practice religion in China. Religious education for young people is necessary to ensure vibrancy and continuity in the religious community.

I think it is particularly crucial that families be allowed to transmit their faith and values to their children in certain ethnic minority communities, such as Tibetans and Uighurs, because this allows them to transmit the core elements of the culture.

Thus, prohibitions on minors practicing religion or receiving religious education have been a longstanding issue for us. We have raised this question many times. The Chinese, in response, back in December at the human rights dialogue and in other fora, have expressed that they do not have an official policy that bans religious practice for minors.

However, we do know that there are many obstacles to young people practicing religion freely. For instance, we observed in mosques in Xinjiang actual signs saying, "No One Under 18 Permitted." So again, there's an imbalance between actual practice and the stated policy, but certainly there are obstacles that the Chinese Government has put in place.

I just mentioned Xinjiang. Chinese officials there have ramped up a crackdown against ethnic Uighurs, a Muslim minority group. This is really a misguided effort to curb what they call "separatism."

Senior officials in China have closed mosques. We mentioned, of course, that they make it very difficult for minors to engage in religious activities. They have taken other steps to limit the practice of Islam.

As we have often stated, China has nothing to fear from the practice of religion, whether it is Islam in Xinjiang, Buddhism in Tibet, or Christianity throughout China.

The situation in Tibet, I think, is a mixed picture. We have observed that in many ways practitioners are able to worship relatively freely, but that Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns continue to face restrictions on their ability to pursue religious education and to practice religion.

There is a case of a very particular concern. A number of monks in Sichuan Province were arrested in connection with some bombings. We have evidence to suggest that certainly at least one of them was not involved in the bombings, but is still being held.

One of the former monks was quickly put to death, despite promises from the Chinese Government that he would be allowed to appeal his case. So, China has not conducted these cases in an open, transparent manner. Unfortunately, they have not given us any indication that they want to do that.

Elsewhere in Sichuan, there is a case involving a dozen or more Tibetans who were arrested in conjunction with a public "long life" ceremony for the Dalai Lama. Obviously, we fail to see any reason why they should be imprisoned or punished for such activity.

I mentioned the Falun Gong. It is an issue that is well known to all of us. The Chinese have determined this group to be a cult and, as a result, has taken some brutal measures against the Falun Gong.

We have sources reporting that thousands of Falun Gong adherents have been arrested, detained, imprisoned, and that several

hundred or more Falun Gong adherents have died in detention since 1999.

I am sad to say that these reports of repression continue. We do continue to raise this as an issue that is important to us, and we will continue to do so.

Another case of very particular interest is that of the South China Church. This is another group that China has deemed to be a cult and, as a result, has taken some unfair measures against it. Many of its members have been arrested.

Egregiously, we have credible reporting that four young women have indicated that security forces tortured and abused them in order to obtain evidence against the group's founder.

We have raised this case, of course, in great detail with the Chinese and remain deeply concerned over continuing reports of abuse and continuing reports of unfair detention.

Let me also note China's relations with the Vatican. China still refuses to acknowledge the Vatican as the supreme authority for Chinese Catholics in many matters of faith and insists on controlling the appointments of Catholic clerics in China through the government-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association.

Many Chinese Catholics who remain loyal to the Pope do so in an underground fashion, a non-transparent fashion, or they face reprisals from the government. We continue to urge the Chinese to move forward in allowing people to practice freely, legitimize their relationship with the Pope and the Vatican, and resume its own official dialogue with the Vatican.

We also mentioned briefly North Koreans in China. This is something that we spent a lot of time on, but I think in this forum it is also important to note that North Koreans who practice Christianity face severe risks if they are repatriated. We are concerned about reports that China does continue to force repatriation of North Koreans.

We have urged China to treat those who flee North Korea in a humane way. We have urged them to allow the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] into these areas to do appropriate refugee screening of North Koreans. We have asked them if they would liberalize their policies on allowing NGOs to work there, some of the NGOs that we fund quietly.

Unfortunately, we have not seen the progress we would like to see, and the willingness of the Chinese to be cooperative on this issue, to date, has been minimal.

Just a couple of what I would characterize as modestly positive notes. The number of believers in China and those that practice, we understand, are rising. This is, I think, a testament to the important role that faith can play in China, where people are hungry for a spiritual life and want this. There is potential for improvement, if the Chinese Government makes the decision that they are willing to let that happen.

Mr. Chairman, you also mentioned community activities. In some localities, officials do work closely with Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant groups to build schools, build medical facilities, and retirement centers for poor communities. So this is encouraging.

In some cases, Catholics and Protestants have been encouraged by local officials to work with Western religious groups to continue

these kinds of activities and these services. This is something President Bush has noted and encouraged in his talks with the Chinese leadership.

Let me briefly mention the other topic, Mr. Chairman, that you were interested in having us address. That is the new leadership and what potential there may be for change.

I think it is important to note that, in the Chinese system, when people come to power, we tend to have unknown quantities on our hands because their system, as they are waiting in the wings and waiting to assume power, their role is very much not to make news, not to make headlines, not to let people know that they have any views that may or may not be different than the Communist Party and the leadership that precedes them.

So I think the first point is, we have a group that is largely an unknown quantity. I think at this point, at this early juncture, we have yet to see clear signs that the new leadership plans to move in any significant new directions related to religious freedom and in the treatment of religious believers.

That said, let me point to a few areas that might give us windows on this new leadership. At last December's human rights dialogue, China did make a commitment to host visits by some of the U.N.'s Special Rapporteurs, for instance, the Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, and Rapporteur on Torture, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

China promised to invite these groups to visit China. That has not come to fruition yet, and we have urged the Chinese to move forward. They have cited SARS and have given us other explanations which we find uncompelling. So, we urge them to move forward. I think that would be a positive development if these U.N. officials were allowed to visit China and to engage in their work there.

In addition, the Chinese leaders, last December, invited the Congressionally chartered U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to visit China. I know just following me will be the CIRF commissioner, and I believe there is a plan for China to host a visit. I look forward to hearing her comments on that. I think that would be a positive development.

In the area of Tibet, the Chinese did invite the elder brother of the Dalai Lama to visit China last year and has hosted the official emissaries of the Dalai Lama from the United States and Europe to visit China. One visit just concluded at the end of June.

This is something that we are cautiously optimistic about. As a matter of policy, we want to encourage this dialogue and want the Chinese to be engaged directly with representatives of the Dalai Lama.

Unfortunately, on the broader questions, though, about the willingness of China's leaders to take steps to relax their treatment of practitioners and religious institutions, we just do not have enough data to suggest that there is going to be significant movement.

We might even speculate that, at a time when new leadership is in power, this kind of risk taking might not be something they want to engage in. I think that type of speculation would be misguided.

I think this is a time for the leadership to show that it is willing to create a confidence and trust in the people, and to recognize the valuable role that religion can play for its citizenry, making them good citizens of China and the world.

Finally, let me briefly address U.S. Government actions and what we plan to do. As I mentioned earlier, this is an extremely high priority. Religious freedom is raised at all levels of the government.

Mr. Chairman, you mentioned the President raising it in Crawford. I think it is significant, when we have important bilateral issues that we are working on with the Chinese, that religion is almost always placed alongside issues such as North Korea and Iraq.

I think that sends a signal to the Chinese that, if we are willing to take the time of the senior leadership to mention two or three issues and one of them is freedom of religion, I do think that has an impact. They understand that they do not get a free pass from us.

Our Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Ambassador John Hanford, has traveled to China twice. This is the only country he has made a return visit to so far on his watch. He has had regular visits with Chinese officials here in Washington. Of course, all of the other senior officials raise this as well.

The issue of religious freedom was raised in the U.S.-China human rights dialogue last December. Ambassador Hanford and Assistant Secretary Craner were part of that team.

There are many specific things that the Chinese gave us the impression—or even more than the impression, led us to believe—that there was going to be forward movement. One is the area of religious freedom for minors.

That, in particular, was an important issue to us that we just have not seen progress on yet. We will continue to press, but that will continue to be part of the human rights dialogue and any dialogue on religious affairs.

I think there has been some payoff due to these diplomatic efforts, mostly in the form of individual prisoner releases. Although we know it can be a practice of the Chinese to release one and then arrest another, still, these are significant developments. For instance, the Tibetan nun, Ngawang Sangdrol, who was released last year.

I and others from the State Department were able to meet with her. It only reinforced the importance of this work to see this impressive woman, to hear what she had endured, and to recognize her as somebody who is going to continue to have a voice in these affairs now that she is free to do so.

Let me just close and reiterate that the situation in China is certainly, on balance, poor, and we do not want to leave you with another impression at all. But we do think that there are some positive signs. We want to be optimistic about this new leadership. We want to believe that they can take a more enlightened approach, a more constructive approach. Until they do, China will remain a country of particular concern in that exclusive club of objectionable countries that I mentioned.

We do not have any illusions about their history and how they have treated religious groups, but nevertheless this will continue to be part of our dialogue and continue to be a priority. As I said, it is certain that China will not get a pass from us on religious freedom issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to any questions you have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schriver appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Thank you very much.

Let me just begin with a couple of questions and then turn to my colleagues.

First, let me just say that there are always exceptions to all rules. But, as a general rule, religion is a socially conservative institution. It becomes radical when it is repressed or lacks respect. The history of America is that the more freedom, the greater the vibrancy of the church, but also the greater the social cohesion of the church.

In radically changing times—and China is facing that, as we do—churches play a greater role in helping individual citizens deal with social change. So, as an institution of society, I think all societies have an interest in respecting the church. But I think the case for China is one of the most radically changing societies in the world, of greater interest than, conceivably, most others.

Here, I would like to ask a question about dialogue with the Catholic faith. A fundamental aspect of freedom of religion is not only can people choose to worship, but who leads the worship.

The notion that a state would dictate who the leaders of the faith are is anathema to the mind, not of a Westerner alone, but of anyone who believes in freedom of religion.

We all know that one of the aspects of systems that are either still profoundly Communist, or have remnants in Communism, is that there is some antagonism to religion and some utilization of the state as leadership of the faith, as in the old Soviet Union.

Is there any hint from this new leadership that they can accept the leadership of the faith's choosing, in this case the Holy See's, instead of the government's?

Mr. SCHRIVER. Again, we do not have enough evidence to make a solid judgment one way or the other. We do know that Chinese officials are willing to talk about the idea of having visits from representatives of the Holy See. We do know that they understand this is an issue of importance to us, to Catholics worldwide, and they know it is something that people are paying attention to.

There is some evidence that Catholics in certain regions are allowed to practice a little more freely and are not necessarily part of the officially sanctioned Catholic Church. It is always a question in China, how much is this sort of tacit acquiescence or how much is this going on underground and the authorities are not fully aware. So, it is a difficult thing to speculate on.

Again, I think a great first step China could take would be to have an ongoing dialogue with representatives of the Holy See, and at some point be engaged with the Pope himself.

I think there can be no better way for the actual Catholic Church, the official Catholic Church, to have an opportunity to express why this is not something to be feared, why this is, in fact,

something that can definitely play a constructive role in China's future, as you noted, and as I said in my statement, the role that they can play in social work and communities.

So I think an excellent first step, if China is willing to take it, would be to engage in a robust dialogue with the Holy See.

Chairman LEACH. Well, I certainly support the idea of a robust dialogue, but I think we should be very careful of accepting as a significant step the idea of a respectful dialogue in contrast with acceptance of the right of a church to designate its own leadership.

I think that anything short of that is basically something that is an umbrage to the mind of anyone who believes in freedom of religion. So, there are certain things in Chinese history that are of a step-by-step nature.

There are other things that I think are of a principle nature, that have to be wrestled with on absolute principle terms. Leadership of a church is one of those. I would hope that our government would indicate that as strongly as they can.

Let me just ask one final question before turning it over to my colleagues.

As we followed the old Soviet Union, and I used to be in Soviet Affairs at the State Department, we used to look at certain leaders and whether or not they were people of faith, and wondered. We also looked at church movements in Russia and found that they became institutions of change because the institutions in government were intransigent.

Do you have any sense that the typical members of the government elite are people of faith of any variety, or are people of doubt, or people that are questioning the circumstance? Do they ever indicate to such to our government or to others?

Mr. SCHRIVER. I think you can say that within China there is great evidence that people desire to have a life where they are free to practice religion and express their faith. Certainly, within the Communist Party, this has not been allowed, even the new generation of leadership that was raised through the Party and worked its way through the ranks.

However, occasionally you do get a private conversation or private statement that gives some evidence that a Party member is a person of faith and that it plays an important role in their life. But it is not something even today that I think they feel free to express. It certainly gets much worse if there is a suspicion on the part of the government that they are associated with certain groups.

We know that there has been a campaign in China related to the Falun Gong where Party members, even members of the military, have been arrested and otherwise removed from their official positions.

So I think what you have is a little bit of an uneven approach, where in certain areas for certain religious groups there may be a tacit acquiescence, and other cases where the government feels more threatened—in my view, wrongly—and they would be less tolerant.

I think, over time, there is some room for optimism just because we know the numbers are growing in China. Naturally, people of faith are going to be entering the Party, they are going to be enter-

ing the military, they are going to be in other institutions. So, I think that over the long term, there is room for optimism. That is always the case with China.

If you look at human rights in China or religious freedom, you can say, over 25, 30 years—and almost no one would dispute this—the situation gets better and better, and slowly better. But it is just not happening fast enough.

As you said, there is a missed opportunity. These are institutions that can play constructive roles in the modernization of China and the betterment of people's lives there, and it is an opportunity that has been missed.

Senator SMITH. Thank you, Congressman Leach. I am pleased to be here with you as a new commissioner. I can think of no other bilateral relationship that is more important than that of the United States and China. There are many important bilateral relationships, but clearly this one ranks perhaps highest among them.

I suppose every one of us who is on this Commission and who cares about China and the United States' relationship with China has some passion on this, and religious freedom is one of the values of the American people that I find the most valuable.

So, Mr. Schriver, we thank you for your work in the State Department, and ask that as you pursue America's national interests you do not forget America's national values.

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you, sir.

Senator SMITH. I think it is very, very important that, as we engage China, that we not lose sight of the importance of one of the founding principles of this country, which is that people have freedom of conscience and there is no room for government between one's conscience and one's God, however the individual defines that.

I am pleased that President Clinton, President Bush, Republican and Democrats alike, have spoken eloquently to the Chinese on this subject and I hope they will continue, through the State Department, to keep this in the forefront of our discussions with them.

I look with concern on the restrictions placed on house churches and the other restrictions you have described here with respect to the people of Tibet. I look with interest, and even a little bit of alarm, certainly concern, for the Chinese people, what is developing in Hong Kong.

I hope that the leadership will respond peacefully and thoughtfully. I truly think what happens in Hong Kong is a harbinger of what may happen to China more broadly.

I have, frankly, just one question. I have taken the tack, as a U.S. Senator, that the best way to change China, to be a friend of China, is to engage this country. So, I have voted fairly consistently for engagement for trade in the hopes that the Chinese Government would respond by respecting these Western values, while we respect their Eastern values as well.

But it is discouraging to hear many parts of your report. It seems so typical of one-party rule, that there is one-party paranoia that even extends to concern over a person's faith.

My question to you, as someone who has voted as I have for engagement, has my hope been misplaced? You mentioned that change is coming. It is not happening fast enough.

But, clearly, as China gets involved in WTO, as China asks for greater respect from the world, as China deals with its situation in Hong Kong, are its leaders aware of this concern and what a threshold standard and value it is in the community of civilized nations, that we respect religious freedom, religious conscience? Has my hope, my faith been misplaced in the way I have voted?

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you, Senator. I think everyone who has supported engaging China can feel that, though the progress might not be what we hoped for, we have had a relationship that has encouraged forward movement over a period of time.

As I said, any observer from China would note that in the past 25, 30 years, human rights, religious freedom, it is all moving in a positive direction. The quality of life and the freedoms that individuals enjoy in China today are unquestionably better than 25 years ago.

I have heard people say it is kind of like watching an iceberg, though. You stare at it, you do not see the movement. If you look away and look back some period of time later, you notice that it has inched along. Maybe that is what we are looking at.

But I do believe that this period of 25 years of modest, gradual improvement has definitely come as a result of engagement with the outside world, and I think through U.S. leadership.

The timing when this progress began very much relates to when China allowed itself to open up to the outside world after the Cultural Revolution, the death of Mao Zedong, in the period after about 1976. When China became more open to engagement with the West, that is when changes started to occur. So, I think those who have been proponents of engagement can feel good about it. It is not going fast enough.

Many of us believe very deeply that the future of China could be so much better if the government were encouraging, rather than oppressing, religious institutions, a free press, and other elements that are important and core to Americans. It is a frustrating thing, because the Chinese people are the ones paying the price, and the international community also pays a price by not having the kind of quality citizenship that we would like to see from the Chinese.

So it is a frustrating experience. We would like to see greater progress. But I think there is no question that engagement with the United States and the outside world has had a positive impact over a period of time.

Senator SMITH. Well, I hope you emphasize in your work with them a point that Congressman Leach made. That is, that religions can be the greatest strength of secular societies if they are given respect and a place of protection under law. But they can be radicalized by oppression, by lack of respect, by lack of rule of law that includes people's faith.

That does not suggest that the Chinese Government, or any other government, needs to tolerate criminality masking in the robes of religion. Criminality is one thing. Faith and mainstream kinds of religious practices are entirely supportive of good civilization, good government, and a progressive state.

So, I thank you for your testimony and your time.

It is a pleasure to be here with you, Mr. Chairman. I have no other questions.

Chairman LEACH. Thank you very much, Senator.

We are also joined by Congressman Pitts, who is, I daresay, the leading spokesperson in the Congress on a variety of religious issues. We are honored that you are with us, Joe.

Representative PITTS. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this very important hearing.

I will submit my opening statement for the record.

Chairman LEACH. Without objection, yours and all other members' will be submitted for the record.

Representative PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Representative Pitts appears in the appendix.]

Representative PITTS. Mr. Secretary, you mentioned there have been prisoner releases. One thing I have been very interested in concerning China and the Commission, is that we develop a data base, a prisoner list, and encourage members, as they travel or meet with officials, Ambassadors, to engage just in a respectful way and ask for status reports on some of these prisoners. Many of them are what we would call prisoners of conscience or prisoners because of their religious beliefs.

What is your assessment of the possibility of a continued pattern of prisoner releases under the new leadership in China? Is there a difference between previous cooperation of the Chinese leadership and the actions of the new leadership regarding prisoner releases?

Mr. SCHRIVER. Congressman Pitts, thank you. The issue you raise is one that we recognize to be important as well. We have been engaged through officials channels to try to develop prisoner lists and data bases. We have been engaged with NGOs who have their own lists so that we can compare the data. Other governments have lists.

I think Assistant Secretary Craner has been really effective in taking this approach that "everybody has got a little piece of the picture," and that our best opportunity to draw attention to the issue, find the most egregious cases of unfair detention and imprisonment, is to first have the information. He has been very vigorous at that.

But there just is not enough information yet about the new leadership. The small windows we have had into their thinking, I am sorry to say, have not been encouraging. We had some cases of individual prisoners who we were optimistic might be released.

I might just mention one, a Uighur businesswoman, Rebiya Kadeer. I believe the Chinese made their policy statements and led us to believe that she would be released. They may have been timing that release to coincide with a particular bilateral visit, and that would be unfortunate because she should be released now. But again, I am sorry to say we have not seen a change yet.

Let me also note that it is extremely important to get people out, but we are also aware that the Chinese have the ability, if they would like, to release one, arrest one, release one, arrest two.

So it is important that, as we do the work to get the individuals out who should not be imprisoned, we also pursue broader systemic

change in China. That has also been very much a part of the work of the State Department under Lorne Craner's leadership.

Representative PITTS. During the Soviet Union period, some of us used to organize prisoner writing opportunities to communicate with wardens and prisoners. I am told by those now who were in prison then that this made a difference in their treatment.

Do you see the opportunity for engagement? For instance, sister city relationships or provinces or organizations that have relationships with organizations or government entities in the United States. Would that be an appropriate forum to inquire concerning some of these types of prisoners of conscience?

Mr. SCHRIVER. Yes, sir. Thank you. First of all, as a general point, when we have had the opportunity to talk to former prisoners who have since been released and they are willing to speak with us, we have found that a variety of things can help improve their conditions just by virtue of us raising their case in official channels.

We have reason to believe that their condition may improve, so it is important that we continue to do that. In terms of the direct communication you mentioned, we are aware that such activity is taking place with wardens.

It appears that the response you get is uneven and it is not clear why that is, if it is a different regional policy, if it is particular individual wardens who feel more comfortable responding to an inquiry. We just do not really know the reason why this might be.

But we do have some encouraging results through this approach, and I think it is a worthy thing to do. We work closely with one particular NGO that has recently started this practice and is getting some encouraging results. So, I thank you for that question and raising the issue.

Representative PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEACH. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Schriver.

We will now turn to our next panel.

Mr. SCHRIVER. Thank you.

Chairman LEACH. Our next witness is Ms. Felice D. Gaer, who is the Co-Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Ms. Gaer, welcome. As with your predecessor, your full statement will be placed in the record and you may proceed as you see fit.

STATEMENT OF FELICE D. GAER, CO-CHAIR, THE U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. GAER. Thank you, Congressman.

The Commission on International Religious Freedom [CIRF] is grateful for the opportunity to testify. Since it was created, the Commission has spoken out on the widespread and serious abuses of the right to freedom of religion and belief in China, and has provided numerous policy recommendations regarding the steps that the U.S. Government should take.

This hearing is particularly timely because in less than 2 weeks our Commission expects to travel to China for the first time. We

plan to visit Tibet as well as other parts of China. On our return, of course, we look forward to briefing the Congress on our findings.

We have been asked to address a few issues: leadership changes, religious freedom conditions, and recommendations for U.S. policy.

With regard to political leadership changes and their impact on issues of freedom of religion and belief, the face of China's political leadership has undergone major changes in the last year, as you well know.

The transition from the leadership of Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao has gone smoothly, but it remains unclear to many observers whether the change in power will impact the policies of the Communist Party at all. If the past is any guide, we cannot be very optimistic.

In the area of human rights, we also know that severe restrictions on religion and political freedoms are authorized at the highest levels of the Communist Party, and many of China's new leaders, including Hu Jintao himself, have been intimately involved in formulating and implementing the government's repressive policies on religion and ethnic minorities.

This fact, along with the fact that many of Jiang Zemin's allies continue to occupy key positions overseeing religious affairs and legal reform, signals little prospect for immediate improvement. In fact, our Commission fears it may even deteriorate. However, with the recent transition and the visit coming, we may have a different assessment on our return.

Now, as to the question of religious freedom conditions in China, the overriding issue, as indicated in our testimony and I think everyone else's, is the question of control. The government sees religion as an area that must be subjected to government control, and from that follows a lot of the forms of repression and limitations that we have seen.

The government claims the right to control, monitor, and restrain religious practice, purportedly to protect public safety, order, health, and so forth. However, the actions to actually restrict religious belief and practice go far beyond what is necessary or legitimate under international law and China's obligations.

China's Constitution provides its citizens with freedom of religious belief, but does not provide freedom to manifest religious beliefs. This highlights the importance of China's signature and ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It has signed, it has not ratified.

The Covenant contains explicit provisions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, so we look to that issue as a harbinger of protection on the legal level.

Now, the crackdowns against religious believers in China are believed to be sanctioned at the highest levels of government. This has led to the imprisonment of clergy, even the disappearance of key clergy.

I need only draw attention to the young boy, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who "disappeared" in 1995, days after he was recognized by the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama, the second-highest ranking leader in Tibetan Buddhism.

The Chinese Government continues to insist that the young boy is well and is with his parents, and that they are protecting his pri-

vacy. That is a different interpretation of his status than certainly our Commission has, and I am sure your Commission as well, Congressman.

Bishop Su Zhimin, the Catholic bishop, was detained on questionable charges. The government claims it does not have knowledge of where he is. We would have to count him as a "disappeared" person.

The question of how to find, see, and interact with leading clergy who have been imprisoned is one of the highest importance, we believe, because it reveals repression sanctioned by China's leadership.

The Chinese Government has also reserved for itself the right to determine the legality of religious activities and the legitimacy of religious leaders across the board. As a result, the government has banned what is called "heretical cult organizations."

Criminal law provides for extensive punishments for those organizing and utilizing "superstitious sects, secret societies, evil religious organizations" to commit crimes.

Now, it is under these laws that groups like Falun Gong and several unregistered Christian Churches have been designated as cults by the government, and their practitioners have suffered tremendously.

Imprisonment, often without trial. Falun Gong practitioners tell us that as many as 100,000 of their practitioners have been sent to labor camps without trial, and hundreds have died, they claim, either in prison or after their release.

Now, the written testimony gives a little bit more detail about repression against Protestants and repression against Catholics. We speak to the issue of women believers, and also the practices that have been used against them and that they are vulnerable to when imprisoned.

We note the concern expressed by the committee monitoring the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the United Nations regarding the violent and coercive measures being used by government officials in the conduct of the population policy.

The questions of Xinjiang and Tibet loom large whenever one looks at issues of religious freedom. The government has linked religion with separatist or terrorist acts, and particularly with regard to these regions and the Muslim religion and the Tibetan Buddhist religion. Again, I speak about this in my written testimony. The picture is not one of great hopefulness.

Finally, the issue of North Korea, which Mr. Schriver spoke about before, and the issue of North Korean refugees in China is one that our Commission has paid much attention to.

China is a party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Under this treaty, it should not be expelling or returning refugees to a country where they would suffer persecution on return. The forcible repatriation of the refugees is a very serious denial of their freedoms and of their rights.

On the issue of U.S. policy, the Commission has identified three aspects that have characterized recent U.S. policy to advance religious freedom and other human rights in China.

First, the treatment of religious persons has been raised by President Bush and Secretary Powell directly with the senior Chinese leadership. Second, the United States has raised cases and sought the release of imprisoned individuals who have been detained in violation of their rights, including on account of religion or belief. Third, the United States funds a multi-million dollar program to promote democracy and the rule of law.

These efforts contributed, in 2002, to the Administration's determination that there had been positive developments, particularly with regard to Tibet. In that year, six Tibetan political prisoners were released from imprisonment. The Chinese Government invited the older brother of the Dalai Lama to visit, paving the way for the Dalai Lama's special envoy.

Citing significant but limited progress, the State Department announced in April 2003 that it would neither propose nor sponsor a resolution censuring China's human rights practices at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

One development cited as a reason for the State Department's decision was the Chinese Government's reported agreement to invite U.N. human rights mechanisms and special rapporteurs, including the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, to visit China without conditions. However, as indicated by Mr. Schriver, these have not yet taken place.

We would go further and say even the invitations have been questionable. Conditions on those visits remain, as in the past. The reality of those requests is not what has been said.

Now, I see the red light is on, and I would just say very quickly that we recommend that the Department use the full range——

Chairman LEACH. Do not feel hurried.

Ms. GAER. Pardon?

Chairman LEACH. Do not feel hurried.

Ms. GAER. Oh. All right.

Chairman LEACH. Go ahead.

Ms. GAER. Thank you.

We note the Department has changed its assessment of human rights conditions in China. We believe the continued lack of systemic changes in this area does raise questions—and must raise questions—about the effectiveness of U.S. policy during a period like the present one.

We think that any reassessment of policy should take into account past failures on the part of the U.S. Government to condition the expansion of the bilateral economic relationship, and China's entry onto the international scene through the hosting of such public events as the Olympics, on substantial improvements in China's religious freedom and human rights practices.

The policy options our Commission would like to stress in terms of U.S. actions to advance protection for freedom of religion or belief in China include the following three.

First, that the State Department should use the full range of policy tools available under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 [IRFA] so that it takes additional actions with respect to China.

The Secretary has designated China as a "country of particular concern" for its egregious violations, but the Secretary has determined that preexisting sanctions satisfy the IRFA requirements.

While the reliance on preexisting sanctions may be technically correct under the statute, our Commission believes it is not defensible as a matter of policy. Moreover, reliance on preexisting sanctions provides very little incentive for governments like China to reduce or end severe violations of religious freedom. There is simply no added value.

Second, the Department should provide to the Congress its evaluation of the impact of current U.S. rule of law and democracy programs on the promotion of religious freedom and other human rights in China.

According to the recent, new State Department report on U.S. efforts to promote human rights and democracy in China, the U.S. Government supports a wide range of programs designed to promote, among other things, respect for freedom of religion.

Yet, there is no information about specific religious freedom programs in the report, and there is no information about the impact that the broader rule of law and democracy programs supported by the government have had on the actual advancement of freedom of religion or other human rights in China. We would welcome attention to that and attention by the Congress as well.

Third, the U.S. Government should enhance its public diplomacy efforts focusing attention on the plight of the Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists. The U.S. Government should seek expanded opportunities to speak frankly and directly to the Chinese people to express why the U.S. Government is concerned with violations of internationally recognized human rights, and why the American people are concerned about them.

President Bush and Assistant Secretary Craner have done so during their visits to China. Our Commission is seeking a similar opportunity during the upcoming visit. We think that expansion of broadcasts by Radio Free Asia and Voice of America are also important to this effort. The number of hours put to these programs is, in our judgment, inadequate at this time.

In summary, Mr. Chairman, the Commission on International Religious Freedom recommends that the United States be more consistent in our message that religious freedom is, and will remain, a priority in U.S. foreign policy and in our assessment of progress on China's human rights practices. China must know that we will continue to raise this issue until they fully comply with their international obligations.

As a key component of this effort, until China significantly improves its protections of religious freedom, systemic improvements that will prevent further serious violations, the United States should propose and promote a resolution to censure China at the United Nations and at its Commission on Human Rights.

This is extremely important, as the United States stands virtually alone in striving to focus world attention on China's specific violations of human rights. Invitations alone are not progress. Systemic progress is what is needed, and we promise you we will be pursuing that issue. We look forward to doing so in collaboration. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gaer appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Well, thank you very much. Let me just say that I appreciate the existence of your institution, as well as your leadership. I would stress that, in the history of the 20th century in particular, we have found a great circumstance develop where the importance of referencing individuals is critical to both changing circumstances and holding governments accountable.

I remember as a college student reading probably the first seminal philosophy book on the subject of totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt's famous volume. Arendt talked about the commonality of themes between fascism and Communism and said the principal thing was the loss of individual identity.

When people were given numbers, when people were taken from homes and there was no accountability, no reporting back, no dignity to the individual even in death, that this had a dispiriting effect on society at large and really defined totalitarianism.

So when institutions like yours take this charge, that of looking for accountability for individual human beings, I think it is something that is one of the really impressive aspects of democratic sensitivities to freedom of religion. So, I want to thank you very much for that.

Ms. GAER. Thank you.

Chairman LEACH. Mr. Pitts, do you have any questions?

Representative PITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Madam Commissioner, for your very thorough testimony. I just wanted to follow up on one thing. You said you were going to be visiting China soon.

Have you considered, or would you consider, requesting status reports on religious prisoners or to visit with religious prisoners while you are there, to request to actually be able to visit some of them if you have any names that would interest you in the prisons? I do not know what their reception might be, but it might be a possibility for you to consider.

Ms. GAER. We have lists, I can assure you. We are familiar with the lists of the Department of State, and NGOs as well. This would be a first visit for our Commission. We are seeking to understand better what the status of freedom of religion is, what has improved, and what has not. In that context, we certainly will request access and visits.

I think, as indicated by my testimony, the issue of the young Panchen Lama—he is now almost 14 or 15, perhaps not so young. But we certainly have lists. We certainly will be raising these questions. Whether or not we will have access or not, stay tuned.

Representative PITTS. I understand. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Ms. GAER. You are welcome.

Chairman LEACH. Well, thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony.

Our third panel is composed of Dr. Joseph Fewsmith who is a professor, as well as director of East Asia Interdisciplinary Studies at Boston University; Mr. Charles D. Lovejoy, Jr., who is an associate with the U.S. Catholic China Bureau; Mr. David B.T. Aikman, who is a former senior correspondent with Time Maga-

zine; and Dr. Jacqueline M. Armijo-Hussein, who is an assistant professor, Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University.

In terms of order, I will suggest the way I have introduced, unless, by agreement, you have made any other decisions. Is that all right with you? Fair enough. All right.

Then let us begin with Dr. Fewsmith.

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH FEWSMITH, PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR OF EAST ASIA INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, BOSTON, MA

Mr. FEWSMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the opportunity to come down here and speak to your Commission. I have been, of course, asked to testify about political trends in contemporary China, leadership transition, their implications for state-society relations, including religious affairs.

That is a very large menu. I will not get too much of that in depth. All I can do, is hit some of the major trends and hope that that makes some contribution.

As you know, China has undergone a major leadership transition over the past year. It is really the first political transition that China has undergone since the revolutionary generation, the Mao Zedong and the Deng Xiaopings. Deng liked to call himself second generation, even though he was a first generation revolutionary. Since that generation has gone, this is the first real leadership transition.

I think that we see some glimmers of hope in terms of trends toward moderation. I would agree with Randall Schriver that it is too early to judge these sorts of issues. Leadership transitions, you know, start a couple of years before they take place and continue a couple of years after they take place. It is a long transition. So, we will have to sit and observe these sorts of things.

But what I would like to stress is that whatever leadership China is going to have is going to have to follow some socio-economic trends in China that are going to drive whatever leadership comes to the fore. I think that gives you at least some glimmer of hope for the long term. And I would stress the long term.

As you all know, just a couple of years ago General Secretary Jiang Zemin called for admitting private entrepreneurs—capitalists—into the Chinese Communist Party.

We sort of absorbed that and said, "Yes, sure." This is a shocking change in China, and it suggests a depth of the economic and social change that has taken place.

According to Chinese data, some 20 percent of private entrepreneurs are already members of the Chinese Communist Party. By the way, most of them join the Party first and then go into business, which is not necessarily a clean and wonderful way to do things, but it suggests the extent of change.

In recent months, under the leadership of General Secretary Hu Jintao, there has been emphasis on the masses on the people. Those emphases that we have seen, I think, are speaking to a lot of the problems facing China as it goes into the 21st century, including tremendously rapid growth of inequality.

China used to be the most egalitarian society in the world. Today, it is one of the least. That is a change within a two-decade

period. The social stress is enormous. The corruption is terrible. The unemployment rates would shock anybody who was running for office. The emergence of urban poverty, something that China has never had, at least in the last 50 years. The abuse of authority, social disorder, and so forth.

The result of that, I think, is that you are beginning to see some new demands for accountability of the leadership at different levels, and to expand decisionmaking authority within the Party itself, so-called intra-Party democracy. I will grant you quite readily that this development is a poor substitute for the real thing, but it is a change that is occurring on the horizon.

These changes reflect a realization within the Chinese Communist Party that Chinese society is changing and that the Party itself has to change or it will give up power. So, it is beginning to change.

One of those changes is the very rapid growth of non-governmental organizations, of which I think religion is a specialized type. There were virtually no NGOs in the 1980s in China. By the latter half of the 1990s, you had some 700,000 NGOs.

As has been mentioned earlier today, these are at least supposed to register with government bodies. Frequently, they are funded, at least in part, by the government, and therefore they are often referred to as government-organized non-governmental organizations, GONGOs, for short. A wonderful term.

In any case, this growth of intermediary organizations has led many in the West to argue that China has been developing some form of civil society. That is one of the issues that I would actually like to dispute, at least in the Western sense of the term.

Intermediary associations in China just do not fit easily into Western categories. We tend to distinguish between the state, the public and private spheres, seeing intermediary organizations as distinct from government on the one hand and articulating the demands and hopes of the people on the other.

In China, the idea of social organizations articulating private interests against the government has never been accepted on a normative level. To take the example of China's final dynasty, the Qing dynasty, there were specific prohibitions against scholarly associations—which I would deeply oppose—fearing that they would become the basis of factual intrigue against the government as they had in the late Ming dynasty. There was an historical basis for that.

A couple of points here that I think are worth considering. First, the notion of "private" has traditionally been understood quite differently in China than in the West. We tend to see private as good. As the expression of private interest is absolutely central to our notion of pluralism, the basis of our form of government, our society.

In traditional China, the term "private," "*si,*" was generally viewed as the antithesis of "public," or "*gong.*" The more private you had, the less public you had. These were like phases of the moon, one expanding, the other contracting. The government itself, and specifically the figure of the Emperor, was supposed to represent and body publicness.

Second, Chinese governments throughout the 20th century—and here I have heard the focus several times on the Communist gov-

ernment since 1949. One of the things I want to do is try to get you to focus on what is Chinese and not just on what is Chinese Communist.

Throughout the 20th century, the Nationalist government, the Communist government, previous other governments have forced voluntary associations into established hierarchical, corporatist structures, or tried to abolish them altogether.

The first pattern was very distinctly followed by the Nationalist government in the 1920s. There is a wonderful set of laws that outline a corporatist structure that Mussolini would have been proud of. The other pattern of abolishing them is what the Chinese Communist government did, particularly after 1956, after the so-called Socialist transition.

With the onset of reforms—and this is where you have seen this tremendous change over the last 25 years—the state has once against been adopting corporatist structures. This is where intermediary associations are supposed to register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and accept state supervision.

This does not mean that they are, by the way, simply extensions of state power. Frequently, they are able to inject local interest and concerns into the policymaking process, so it is a very complicated situation.

Religious organizations and activities are special types of intermediary associations, based as they are on the spiritual needs of their adherents, their tendency to absorb large numbers of believers, and their ability to mobilize large numbers of adherents around a cause.

As with other forms of intermediary associations, the Chinese state has had long experience with religious organizations, much of it unhappy from the state's point of view.

Scholars who study the origins of the Chinese state and the monarchical system note that the authority of all emperors was based on the idea that the emperor was the link between the human world and the heavens. Ancestor worship played an absolutely central, critical role in this.

The emperor's family tablets established a legitimate and sacred line. There was a religious foundation to the Chinese state, something that many Chinese intellectuals these days do not even recognize.

The current repression that we have heard so much about today is, indeed, I think, rooted in the 5,000 years of imperial history. In other words, the Chinese state at no point has taken the type of perspective toward religious organization that you indeed—and I would agree with you—hope that China some day will.

There were periods in Chinese history when Buddhism and Daoism occupied important places in the polity. Nevertheless, the state ultimately asserted its authority over these religions.

The Chinese state could patronize religions. It could incorporate them. It could co-opt them. But it never allowed independent, powerful religious organizations to develop, at least if it could help it, or a powerful, organized clergy to develop, or at least over a long period of time. That was true traditionally, and I am sorry to say it remains true today.

The hostility of the Chinese state toward religious organizations—and here I want to be very clear that what the Chinese state opposed was not the practice of religion—I think that gives you some window of hope there—but the emergence of powerful religious organizations that could challenge the authority of the state. That policy was rooted in painful, historical experience.

Repeatedly, religious organizations of one sort or another have been used to mobilize peasant revolts against the state, some of which were successful. This stems from the Yellow Turban Rebellion of the Han dynasty, to the White Lotus, the Taiping, and Boxer rebellions of the 18th and 19th centuries. Such experiences left a very, very deep imprint on Chinese political culture and one that is, I think, as distinct from our Western traditions as I can think of.

If there is a positive side to this, it is that although the claim to legitimacy of the Chinese state was anchored in a religious understanding, its administration of society was largely secular. Today, the inheritors of this system, the government officials, are relentless modernizers.

I think that that is good in the sense that they do not have problems with the broader issue of modernity. You do not see the religiously inspired rejections of modernity in China that you see in some parts of the world.

On the other hand, the Chinese state has continued to see religious activities that are organized outside of state control as potential sources of social instability. As with other forms of voluntary associations, the Chinese state has tried to force religious adherents to participate in one or another of these state-organized and controlled religious associations.

As Randall Schriver testified, many religious adherents have not been willing to accept these restrictions. That, of course, is the basic conflict that we see and where the suppression of religious freedom comes from.

I will conclude very quickly. One might add, perhaps on a discouraging note, that many government officials who are also modernizers do see religious organizers as inimicable to their goals of economic development and, therefore, see little wrong with their suppression.

Let me just conclude by saying that I think that there is very little academic research that has been carried out on the sociology of religion in contemporary China. We know very little about who converts to what religion and for what reason.

We do know that in some parts of the country the growth of religion co-exists surprisingly well with the state, and in other parts of the country religious organizations are suppressed. Serious research on these sorts of issues, I think, is desperately needed.

So, I think I will just conclude on that note.

Chairman LEACH. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fewsmith appears in the appendix.]

Representative PITTS. Mr. Chairman?

Chairman LEACH. Yes.

Representative PITTS. I do apologize. I have to leave for another meeting. But I do have some follow-up questions I will provide to you for the panelists, if that is all right.

Chairman LEACH. Would that be all right if you responded in writing?

Representative PITTS. I very much wanted to hear them, but I do have another commitment.

Chairman LEACH. Thank you, Joe.

Mr. Lovejoy.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES D. LOVEJOY, JR., ASSOCIATE, U.S. CATHOLIC CHINA BUREAU, PRINCETON JUNCTION, NJ

Mr. LOVEJOY. Congressman Leach, thank you very much for allowing me to be here today to represent the U.S. Catholic China Bureau.

I currently work at Princeton University as the director of University Development for Asia, but I have been associated with the Bureau since its inception in 1989. Sister Janet Carroll, who many people in this room know, could not be here today. She is the executive director. She did ask me to express her appreciation for the work of this Commission and for allowing her statement to be entered into the record.

Chairman LEACH. And your full statement, as with everyone else's, is entered in the record.

Mr. LOVEJOY. She also asked if I would just remind people of the function of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau which was founded in 1989, with encouragement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and is sponsored by a cross-section of Roman Catholic organizations and various individuals who share its purposes and goals, the main ones of which are to promote the development in China of a fully indigenous local Catholic Church with adequate leadership and resources for the pastoral service of all the Chinese people, to foster reconciliation and unity of the Chinese Catholic Church within the universal church under the Apostolic See, and finally, to promote understanding among American Catholics about the Catholic Church and the situation among Catholics there in China.

Let me briefly highlight key points in that statement that we have submitted. As many have cited here, there has been a well-recognized tremendous growth and upsurge in religious activity in China at all levels—institution, community, and personal—since the early 1980s. The Catholic Church has been the beneficiary of that growth. In fact, it has grown at least fourfold since 1949 or 1950.

There is potentially disturbing recent evidence, however, of government efforts to tighten restrictions on the registered Catholic Church and to put more pressure on the unregistered church in China.

The direct, verifiable evidence of individual abuses, however, is hard to come by. It is even more difficult sometimes to fully understand and appreciate the complexity of local situations.

The Holy See continues its efforts to have a dialogue with the Chinese Government and to reconcile internal church differences.

With regard to the Commission's second issue under consideration here, the impact of China's new leadership, we also agree it is too early to tell just what direction that will take.

Finally, with regard to U.S. policy, we believe it should continue to take very strong, principled stands on issues of religious freedom while respecting basic Chinese values.

The attached statement, of course, does show the statistics that reflect the growth of the Catholic Church. I might note that these statistics are indicative of the courageous efforts of Chinese Catholics to restore, renew, and develop their church, both as an institution and a community of faith.

I might also note, that a recent edition of Maryknoll Magazine shows a very interesting example of the positive aspects of this church growth. In fact, it showed a vibrant Catholic community in Shanxi Province that had just completed a very stunning new church in a very traditional Chinese design.

We believe this church was actually an unregistered church, but much of the artwork had been done by people who were part of the registered church.

However, recent evidence of tightened controls is found in three interesting draft documents that have been circulated. These are called: "The Method of Management of Catholic Dioceses in China," the "Rules for the Work of the Patriotic Association of Catholic Catholics," and, finally, the "Method of Work of the Unitary Assembly of the Patriotic Association of Chinese Catholics and of the Chinese Catholic Episcopal Conference." These were issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs.

The last one's purpose is worth quoting. It has been "formulated . . . to make more complete and to intensify the Chinese Catholic independent enterprise in accordance with the democratic principles of administering the church, namely, collective leadership, democratic supervision, mutual consultation, and joint decision."

The ostensible purpose of these documents could be interpreted as to provide guidelines for church work that will help by defining more clearly the relationship of local governments with the Catholic Churches, both registered and even unregistered.

However, they probably reflect a general tightening up, and in effect renewed efforts to strictly enforce religious policy and regulations regarding places of worship, and also appears to be pressuring unregistered leadership and communities to join with the registered communities of Catholics in each diocese.

The former director of the Vatican agency Fides, in May of this year, expressed his concern that these documents, when describing the democratic concept of the church, actually run the risk of destroying the apostolic and sacramental dimension of the Catholic faith, thus reducing the church to the rank of a sect.

This third document, when making reference to the "Chinese Catholic independent enterprise," certainly raises some very serious concerns, especially if the term "independent" is used to be interpreted as cutting off the Catholic Church from its communion with the universal church.

However, if it is intended to mean an authentic autonomy vis-a-vis both external and internal intrusion into the affairs of the church, then we might applaud this as a positive goal.

Reconciliation and unity among Chinese Catholics and with the universal church is certainly a long-desired goal. But if this is done by coercion or force, as could be indicated by these documents, let

alone with violence in any given situation, it obviously would be reprehensible and unacceptable.

Let me cite one recent example. I think it was also cited in one of the other documents. The Union of Catholic Asian News [UCAN] has reported, just in June, the arrest of Reverend Lu Xiaozhou, a priest in Wenzhou Diocese who was associated with the unregistered church, while he was en route to visit the sick in the city hospital. He was then transferred to the custody of the local Religious Affairs Bureau and probably has been pressured to join the registered church. This tends to be a typical way that Chinese authorities will operate.

However, despite such reports, it is important to point out that it is difficult to cite specific instances of repression which occur frequently in remote areas, or even to validate reports in the religious and secular media of such instances of force, coercion, and violence. The local security authorities often use these as a pretext for other actions.

Sister Janet asked me to nuance these remarks by admitting that our organization does not have the resources to staff or to closely monitor these developments on the ground, and we have deferred in these matters to Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UCAN, and so forth. We never rely on news media reports, which we find to be frequently unreliable.

I would also like to note here that the Catholic China Bureau does follow the direction of the Holy See in promoting efforts for reconciliation.

I should note that in the presentation last year to this Commission by Thomas Quigley, he cited the statement by Pope John Paul II at the Ricci Symposia of 2001 in which John Paul expressed the hope that the church would contribute toward China's social development, and that it apologized for past errors which have frequently been the source of problems with the church in China.

Since then, the Holy See has continued to pursue its dialogue with the Chinese Government. It continues efforts for reconciliation and unity. It is continuing to identify bishop candidates to succeed some of the elderly bishops, both official and unofficial, who will be acceptable to all segments of the Catholic Church in China and merit the recognition of their rightful ecclesiastical role by the authorities of the State Religious Affairs Administration.

Hopefully, this initiative by the Catholic Church authorities may lead to deeper reconciliation and, thus, to the removal of one proximate cause of the severe crackdowns and abrogation of rights of believers that are guaranteed by constitutional provisions.

As noted, with regard to policies and programs with China's new leadership, it is really too early to tell. Transition is usually a time of uncertainty. The three recent draft documents on the church probably reflect an inherent tendency toward restriction during periods such as this one, as we see it.

We believe, therefore, that the options to be pursued by the U.S. Government should be in the context of policy consistency, justice, and honesty in dealing with the Chinese in the political, social, religious, and economic areas.

The Chinese Government respects and works best when confronted with principled, well articulated, and consistent positions

that respect basic Chinese values and are based on commonly accepted international principles.

We also strongly urge you to continue support for a wide range of academic and social exchanges that have emerged over the past 10 years. We note with some encouragement that there is increased interest in Christianity in academic circles, and the fact that U.S. Christian universities now sponsor programs, though many are secular in nature, in collaborating with major Chinese universities.

While modernization and globalization definitely pose serious challenges to the faith and practice of the religious beliefs and convictions of Catholics in China, ironically, this continued political pressure on bishops, priests, religious sisters, and lay leaders in effect hinders them from properly dealing with the challenges of contemporary Chinese society as it undergoes rapid transformation.

Therefore, we urge this Commission, as well as the current administration of the U.S. Government, to seek to identify and encourage leaders in the PRC who are working to bring about positive change in a manner that will preserve social stability and well-being. We certainly will join with collaborative efforts to realize these developments.

In concluding, let me add a commercial for a conference that the Bureau is sponsoring in November, which is our 20th National Catholic China Conference. It is called "The Role of Religion in China's Emerging Civil Society."

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address the state of the Catholic Church in China to this Commission.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lovejoy appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Thank you for those thoughtful observations.

Our next witness will be Dr. David B.T. Aikman.

STATEMENT OF DAVID B.T. AIKMAN, FORMER SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, TIME MAGAZINE, LOVETTSVILLE, VA

Mr. AIKMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the privilege and the honor of being here today. Because of the shortness of time, I will try to make my remarks as short as possible. I believe my written statement is already accepted into the record.

My specialty, my expertise, has been the Protestant house churches of China, which I have been familiar with for the last 30 years, including 2 years' residence in China, and then several months last year of collecting material for a book.

I am somewhat familiar with the situation of the Roman Catholics, and also somewhat familiar with the situation of other religious groups, including Buddhists and Muslims.

To answer the very first question that the Commission is concerned with, has the leadership change in China portended any changes in religious policy, I would give a flat "no," for one very specific reason.

The head of the Religious Affairs Bureau, or as it has now renamed itself, the State Administration of Religious Affairs, Mr. Ye Xiaowen, who is a self-professed militant atheist, is a holdover from the former regime of President Jiang Zemin, also former General Secretary of the Communist Party. Mr. Ye is known to be rather close to Mr. Hu Jintao.

When I was in China at the time of the political changes taking place, I was told by high officials within one of the officially registered Christian groups that Mr. Ye's stock had risen in light of the new political change.

Mr. Ye Xiaowen has stood for a policy of extremely tight control of all religious groups in China, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Muslim, and Daoist. In fact, this control has amounted to the continued interruption of religious services, religious ceremonies, worship ceremonies carried on by both Catholics and Protestants. We have already heard from the Roman Catholic side of the equation.

The overall effect has been to suggest that the new political leadership has absolutely no interest whatever in modifying the situation of religious believers in China, especially Christians.

However, within the Chinese academic and political establishment there are remarkable signs of change. First of all, I have met a number of Communist Party members who are Christian believers, some of them fairly high up. I know of several children of top Chinese political leaders who, outside of China, have been baptized as Christians, obviously with the knowledge of their parents.

Within the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, there are strong efforts to abolish the Religious Affairs Bureau as reactionary and not conducive to China's peaceful civil development and the emergency of a civil society.

The notion is that what China should adopt is simply a law on religious freedom, and that religion should be supervised according to the rule of law, without any attempt to control them or administer them on theological or other doctrinal grounds as promoted by Communist Party authorities.

The concern has been expressed sometimes by the Chinese authorities that religious groups may not be patriotic. In the case of the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, you have had a situation where some practitioners have, in fact, demonstrated openly, in political terms, against the government.

But as far as the Protestant house church Christians go, at least the vast majority of them, they are very patriotic. For example, they do not support the independence of Taiwan. They do not support the independence of Tibet. They support the notion of a central government controlling a unified China, albeit in the future, perhaps, in a federal form.

But there is an interesting washover of religious belief into political opposition at the non-violent level. And here, I would like to raise the question of two prominent U.S. permanent residents, Dr. Yang Jianli and Dr. Wang Bingzhang, both of whom have been held for extremely long periods of time. In the case of Dr. Yang Jianli, 15 months without any access to a lawyer, without any contact with any of his relatives.

In the case of Dr. Wang Bingzhang, he was actually kidnapped in Vietnam, brought into China on a boat in the custody of men who were wearing Vietnamese police uniforms, but were speaking fluent Mandarin Chinese.

He was discovered tied up in a Buddhist monastery in Hunan Province where, providentially, the Public Security Bureau showed up and discovered that there was a warrant for this gentleman's arrest in Guangdong Province.

He was then held for several months. Finally, he was tried, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison in February of this year.

Dr. Wang Bingzhang is interesting for one reason, and I will conclude with this. In 1896, a prominent political oppositionist was kidnapped in London and held in the Chinese legation, where plans were being made to ship him back to China, where of course he would have been executed.

His name was Sun Yat Sen. Sun Yat Sen was a political oppositionist, for sure. He was also a physician, and he was a Christian. Dr. Wang Bingzhang is certainly a political oppositionist, he is a physician, and he is a Christian.

I would like to suggest that the Congress devote attention to the way in which political opposition in China, in many ways, is being modulated by those in the community who are Christian who understand, as Mr. Nelson Mandela did in South Africa, that when you have political change, which these oppositionists are aiming for you need to have a climate of mercy and forgiveness so that you do not have just a repetition of the violent revolution that brought the previous regime into power.

I would encourage the U.S. Government to raise issues of suppression of religious captives on the grounds of denial of freedom of conscience at every opportunity where American officials are in contact with their counterparts in China.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Aikman appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Thank you very much.

Our final witness is Dr. Jacqueline M. Armijo-Hussein.

STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE M. ARMIJO-HUSSEIN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, STANFORD UNIVERSITY, PALO ALTO, CA

Ms. ARMIJO-HUSSEIN. I would like to thank the Commission for inviting me to share my knowledge of the history and contemporary situation of the Muslim peoples of China.

This knowledge is based on more than 20 years of research on this highly important, but neglected, topic, and more than 7 years lived in China.

With the Muslim population conservatively estimated at 20 million, China today has a larger Muslim population than most Arab countries. Yet, little is known about this community.

Of China's 55 officially recognized minority peoples, 10 are primarily Muslim. The largest group, the Hui, are spread throughout the entire country, while the other nine live primarily in the northwest region.

I will begin by concentrating on the Hui, and then address the situation of the Uighurs in Xinjiang.

Shortly after the advent of Islam in the seventh century, there were Muslims in China, for sea trade networks between China and Southwest Asia had existed for centuries. Small communities of Muslim traders and merchants were established in port cities along China's southeast coast.

This very early interest in China as a designation for Muslim travelers is reflected in the famous hadith of the Prophet Muham-

mad, "Utlub al-'ilm wa law fi Sin," which means, "seek knowledge, even unto China."

Although Muslim communities were established in China as early as the 7th century, it was not until the 13th century during the Yuan dynasty that tens of thousands of Muslims from Central and Western Asia settled in China. Most of the Hui population today are descendants of these early settlers.

Despite centuries of relative isolation from the rest of the Islamic world, the Muslims in most regions of China have managed to sustain a continuous knowledge of the Islamic sciences, Arabic, and Persian.

Given extended periods of persecution, combined with periods of intense government efforts to legislate adoption of Chinese cultural practices and norms, that Islam should have survived, let alone flourished, is an extraordinary historical phenomenon.

Although some scholars have attributed the survival of Muslim communities in China to their ability to adopt Chinese cultural traditions, when asked themselves, Chinese Muslims usually attribute their survival to their strong faith and God's protection.

I am now going to skip the history, which, as an historian, is painful. [Laughter.]

During the Communist rise to power in the 1940s, many Muslims agreed to support them in exchange for guarantees of religious freedom.

Although in the early years of the PRC these promises were respected, during subsequent political campaigns culminating in the cultural revolution, the Muslims of China found their religion outlawed, their religious leaders persecuted, imprisoned, and even killed, and their mosques defiled, if not destroyed.

In the years immediately following the Cultural Revolution, the Muslims of China lost no time in rebuilding their devastated communities. Throughout China, Muslims began slowly to restore their religious institutions and revive their religious activities.

Their first priority was to rebuild their damaged mosques, thereby allowing communities to create a space in which they could once again pray together, but also so that mosques could reassert their roles as centers of Islamic learning.

Over the next two decades, mosques throughout most of the country organized classes for not only girls and boys and young adults, but also for older men and women who had not had the opportunity to study their religion.

Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing into the 1990s, Islamic colleges have been established throughout most of China, except Xinjiang. Within China, when asked how to explain the recent resurgence in Islamic education, community leaders cite two main reasons: a desire to rebuild that which was taken from them, and the hope that a strong religious faith would help protect Muslim communities from the myriad of social problems presently besetting China in this day and age of rapid economic development.

Chinese Muslims studying overseas reiterate the need to equip themselves and their communities for their future in a state which seems to be ideologically adrift.

After many years of living in China and interviewing religious leaders and students, I am convinced that these studies have an overwhelmingly positive influence on Chinese society.

Older Muslims are finally able to study their religious traditions and young people are able to learn the guiding moral traditions of Islam, including a respect for the state and its laws.

As both of my daughters attended the public Hui preschool in Kunming for several years, I can attest to the extraordinary degree to which the teachers promoted civic responsibility and community values, and their American teachers here have actually noticed that in them.

Moreover, Muslim religious leaders have been able to assist in the national government's efforts to stem the increasing number of rural households who are sacrificing their children's education, particularly their daughters, as recent economic reforms have resulted in school fees that are crippling families' incomes.

Imams have worked together with the All-China Women's Federation to remind peasants in rural areas of their religious obligation within Islam to educate all their children.

Women have played a very active role in the revival of Islamic education, both as students and as teachers. The women are well aware of the importance of educating girls, for as one of them said to me, "educate a man, educate an individual; educate a woman, educate a nation."

The Muslims' emphasis on education, both secular and religious, is not a surprise. As other minority groups who have survived the vicissitudes of state persecution over time, they have learned the one thing that cannot be taken away from them is their education.

At present, the government still maintains a very strict control on all aspects of public religious practice and education throughout China. The government controls the faculty, students, and curriculum of Islamic schools, and controls the appointment of imams in mosques, and decides which ones will be allowed to lead the Friday prayers.

I will now turn to the condition specifically of the Muslims in Xinjiang. Although Muslims throughout China face a variety of challenges and are subject to a wide range of discriminatory actions, the situation for the indigenous peoples of Xinjiang is unprecedented in its severity, to my mind surpassing even the repressive policies facing Tibetans.

Muslims who hold official positions, including faculty at the universities, are forbidden to carry out any religious activity in public. They are not allowed to attend mosques, fast during Ramadan, or in any other way respect their religious traditions in public. There are signs on mosques refusing entry to anyone under 18 years of age. Islamic education outside the one officially controlled school is forbidden.

The state has conflated the practice of Islam with separatist activity and overreacted, and is prohibiting almost all forms of Islamic education and public religious practice.

Once the overwhelming majority in Xinjiang, Uighurs and other Muslim peoples will soon be outnumbered by the Han Chinese immigrants. And although the government is committed to spending millions of dollars on development projects there, the primary bene-

ficiaries in virtually every major industrial and development project have been the immigrant Han Chinese population, and often with tremendous negative environmental impact on the region.

Some policies which I would hope that our government would encourage within China are:

All Muslims should have the freedom to practice their religion, and all parents should have the freedom to bring their children with them to the mosque.

All Muslims should have the freedom to take part in Islamic studies classes and pursue a deeper understanding of their religion.

All schools in predominantly minority areas should be allowed to teach their cultural traditions and history.

The current quota of only 2,000 people being allowed to make the annual pilgrimage to Mecca should be increased to at least 20,000, which is the normal amount allowed using the Saudi calculation of one hajj visa for every 10,000 Muslims in a given country.

The government is making it increasingly difficult for Muslims to receive a passport, thereby limiting their ability to take part in hajj or study overseas.

Over the past decade, throughout China mosques and Muslim neighborhoods dating back centuries have been destroyed as a result of real estate and public development projects. Efforts should be made, ideally through international organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], to protect Muslim neighborhoods and preserve historic mosques as national heritage sites. These communal spaces are of fundamental importance to the survival of these communities.

I think the United States should also support the establishment of local non-political NGOs by indigenous peoples to promote economic, educational, and public health developments.

In conclusion, at the present time Muslims in China continue to hope and pray that the U.S. Government will use its influence to persuade the Chinese state to uphold its moral and international obligations to allow for the freedom of religion and the survival of indigenous cultures.

Recent actions by the United States, including the decision to acquiesce to Beijing's labeling a small, obscure Uighur group, the ETIM, as a "terrorist organization," has done much to undermine Chinese Muslims' faith in the United States as a protector of basic human rights.

And although there are numerous reports made by the Chinese state and often repeated in the Western press that radical separatism is a common desire in Xinjiang, in fact, in dozens of conversations, spanning 20 years now, I have never heard a Uighur call for violent attacks on the Chinese state.

They have spoken with increasing despair that they simply be allowed to practice their religion, continue to use their language in their studies, and uphold their traditional cultural practices as citizens of China.

Our government should encourage the Chinese state to uphold the basic rights of the Muslims in China. Current repressive tactics not only undermine the Muslims' right to pass on their religious

and moral values and cultural practices to their children, they also undermine the Muslims' trust in the Chinese state.

In conclusion, although maintaining their religious beliefs and practices over the centuries has been a continual challenge, Muslims in China have always been confident of their identities as both Muslims and Chinese.

Although many have presumed that these identities were somehow inherently antagonistic, the survival of Islam in China for over a millennium belies these assumptions. Islamic and Chinese values have both proven to be sufficiently complementary and dynamic to allow for the flourishing of Islam in China, and God willing, will continue to do so.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Armijo-Hussein appears in the appendix.]

Chairman LEACH. Thank you very much for that thoughtful testimony.

Let me be very clear that we all know that there are problems of U.S. policy in the Muslim world, but the U.S. Congress has to be unequivocal in supporting the religious rights of Muslims in this country, and anywhere else. I appreciate very much your testimony in that regard.

Let me first, at the risk of some presumption, turn to the Catholic faith for a second, just an aspect of my time in the U.S. Congress, as a reflection of one policy of the Holy See.

At one time I served with two Members of the U.S. Congress who were Catholic priests, but the Pope made a decision that it was inappropriate for a member of the Catholic clergy to be an elected Member of the Congress or in politics.

I stress this, because that is part of the tradition of the separation of church and state in historical ways that really reflected a very modern decision. I think it is very impressive, and I think that is something that should be noted by the church in a Chinese context.

Second, I am reminded of listening to a lecture by a noted Catholic theological historian, Garry Wills. I hope that is a fair description of his field of study. But he commented on the life of St. Ambrose, who was an early figure in the church. St. Ambrose was considered the most competent individual in a given area of Italy and was the equivalent of a Governor. A week after accepting the Catholic faith, he was named a bishop.

But I raise this to suggest that the issue is not so much going from the church to government. Here is an example of going from the government to the church. Granted, it was the early church, and it was a somewhat different phenomenon.

No one is suggesting that Jiang Zemin should become a bishop of the faith. But it is still an interesting phenomenon in terms of separation of church and state.

Dr. Fewsmith, I want to ask you, because you made a quick reference, and quick because you had such limited time, to certain aspects of Chinese history and where religion and social disorder had become synonymous.

As a former student of Chinese affairs, I found very remarkable the issue of the Taiping Rebellion in 1851 to 1864, where someone

who claimed to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ, possibly an epileptic, in one of the least—in terms of recent times—historically understood events, because there is staggeringly little history that is available to study, but apparently the largest civil war in world history occurred.

Is this kind of event influencing the Chinese leadership today or is this one of those anecdotal circumstances that people do not refer to? For being a seminal event, a larger civil war than the American civil war, which has had a century and a half influence in the United States, one has the sense that I have never heard a Chinese leader speak to it. I have never heard Chinese commentary about the Taiping Rebellion. Is this an important event or is it an incidental event, in your view?

Mr. FEWSMITH. I think it is an enormously important event. There is a real irony here, though, that the Chinese Communists used to see themselves as the inheritors of the Taiping Rebellion. This was the rebellion that was overthrowing so-called feudalism, if you will excuse the misuse of the word.

Chairman LEACH. Yes.

Mr. FEWSMITH. And what they lacked, of course, was the scientific knowledge of Marxism, which is also problematic. But in any case, they used to see themselves as very much the inheritors of that tradition.

Now, when they look at phenomenon like the Falun Gong, they see that same dynamic. They know what happens. They were the leaders of it. They tapped into the same sorts of social roots.

So, yes, when they suppress movements such as the Falun Gong, they see the Taiping Rebellion, they see the Yellow Turban rebellion. I am afraid these things are imprinted very deeply on the political culture of China.

Chairman LEACH. Let me turn to the Muslim situation in China. Are there similarities in attitudes toward the Muslims to the Tibetans, and are there dissimilarities?

Ms. ARMIJO-HUSSEIN. I think, to my mind, the major similarity is the extent to which the government feels so threatened by the idea that here is an area with historically a very specific cultural group living there that may want some sort of separate state.

In that sense, it is the extreme reaction that the state has to the idea of these groups being autonomous. Technically, they are given a fair amount of autonomy, but in reality they have minimal actual autonomy.

For example, oftentimes with an important political appointment, a leadership position, they will allow that position to go to, let us say, a Uighur, or a Kazakh in Xinjiang or Tibet.

But oftentimes the Party secretary position that is associated with the official position, goes to a Han Chinese. And as the Party secretary positions are so powerful, the result is that actual power is still controlled by the Han Chinese. Consequently, in most minority regions, including Tibet and Xinjiang, the indigenous peoples have not been able to assert any real autonomy or control.

So the main similarity, I think, has to do with a fear on the part of the state that here is this very large indigenous group that claims an identity to a specific region. For example, with the Hui, it is very difficult, because the Hui are all over China.

Chairman LEACH. In the Muslim areas, are there any directed immigration flows from other parts of China to weaken numerically or percentage wise the Muslim population?

Ms. ARMIJO-HUSSEIN. No. Historically, there has been movement of Muslims to different regions of China, but at this present time, none. For example, during massacres in the past people have fled from northwest China to southwest China.

But then when there were massacres in southwest China, Muslims fled either to Burma, Thailand, or other areas of China. But recently there has been no mass movement of Muslims in any particular direction.

Chairman LEACH. Sir, you are the expert on the Protestant Church. Numerically, how strong is it in China?

Mr. AIKMAN. I would estimate about 70 million.

Chairman LEACH. That many? How do you break it down?

Mr. AIKMAN. About 20 million who are attending Three Self Patriotic churches, and about 50 million who attend essentially unregistered house churches, private Christian groups.

Chairman LEACH. In Russia, there was a phenomenon in the late 1960s through early to late 1980s in which the Baptist Church—they were called the Baptisti—came to play a large churchly growth role. It was the modern church in contrast with the Russian Orthodox Church.

There was a sociological phenomenon for a period of time, for a decade or two, that if one were a member of the church in any institution of the economy and were dealing with another member of the church, one had an automatic kind of trust level that did not exist within the Communist Party. This was a kind of bonding circumstance of trust.

Is there such a phenomenon in China today?

Mr. AIKMAN. Well, it is much harder for a Chinese in an official position to identify himself as a Christian to somebody else in the same way that a Baptist did, for example, in the former Soviet Union. And, of course, the Pentecostals played a similar role.

Baptists were prized in the Soviet Army as drivers because they did not drink, and therefore they did not get drunk. Generals, on the whole, preferred to be driven by sober drivers rather than drunken drivers.

I think what you do see is a sort of networking that is developing in China among prominent cultural and academic figures who are Christian. Several Chinese universities have faculty members who are professing Christians and are known as Christians by fellow faculty members.

Peking University has a significant group of graduate students, professors, and undergraduates who are known to be Christian. People's University conducted a poll of its students and came up with a figure that 3.6 percent of the student population actually called themselves Christian, but that about 60 percent of the student population were quite interested in Christianity.

Again, at People's University, several of the faculty members were known to be Christian and were encouraging their students to take part in Christian activities.

Chairman LEACH. Well, I know in the Soviet environment during this period of some transition that churches had a defined member-

ship. But the assumption was, when you talked to the leadership, that the fellow traveler/religious person would increase the numbers four- or five-fold. Is that a phenomenon in China?

Mr. AIKMAN. Are you asking if people exaggerate the numbers of believers?

Chairman LEACH. No, this was another phenomenon. No exaggeration that I am implying one way or another. But if you had a membership of a church that worshiped on Sunday of, let us say, 1,000, it was the belief of the church leadership that they really had four to five times that figure that identified very much with the church, although they might not come to the service.

Mr. AIKMAN. Right. I would not say that is quite analogous to the Soviet situation, because if you are interested in Christianity you can, in China, legally go to a Three Self Patriotic Protestant Church or a Catholic Patriotic Association Church. Unless you are observed by your office supervisor, you are not likely to come to any harm, or unless you are a Communist Party member and are recognized by somebody else there.

I think what is true, is that the interest in Christianity at a cultural level is at a very high level. You find large numbers of people in China who call themselves cultural Christians.

These are academics who are interested initially in the role that Christianity played in the formation of the success of Western culture and civilization, and wonder if there are any potential analogies for China.

There are others who are simply attracted by some aspects of Christianized culture, whether it is the novels of Dostoyevsky or Handel's "Messiah." Handel's "Messiah" was performed for the first time in Chinese in the year 2001 in the center of Beijing with a huge audience of enthusiastic people. Even the China Daily reported on this event and interviewed the conductor, who happens to be a Christian and was quite open about his faith.

Chairman LEACH. Other than the ties that are kind of Russian-Chinese-American of emigrés from Russia that came through Shanghai and Hong Kong, such as former Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal, how large is the Jewish faith in China?

Mr. AIKMAN. Well, the last story I ever did when I was a reporter based in China was about the Jewish community in Kaifeng. The indigenous Chinese Jewish community is pretty small and was, at least until the reforms started in 1978, 1979, somewhat unsure of itself, but willing within reason to identify itself.

I would say, in terms of those who would identify themselves as Jews but are of Han Chinese ethnic origin, it probably numbers a few thousand. There are still a number of Jews of Russian background living in places like Harbin, and probably in Xinjiang, but a dwindling number. In Shanghai, I think there are a number of Jews.

Chairman LEACH. Well, thank you all very much. I am particularly impressed with the expertise on the Muslim population in China. That is, I think, of great import to the Commission.

Thank you all very much.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:45 p.m. the hearing was concluded.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANDALL G. SCHRIVER

JULY 24, 2003

Chairman Leach, Chairman Hagel, and other Members of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China:

Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the current State of religious freedom in China and the prospects for improvements in the situation under China's new leadership. I would also like to discuss the many efforts the Administration has taken to push for greater respect for religious freedom in China. Finally, I look forward to hearing from other speakers their views on options open to the United States to prompt the development of new policies toward religion in China.

As you know, President Bush is deeply and personally concerned over the state of religious freedom in China, and he has raised his concerns in his meetings with Chinese leaders and in public remarks in China. Addressing Chinese students at Beijing's Qinghua University in February 2002, the President said, "Freedom of religion is not something to be feared, it's to be welcomed, because faith gives us a moral core and teaches us to hold ourselves to high standards, to love and to serve others, and to live responsible lives." Speaking to the strong interest we have over the situation in China, the President added, "My prayer is that all persecution will end, so that all in China are free to gather and worship as they wish."

These concerns are shared by all of us in the Department of State, and in our mission in China. Promoting respect for religious freedom is one of our top foreign policy goals. So I welcome today's hearing on this important topic, and look forward to continuing the dialogue in the future.

I. CURRENT CONDITIONS

Let me start by describing our assessment of current conditions in China. As you know, the Secretary of State has designated China one of six "countries of particular concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act. The other five are North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Burma, and Sudan. We made this designation because we found that the Government of China "is engaged in or tolerates particularly severe violations of religious freedom" in a manner that is "egregious, ongoing and systematic."

During the last 12 months, the government's respect for freedom of religion and freedom of conscience remained poor overall, especially for many unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong. Thousands of believers—Catholics, Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists, Muslims, or members of the Falun Gong and other groups—remain in prison for seeking to exercise their religious or spiritual views. Some have been tortured; many have been abused.

But at the same time, we have seen some positive developments that may suggest a possibility of increasing tolerance for religious activity. China has seen progress since the late 1960s, when religious activity was entirely proscribed. The growing number of believers in China is a testament to the hunger of Chinese people for religious faith. It is also a testament to the greater space given to some religious organizations by the government. While we seek to highlight and encourage the positive trends that we see, this does not mean that the overall situation is good. It clearly is not, and we remain very disturbed at the harassment and serious mistreatment of many religious believers in China, as well as by the Chinese Government's continued insistence on controlling religious activity.

Let me discuss a few specific areas of concern to illustrate this complex picture.

A. Registration requirements

The government requires all religious groups to register with state-sanctioned religious organizations, which monitor and supervise religious activities. Many believers feel they would have to make compromises in what they believe or how they worship in order to register and have, therefore, chosen not to register. Officials have continued a selective crackdown on unregistered or "underground" churches, temples, and mosques. Members of some unregistered religious groups, including Protestants and Catholics, are subjected to restrictions, including intimidation, harassment, and detention. However, the degree of restrictions varies significantly from region to region. In some localities in southeastern China, some "underground" churches have been allowed to operate without registering—though often only after their leader has been vetted by officials. While we have urged the government to relax or eliminate the registration requirements and to allow any religious or spir-

itual group to practice their faith freely, any increase in the number of unregistered groups allowed to operate is a positive intermediate step.

B. Minors

Religious education for young people is necessary to ensure the vibrancy and continuity in a religious community; it is crucial that families be allowed to transmit their faith and values to their children, and that ethnic minority communities such as Tibetans and Uyghurs be allowed to transmit core elements of their culture. Therefore, prohibitions on minors practicing religion or receiving religious education have been a long-standing concern for us. In response to our inquiries, senior government officials claim that China has no restrictions against minors engaging in religious activity. Nonetheless, observers have witnessed local officials in some areas preventing children from attending worship services, and some places of worship—especially mosques in western China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region—have signs prohibiting persons younger than 18 from entering. At the U.S.-China human rights dialogue session held in Beijing last December, senior Chinese Government officials told us they would consider taking steps to clarify state policy on minors and religion, but this has not yet occurred.

C. Xinjiang

I just mentioned Xinjiang. Let me discuss in somewhat more detail additional problems of deep concern. Under the mantle of "counter terrorism," Chinese officials have ramped up a brutal crackdown against ethnic Uyghurs, a Muslim minority group. Uyghurs enjoyed two brief periods of independent statehood during the last century. Convinced that Uyghurs again seek independence, Beijing pursues a policy of such tight control that it may be stoking the very separatist sentiment and instability it fears. In a misguided effort to curb separatism, officials have closed some mosques, forbidden minors from engaging in religious activities, and taken other steps to limit the practice of Islam. I say this effort is misguided because we do not see a link between nationalist aspirations of some Uyghur groups and Islam per se.

The way to deal with dissatisfaction among minority peoples is not through crackdowns, but through allowing Uyghurs and others the high degree of autonomy guaranteed them under Chinese law. For the Uyghurs, as for Tibetans and other minority groups, this means having a greater voice in decisions affecting their lives—for example, greater respect for their rights to decide when, where and how to worship. We urge Chinese officials to recognize what President Bush has repeatedly stated: that religious faith is a source of strength for any community, and that China has nothing to fear from the free and unhindered practice of religion, whether Islam in Xinjiang, Buddhism in Tibet, or Christianity throughout China.

D. Tibet

The situation in Tibetan regions is a mixed picture. In many areas, Tibetan Buddhist lay practitioners are able to worship relatively freely and engage in religious celebrations, but Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns continued to face restrictions on their ability to pursue a religious education. A number of monks in Sichuan Province were arrested in connection with a series of bombings, and one former monk was quickly put to death despite promises from the Chinese that he would be allowed to appeal his case and that the Supreme Court would review the sentence. China has not conducted open trials in any of these cases, and we have seen no evidence to suggest that Tenzing Delek Rinpoche, a senior religious figure who remains in jail, was in any way connected to the bombings. Elsewhere in Sichuan, a dozen or more Tibetans were arrested in conjunction with a public "long life" ceremony for the Dalai Lama. We fail to see why such activity merits arrest and imprisonment, and we call on China to follow its own laws on freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

E. Falun Gong

An issue well known to all of us is China's continued harsh repression of groups that it has determined to be "cults," including the Falun Gong. Various sources report that thousands of Falun Gong adherents have been arrested, detained, and imprisoned, and that several hundred or more Falun Gong adherents have died in detention since 1999. I am sad to report that the repression of the Falun Gong continues, and continues to be an issue of great concern internationally and in Washington. We have raised these issues with the Chinese repeatedly, and will continue to do so.

F. South China Church

Another group China deems to be a cult, the South China Church, has seen its members arrested in large numbers. Credible reports from four young women indi-

cate that security forces tortured them to obtain "evidence" that was then used against the group's founder. We have raised this case in great detail with the Chinese and remain deeply concerned over reports of continuing abuse of other followers still in detention.

G. Relations with the Vatican

China still refuses to acknowledge the Vatican as the supreme authority for Chinese Catholics in many matters of faith, insists on controlling the appointments of Catholic clergy, and only recognizes the government-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). Many Chinese Catholics who remain loyal to the Pope are forced to conduct their religious activities surreptitiously or risk arrest. Dozens of "underground" clergy remain in detention or under house arrest, including Bishop Su Zhimin, a senior bishop who has been missing since 1997. We continue to urge the Chinese Government to release these detainees, and to resume its dialogue with the Vatican, in hopes that China will acknowledge Rome's unique role in the spiritual lives of all Catholics around the world, including in China.

H. North Koreans in China

We are aware that many North Koreans cross into China fleeing famine and persecution, and others come seeking work. South Korean missionaries are active along China's border with North Korea, and the number of Chinese-Korean and North Korean residents of China who are Christian is growing. North Koreans who practice Christianity face severe risks if they are repatriated, and we are concerned about reports that China continues to forcibly repatriate North Koreans. We have urged China to treat those who flee from North Korea in a humanitarian way. This Administration has also worked to increase basic humanitarian aid being provided to this vulnerable population and to secure PRC permission for individual North Koreans to depart China for South Korea, and we have been funding various organizations that work quietly in northeastern China providing North Koreans there with food, medicines, and shelter.

I. Numbers of believers

Despite all the problems I just mentioned, officials, religious professionals, and persons who attend services at both officially sanctioned and underground places of worship all report that the numbers of believers in China continues to grow, and credible reports place the number of worshipers in the tens of millions. An increasing number of these religious adherents also report they are able to practice their faith in officially registered places of worship and to maintain contacts with those who share their beliefs in other parts of the world without interference from the authorities. These are hopeful signs.

J. Community activities

In some localities, officials worked closely with Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant groups building schools, medical facilities, and retirement centers for poor communities. In cases involving Catholics and Protestants, local officials frequently encouraged Western religious groups to work in their communities to provide much-needed social services, provided that the groups did not proselytize openly. President Bush made clear in his talks with Chinese leaders that religion can act as a stabilizing force in any society, and we see that this is true in the Chinese context.

II. POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP

At this point, let me turn to another important question: the potential for change under China's new leadership. The changeover in leadership of the Communist Party took place last November, and the new government lineup emerged in mid-March. Hu Jintao has taken over the top slots in both party and government, and most other senior portfolios also switched hands. But while we have a clear picture of who is sitting where, we have not yet seen a clear sign that the new leadership plans to grant significant new freedoms to religious believers, or even to work with the international community on concerns over religious freedom, or concerns over human rights more generally.

At last December's human rights dialogue, China committed to cooperate with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, as well as with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Chinese leaders promised that all three groups would soon be visiting China, but to date no such visits have been scheduled. Some of this can be attributed to the SARS outbreak, and we acknowledge that the epidemic created obstacles to many types of exchanges. However, the worst of the outbreak is behind us, and we now expect

China to move forward quickly on its commitments to work with these international bodies.

In addition, Chinese leaders agreed last December to invite the Congressionally chartered U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to visit China. I believe that Commissioner Felice Gaer, who will speak later, plans to go on the trip. We understand that this trip is scheduled to take place next month. We look forward to hearing the Commission's findings upon their return.

China invited the elder brother of the Dalai Lama to visit last summer, and then invited emissaries of the Dalai Lama to visit last September. Another visit by the Dalai Lama's emissaries took place again 2 months ago, which suggests the new leadership may be willing to keep the dialogue going. We have long pressed for resumption of dialogue between the Government of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives, so we are encouraged that the exchanges continue to take place. We urge that the two sides continue to work toward a negotiated settlement on issues of mutual concern.

As for the broader question on the willingness of Chinese leaders to take steps to address restrictions on religious activity in China, I can only say that we are waiting for progress in a number of key areas. Moments ago, I discussed the problems surrounding the registration requirements, and we have repeatedly urged China to liberalize—or drop altogether—these requirements, and to stop arresting those who do not register. We continue to make this demand, and to watch for a clear policy shift in this area. In addition, Chinese officials repeatedly told us that minors are free to participate in religious activity anywhere in China—to participate in programs of religious training, and to enter places of worship. While no policy statement has emerged from Beijing, we expect China to honor its pledge to address this issue.

So whether or not the Chinese people will enjoy greater freedom to practice and express their faith under the new leadership remains an open question. We have seen a few positive developments, but these take place in an environment where respect for religious freedom remains poor overall. We call again on Chinese leaders to honor the commitments they made to the United States last December, and to address the concerns of the international community in a more systemic, comprehensive manner.

III. USG ACTIONS

Finally, let me discuss actions we have taken to increase respect for human rights generally, and religious freedom in particular. As I mentioned at the start, the Administration has made this an extremely high priority. The U.S. Government raises religious freedom issues with Chinese leaders on a regular, frequent basis, and at all levels. President Bush discussed religious freedom in his meetings with former President Jiang Zemin. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom John Hanford has traveled twice to China—the only country he has returned to so far—and meets regularly with Chinese officials in Washington. Other senior officials, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Lorne Craner, and U.S. Ambassador to China Clark Randt have all repeatedly called on China to halt the abusive treatment of religious adherents and to respect religious freedom. Ambassador Randt also raises our concerns in almost all of his public speeches, on both sides of the Pacific. The Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. Consulates General in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenyang all make concerted efforts to encourage religious freedom, repeatedly urging Chinese officials to respect citizens' rights to religious freedom and release those detained for the practice of their faith.

The issue of religious freedom also was raised during the official U.S.-China human rights dialogue in December, which was conducted by both Assistant Secretary Craner and Ambassador Hanford. Part of the U.S. delegation, led by the Assistant Secretary, traveled to Xinjiang to meet with Muslim clerics and government officials and to express concern that authorities were using the war on terrorism as an excuse to persecute Uyghur Muslims. Another part of the delegation, headed by Ambassador Hanford, engaged in a roundtable discussion on religion and held several in-depth meetings on religion with key policymakers.

These diplomatic efforts have led to some progress. Several religious prisoners were released during the last 12 months, including a number of Tibetan nuns. The most prominent is Ngawang Sangdrol. She was released last October, and the new leadership permitted her to leave China and travel to the United States in late March. Ngawang Sangdrol and the other nuns detained with her should never have been arrested in the first place; their "crimes" were to demonstrate for greater freedom

for Tibet and for Tibetan Buddhists. The physical abuse they suffered in prison in Lhasa is shocking and totally unacceptable. Nonetheless, their releases are significant, and we again call for China to release all persons detained for the nonviolent expression of their religious views.

Let me close by saying again that the situation of religious freedom, as with many things in China, is a decidedly mixed picture. China's new leadership has not yet made clear what its policy toward religious freedom in particular, and human rights in general, will be. China remains a country of particular concern, and yet we have seen a few hopeful signs. We have no illusions about China's history of hostility to religion—and in particular to religious groups that refuse to take direction from the State.

Nevertheless, we will continue to call for China to make the right choices here, and to understand clearly the President's message that China has nothing to fear from the unfettered worship of people of faith. We will also continue to make clear to our interlocutors that this is an issue that will not go away for us, that concerns over human rights and religious freedom will remain an obstacle to closer ties between China and the United States, and between China and the rest of the world.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FELICE D. GAER

JULY 24, 2003

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Commission on religious freedom conditions in China. The members of the Commission are to be commended for holding this important hearing. I would like to submit this statement for the Commission's record.

Since its establishment, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has spoken out about the widespread and serious abuses of the right to freedom of religion and belief in China. It has provided numerous policy recommendations regarding the steps that the U.S. Government should take to encourage the protection of religious freedom in China.

The topics discussed here today are particularly timely. In less than two weeks, the USCIRF will be traveling to China for the first time. We plan to visit Tibet as well as other parts of China. On our return, we look forward to reporting our findings to the Congress.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The face of China's political leadership has undergone major changes in the past year. The transition from the leadership of Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao has gone smoothly, but it remains unclear to many observers whether the change in power will impact the policies of the Communist Party. If the past is any guide, we can expect the party to pursue a policy of gradual economic liberalization coupled with severe restrictions on political dissent and religious freedom.

In the area of human rights, we know that severe restrictions on religious and political liberties are authorized at the highest levels of the Communist Party. Many of China's new leaders, including Hu Jintao himself, have been intimately involved in forming and implementing the government's repressive policies on religion and ethnic minorities. This fact, along with the fact that many of Jiang Zemin's allies continue to occupy key positions overseeing religious affairs and legal reform, signals that the prospect is poor for immediate improvement in China's record on religious freedom. Indeed, we fear it might even deteriorate.

However, the recent transition offers us a chance to reassess the U.S. Government's approach toward protecting and promoting religious freedom in China.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CONDITIONS

Today, Chinese Government officials continue to claim the right to control, monitor, and restrain religious practice, purportedly to protect public safety, order, health, and so forth. However, the government's actions to restrict religious belief and practice go far beyond what is necessary to legitimately protect those interests; in other words, far beyond what is permissible under international law. While China's Constitution provides its citizens with the "freedom of religious belief," it does not protect the right to manifest religious beliefs, highlighting the importance for China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which contains explicit provisions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and which it signed in 1998.

The crackdowns against religious believers are believed to be sanctioned at the highest levels of government. Indeed, Chinese laws, policies, and practices severely

restrict religious activities, including contact with foreign religious organizations, the training and appointment of spiritual leaders, and religious education for children in accordance with the convictions of their parents. As a result of government policies and practices, persons continue to be confined, tortured, imprisoned, and subject to other forms of ill treatment on account of their religion or belief. Prominent religious leaders such as the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and Catholic Bishop Su Zhimin remain detained on questionable charges for one and 6 years, respectively. A young boy, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, "disappeared" in 1995 after he was recognized by the Dalai Lama as the 11th Panchen Lama—the second highest-ranking leader in Tibetan Buddhism. The Chinese Government continues to insist that it does not have knowledge of Bishop Su's whereabouts. The government also continues to deny foreign diplomats and human rights monitors, including UN representatives, access to the boy. Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was reportedly denied access to legal representatives. In July 2003, local officials reportedly raided a house church in Zhejiang province, arresting at least six leaders, including the 80-year-old founder of the church, Shao Cheng Shen.

The Chinese Government has also reserved for itself the right to determine the legality of religious activities and the legitimacy of religious leaders. In 1999, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted a resolution, which has the force of law, to ban all "heretical cult organizations." Judicial explanations issued by the Supreme People's Court defined "cult organizations" as "illegal organizations that are set up using religions, qigong, other things as a camouflage . . . confuse, poison, and deceive people . . . and endanger the society by fabricating and spreading superstitious heresies." Article 300 of the Criminal Law as amended in 1997 provided punishments for those "organiz[ing] and utiliz[ing] superstitious sects, secret societies, and evil religious organizations" to commit crimes. Under these laws, groups like the Falun Gong and several unregistered Christian churches that have been designated as "cults" by the government have suffered tremendously.

According to Falun Gong practitioners, as many as 100,000 have been sent to labor camps without trial. They claim that as many as 700 may have died as a result of police brutality either while in prison or after their release. Protestant church leaders have been arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison sentences for engaging in "cultic" activities. In December 2001, for the first time since the adoption of the 1999 "evil cult" law, a Protestant pastor, Pastor Gong Shengliang, was sentenced to death for founding an "evil cult" and questionable criminal charges of rape. The terms off the sentence were only reduced after U.S. intervention at the highest level. In July 2002, three priests affiliated with the underground Catholic Church were reportedly sentenced to 3 years in a labor camp after having been convicted of practicing "cult" activities.

In many parts of China, even when religious organizations wish to register with the government, they face resistance and oppression from local officials. For example, in June 2003, 12 members of a house church in Yunnan province were reportedly arrested for engaging in "feudalistic superstition" after they officially sought registration with the government with the local government. Eight members of the church are reportedly being detained indefinitely.

The Chinese Government has ratified and reported on compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, the government continues to violate the human rights, including religious freedom, of Chinese women. Female religious persons, including Falun Gong practitioners such as Zheng Donghui and Yang Jinxing, were reportedly stripped, beaten, and subjected to other forms of ill treatment while in detention. There continues to be concern, as enunciated by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, that government officials are engaging in violent and coercive measures, including "forced sterilizations and abortions, arbitrary detention and house demolitions," as a part of the population control policy, "particularly in rural areas and among ethnic minorities." In April 2003, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women expressed concern that the Chinese Government has continued to engage in such practices in Tibet.

In Xinjiang and Tibet, religious freedom is severely curtailed by the government, which linked religion with "separatist" or "terrorist" acts. In January 2003, Wang Lequan, Xinjiang's Communist Party Secretary and a member of the Politburo, reportedly stated the government's resolve to wipe out "religious extremists," "splittists," and "terrorists." As a result, Uighur Muslim clerics and students have reportedly been detained or arrested while "illegal religious centers" were closed. In July 2003, in an effort to draw attention to the plight of the Uighur Muslims, the USCIRF held a roundtable discussion among senior U.S. officials, experts, and NGO representatives, where, among other things, we learned about the extent of the government's tight control over religious affairs in Xinjiang, which was carried out

through the close supervision of all mosques in the region by local Communist Party officials. Meanwhile, hundreds of Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns remain in prison for voicing their allegiance to the Dalai Lama and their opposition to Chinese rule. According to the Tibet Information Network, the State Department, and the testimony of former Tibetan nuns like Ngawang Sandrol, many of them have been severely beaten and subjected to other extreme forms of punishment. Some of them have died in prison.

The USCIRF has focused considerable attention on the plight of the North Korean refugees. Through its public hearing in January 2002, investigative trips to South Korea and Japan, and regular consultation with policy experts and human rights advocates, the USCIRF has received numerous reports concerning the conditions North Korean refugees in China. The USCIRF has also testified before the Congress on this issue.

China is a party to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to that convention. Under these treaties, China has committed to not expel or return refugees to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened on account of their religion or other status. However, since 2000, Chinese officials have forcibly repatriated many of the 30,000—300,000 North Korean refugees who are now in China to escape the dire conditions in North Korea, including the denial of religious freedom in that country. Not only does the Chinese Government refuse to grant refugee status to these North Koreans, it also does not allow the UNHCR to conduct interviews to assess refugee status or to provide services to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

Three aspects have characterized recent U.S. policy to advance religious freedom and other human rights in China. First, the treatment of religious persons has been raised by President Bush and Secretary Powell directly to the senior Chinese leadership. Second, the U.S. has raised cases and sought release of those detained or imprisoned in violation of their human rights, including on account of their religion or belief. Third, the U.S. funds a multi-million dollar program to promote democracy and the rule of law.

These efforts contributed to the positive developments of 2002, particularly with respect to Tibet. In that year, six Tibetan political prisoners were released from imprisonment. The Chinese Government invited the older brother of the Dalai Lama to visit China, paving the way for a visit by the Dalai Lama's special envoy in fall 2002. Indeed, citing "significant but limited progress" in a number of areas stemming from the December 2002 human rights dialogue, the State Department announced in April 2003 that it would neither propose nor sponsor a resolution censuring China's human rights practices at the 2003 U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting.

One development cited as a reason for the State Department's decision was the Chinese Government's reported agreement to invite U.N. human rights mechanisms and special rapporteurs, including the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, to visit China without conditions. However, these have not taken place and there are reports that the conditions remain the same as in the past.

Furthermore, even as some religious and political prisoners were released, during this entire period, there has apparently not been any systemic improvement in China's protection for freedom of religion or belief. Despite the efforts of senior U.S. officials like the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom John Hanford, who has pressed the Chinese Government to agree to the establishment of an inter-agency working group of appropriate Chinese Government agencies that will serve as points of contact with the U.S. Government to address religious freedom violations, the Chinese Government has reportedly not taken any meaningful actions to bring about substantial improvements in the conditions of religious freedom in China. In fact, since the conclusion of the national religious affairs work meeting in December 2001, experts and others have said that the central government has tightened its control over religious affairs.

The State Department has recently changed its assessment of the human rights conditions in China. By the Department's own admission, China's conditions of human rights, including religious freedom, have deteriorated, citing the execution of Lobsang Dondrup, the arrests of pro-democracy activists, the forced repatriation of Tibetans in Nepal, and other human rights violations.

This continued lack of systemic changes in the religious freedom conditions in China raises questions regarding the effectiveness of the U.S. policy during a period when the U.S. has sought Chinese support in the U.N. on Iraq and to help defuse the nuclear crisis in North Korea. Any re-assessment of U.S. policy must also take

into account of past failures on the part of the U.S. Government to condition the expansion of the bilateral economic relationship and China's entry onto the international scene through the hosting of such public events as the Olympics on substantial improvements in China's religious freedom and human rights practices. In the remainder of this presentation, the USCIRF would like to offer some policy options for what the U.S. Government can do to advance protections for freedom of religion or belief in China.

First, the State Department should use the full range of policy tools available under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) to take additional actions with respect to China. The Secretary of State has designated China as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) under IRFA for its egregious violations of religious freedom. However, the Secretary has determined that pre-existing sanctions satisfied the IRFA requirements. While the reliance on pre-existing sanctions may be technically correct under the statute, it is not defensible as a matter of policy. Moreover, reliance on pre-existing sanctions provides little incentive for governments like China to reduce or end severe violations of religious freedom.

Second, the State Department should provide to the Congress its evaluation of the impact that current U.S. rule of law and democracy programs have on the promotion of religious freedom and other human rights in China. According to the recent State Department report on the U.S. efforts to promote human rights and democracy in China, the U.S. Government supports a "wide range of programs" designed to promote, among other things, "respect for freedom of religion." Yet, no information about religious freedom-specific programs was provided and there is no information in that report about the impact that rule of law and democracy programs have had on the actual advancement of religious freedom, or other human rights, in China.

Third, the U.S. Government should enhance its public diplomacy efforts, focusing serious attention on the plight of the Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists. The U.S. Government should seek expanded opportunities to speak frankly and directly to the Chinese people to express why the U.S. Government, on behalf of the American people, is concerned with violations of internationally recognized human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. President Bush and Assistant Secretary Craner have done so during their visits to China, and the USCIRF is seeking a similar opportunity during its upcoming visit.

The expansion of broadcasts by Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America are also important to this effort. In addition, the U.S. Government should support exchanges between Chinese, including Tibetans and Uighurs, and U.S. scholars, experts, representatives of religious communities and non-government organizations, and appropriate officials regarding the relationship between religion and the state, the role of religion in society, international standards relating to the right to freedom of religion and belief, and the importance and benefits of upholding human rights, including religious freedom.

Fourth, the U.S. must be consistent in our message that religious freedom will remain a priority in U.S. foreign policy and in our assessment of progress in China's human rights practices. China must know that we will continue to raise this issue until they fully comply with their international obligations. As a key component of this effort, until China significantly improves its protection of religious freedom—systemic improvements that will prevent further serious violations—the U.S. should propose and promote a resolution to censure China at the U.N. and its Commission on Human Rights. This is extremely important as the U.S. stands virtually alone in striving to focus world attention on China's specific violations of human rights.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, as China continues its political and economic transformation, the United States must consistently remind the Chinese Government that the protection of human rights, including religious freedom, is critical to strong and vibrant society and economy. The rights of the Chinese people must be protected, and the United States should be prepared to assist in this regard.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSEPH FEWSMITH

JULY 24, 2003

I have been asked to testify about political trends in contemporary China and their implications for state-society relations, including religious affairs. This is an enormously complicated topic, and this short discussion can hardly cover it adequately. All I can do is to try to pick out some trends and identify their importance for understanding contemporary Chinese society, including the place of religion.

As you know, China has undergone a major leadership transition in the past year. This is really the first political transition China has had since the revolutionary generation has left the scene. Although I believe that we have seen signs of tension within the leadership—not unexpected—so far the transition has gone well and the new leadership is moving forward on an agenda that seeks both to build on the successes of the past decade and more and to correct the excesses that have emerged.

On the one hand, in response to the very rapid growth of the private economy over the past decade, the former general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Jiang Zemin, on July 1, 2001, called for opening up the CCP to "outstanding elements" from the new social sectors that have emerged in recent years, including private entrepreneurs. This call, which was endorsed by the Sixteenth Party Congress last November, was in part a ratification of de facto changes—in fact, some 20 percent of private entrepreneurs are already CCP members (most of them joined the party first, then "jumped into the sea" of business). It was also a recognition that economic change and technical innovation are not being driven forward by the sorts of industrial workers depicted in traditional Marxist-Leninist literature and art but rather by the technically trained people being generated by Qinghua and other elite universities.

The change here that strikes me as really important is that by drawing party membership from all segments of society—not only in practice but in doctrine—the CCP is rejecting the notions of class struggle, both domestically and internationally, on which it was built. This change, it strikes me, is critical for building a more tolerant and democratic future.

On the other hand, the new leadership under general secretary Hu Jintao and premier Wen Jiabao have been emphasizing such issues as rule by law, opposition to corruption, social equality, and concern for the "masses." These emphases speak to major problems facing China in the early twenty-first century, including growing inequality, corruption, unemployment, the emergence of urban poverty, the abuse of authority, social disorder, and a general sense that the party is remote from and not concerned with the people. In response, the party has been exploring ways to increase accountability and to expand decisionmaking, at least within the party. In recent years there have been calls for "inner party democracy." There is much talk these days in party journals about setting up a system in which a standing committee of the party congress—a body that normally meets only every 5 years—would stay in session to supervise the implementation of policy. There is also much talk of institutionalizing procedures in which the whole membership of the party, not just the standing committee or top leader, would vote on major issues. There is also talk and some experimentation with trying to separate the powers of decisionmaking from implementation and supervision—in other words of creating some sort of check and balance system within the party. Finally, there have been regulations issued to expand the number of people involved in promoting party officials in an effort to break up small cliques of people and to enhance accountability. Such changes, still very nascent, reflect as realization within the CCP that Chinese society is changing—the populace is increasingly well educated and has a greater sense of its rights and accordingly demands greater accountability from its leaders and greater adherence to law.

Such changes in the party are interesting precisely because the party is the most conservative organization in China. It very much desires to stay in power and to maintain control over Chinese society. But if it is to have any chance to do so, it must change.

It must change because of the rapid expansion of the private sector, the large-scale immigration of workers from the rural agricultural areas to the cities, changes in social values, and the expansion of societal organizations.

In the 1990s there was a very rapid growth of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in China; by the latter half of that decade they numbered over 700,000. Most of these are affiliated in some fashion (and all must register) with a government office, from which they typically derive at least some of their funding. Thus, many people speak of these organizations as "government organized non-governmental organizations," or GONGOs for short.

The rapid growth of such intermediary organizations led many in the West to argue that China was developing a civil society similar to what has taken place in many parts of the world. Civil society is frequently seen as a necessary precondition of democratization.

But intermediary associations in China do not fit easily into Western categories. In the West we tend to distinguish between the state, the public, and the private spheres, seeing intermediary organizations as a distinct from the government and articulating social demands against the government. China has a very long history of intermediary associations if such phenomena as clan associations and guild associations are taken into account. Although scholars debate the role of such organizations, it seems that a clearly articulated public sphere never emerged. The idea of social organization articulating private interests against the government was certainly never accepted normatively; China's final dynasty (the Qing), for instance, had a specific legal prohibition against the formation of scholarly associations, fearing that they would become the basis for factional intrigue against the government, as they had in the late Ming dynasty.

There are at least two points here that I think are worthy of consideration. First, the notion of "private" has traditionally been understood quite differently in China than in the West. We have tended to see "private" as good; the expression of partial interests is central to our notion of pluralism. In traditional China, the term "private" (si) was generally viewed as the antithesis of "public" (gong). The government, specifically the emperor, was supposed to embody notions of "public." China has a long history of supporting remonstration against the wrong policies of the emperor but such protests always had to be coached in terms of "publicness;" articulating a private, partial interest was taken as by definition in opposition to "public." Even when China witnessed the development of chambers of commerce and other intermediary associations in the early part of the twentieth century, the issue of their representing private and partial interests was fudged. Writers generally depicted merchants as coming together to decide on the one correct policy, ignoring the inevitable differences between large and small merchants, importers and exporters, manufacturers and distributors, etc.

Second and relatedly, Chinese Governments throughout the twentieth century have either forced chambers of commerce and other voluntary associations into established hierarchical, corporatist structures or abolished them all together. The first pattern was adopted by the Nationalist government after it was established in 1928; the Communist government after 1949, and particularly after 1956, abolished most intermediary associations and those that were retained were expected to play the "transmission belt" role assigned to such organizations in Leninist systems. With the onset of the reforms, and particularly with the changes in state-society relations in the 1990s, the State has on again been adopting corporatist structures. Intermediary associations are supposed to register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs and accept State supervision. This does not mean that they are simply extensions of State power; frequently they are able to inject local interests and concerns into the policymaking process. But it does mean that the whole conception of a sharp distinction between public and private that we in the West are accustomed to and the corresponding notion that public policy is and should be derived from the push and haul of interest group politics is very foreign from the Chinese experience, both in the Communist era and before.

Religious organizations and activities are special types of intermediary associations, based as they are on the spiritual needs of their adherents, their tendency to absorb large numbers of believers, and the ability to mobilize large number of adherents around a cause. As with other forms of intermediary associations, the Chinese State has had long experience with religious organizations, much of it unhappy from the state's point of view. There is a certain irony in this in that scholars who study the origins of the Chinese State and the monarchical system note that the authority of early emperors was based on the emperor as the link between the human world and the heavens. Ancestor worship played an important role in this regard, and the emperor's family tablets established a legitimate and sacred line. In other words, monastic political authority was anchored in religious concepts.

Other families or religious organizations that challenged the central role of the emperor's family tablets were seen as a threat to the state, and dealt with accordingly. Although there were periods in Chinese history when Buddhism and Daoism occupied important places in the polity, the state ultimately asserted its authority over these religions. Thus, the Chinese State never allowed a powerful, organized clergy to develop.

The hostility of the Chinese State toward religious organization—and here I want to be very clear that what the Chinese State opposed was not the practice of religion but the emergence of powerful religious organizations that could challenge the au-

thority of the state—was rooted in painful historical experience. Repeatedly religious organization of one sort or another has been used to mobilize peasant revolts against the state, and some of these have been successful. Examples of such revolts stem from the Yellow Turban Rebellion of the Han Dynasty to the White Lotus, Taiping, and Boxer rebellions of the late 18th and 19th centuries. Such experience has left a very deep imprint on Chinese political culture.

One might say that there is both a positive and a negative side to this political culture. On the one hand, the Chinese state, particularly in its modern form, is staunchly secular. Most (but not all) intellectuals in China today reject religion. The upshot of this is that they are relentless modernizers. One does not see the religiously inspired rejections of modernity in China that one sees in some parts of the world.

On the other hand, the Chinese State has continued to see religious activities that are organized outside of State control as potential sources of social instability. As with other forms of voluntary associations, the Chinese State has tried to force religious adherents to participate in one or another of the state-organized and controlled religious associations. Many religious adherents have not been willing to accept these restrictions, and that is where one sees the suppression of religious freedom. One might add that many government modernizers see religious organizations as inimical to their goals of economic development and therefore see little wrong with their suppression.

I should add that I know of very little academic research that has been carried out on the sociology of religion in contemporary China. We know very little about who converts to what religion and for what reason. We do know that in some parts of the country, the growth of religion coexists surprisingly amicably with the state. As I stated, the Chinese State can be tolerant of religious beliefs as long as it does not challenge state authority. But in other parts of the country, religious organizations are suppressed harshly. Sometimes these different responses seem to depend on such ad hoc factors as the relations between the local party cadre and the religious leaders; in other instances, different patterns appear to reflect different socioeconomic conditions. But as I say, we know too little about this to draw strong conclusions. Serious research is needed.

The difference in attitudes about religious expression is one of the most sensitive and difficult gaps that exist between the United States and China. The United States was founded upon the idea of the free expression of religious beliefs, and we have witnessed a resurgence of religious feeling in recent years. The Chinese State has never condoned the free organization of religious communities, and the political elite remains rather hostile to religious beliefs and movements. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these attitudes are rooted not just in the authoritarian rule of the Chinese Communist Party but also in millennia-old cultural attitudes.

I am not one to argue that cultures cannot change—they do. But one cannot simply disregard them and expect that they can change over night. Indeed, I think that if one looks seriously at the magnitude of changes sweeping Chinese society over the past two and a half decades, one has to be impressed by the breath, depth, and speed of the changes. It is not just that the economy has grown, but that the organization of the economy and society have changed and new ideas and attitudes have emerged. The very rapid growth of intermediary associations is a case in point. There is a new emphasis among younger people on individualism and consumerism that shocks their elders. Attitudes change, but they do so over time and within their own context.

I think that the greatest hope for new attitudes toward intermediary associations and religious expression lies in the growth of a middle class in China. Historically China has never been a middle class society (another contrast with the United States which has always been a middle class society). It is only in the past two decades that we have seen a semblance of a middle class emerge in China. Estimating the size of this class is difficult, but a recent study in China projected it at 15 percent of the population. This is far from enough to call China a middle class society. Income distribution still tends to look more like a convex curve (with a small wealthy class at the top, almost nothing in the middle, and a very large group of people with average incomes or less) than the olive shaped pattern associated with middle class societies. Given the huge size of the Chinese population and the great disparities between the urban areas and the countryside, it will take a very long time—decades—for China to become a middle-class society. But I would guess that as that 15 percent figures grows toward, say, 25 percent over the next decade or so, one is likely to see a better social framework for social stability and hence greater tolerance toward a variety of attitudes—intellectual, social, religious, etc.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES D. LOVEJOY, JR.

JULY 24, 2003

Let me first thank the Commission for this opportunity afforded the US Catholic China Bureau to offer some brief comments on the issue of religious freedom in China today with special reference to the Catholic Church.

Since the late eighties, there has been a tremendous upsurge of activity both on the institutional and community levels in the Christian churches in China. The Catholic Church, while continuing to struggle with solutions to its own internal problems of division, caused in the main by external political pressures, has grown fourfold since 1949, even by conservative estimates.

Despite strict oversight of religious believers of all traditions—which varies in implementation from region to region, and from time to time—the statistics for the Chinese Catholic Church are indicative of the courageous efforts of Chinese Catholics to restore, renew, and develop their Church, both as an institution and as a community of Faith. A recent edition of Maryknoll Magazine, for example, featured a short article on a vibrant Catholic community at Taiyuan in Shanxi Province that had just completed a stunning new church of traditional Chinese design. Submitted with this statement as Attachment A is a statistical profile which attests to the vibrancy of the Catholic Church in China today.

Recently, the State Administration for Religious Affairs [SARA] issued three draft documents to "solicit opinions," with these ostensibly stated purposes as follows:

1. Method of Management of Catholic Dioceses in China: "formulated for the purpose of spreading the Gospel, to put into practice Christ's redemptive love and to adapt to the needs of the times and requirements of social development."
2. Rules for the Work of the Patriotic Association of Chinese Catholics: "to completely bring into play the functions of the CPA on the national and local levels, and to promote the standardization and systematization of the CPA."
3. Method of Work of the Unitary Assembly of the Patriotic Association of Chinese Catholics and of the Chinese Catholic Episcopal Conference: "formulated . . to make more complete and to intensify the Chinese Catholic independent enterprise . . . in accordance with the democratic principles of administering the church, namely, collective leadership, democratic supervision, mutual consultation and joint decision."

However, these regulations actually reflect a general tightening up and, in effect, renewed efforts to strictly enforce existing religious policy and regulations regarding registration of places of worship. Another major objective appears to be pressuring unregistered leadership and communities to join with the registered communities of Catholics in each diocese.

The 3rd document in making reference to "the Chinese Catholic independent enterprise" raises some concerns—if the term "independent" is to be interpreted as cutting the China Catholic Church off from communion with the Universal Church. If it is intended to mean an authentic autonomy vis-à-vis both external and internal (i.e., domestic) intrusion into the affairs of the Church we would applaud it as a goal.

While reconciliation and unity among Chinese Catholics and with the universal Church is a long-desired goal, when this is done by coercion or force, let alone with violence in any given situation, it is very reprehensible and unacceptable to all partners in the dialogue.

The Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN), has reported numerous instances of such use of force and coercion increasingly in the past year or two—especially selected dioceses in Hebei, Fujian, and Zhejiang Provinces. UCAN, reported the arrest on June 16, of Rev. LU Xiaozhou, a priest in Wenzhou Diocese, associated with an unregistered Catholic Church, as he was en route to visit the sick at the city hospital. He was then transferred to the custody of the local Religious Affairs Bureau. Frequently, such detentions are reported to be used to force people to sign agreements to join the Catholic Patriotic Association.

It is always difficult, to cite specific instances of repression, which occur more frequently in more remote areas in China; or even to validate reports in the secular/religious media of such instances of force, coercion or violence against those who, for legitimate reasons of conscience, find themselves unable to comply with official and religious regulation and policies. These situations are usually very volatile and ambiguous; and often, local security authorities claim another pretext for action, than strictly religious grounds; for example, violations of building codes; or unapproved contacts with certain people or groups. In this regard, China continues to deny that it persecutes religious groups as such; and stands by the "religious freedoms" guaranteed in Article 36 of its Constitution.

I wish to nuance these remarks by admitting here that USCCB does not have the resources or staff to closely monitor these developments on the ground. We defer in these matters to reputable sources like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch/Asia and so forth. We never rely on media reports which we find frequently unreliable. Second, our priority and programs are dedicated to enabling the Church in China and its leadership to restore, renew and develop as a truly authentic Local Roman Catholic Church—in full communion with the Universal Catholic Church [cf. USCCB mission statement—submitted as Attachment B].

As noted in our statement to this Committee last year, "USCCB seeks to promote full exercise of human rights and religious freedom of all religious believers in China; and takes as its special mandate the provision of services and programs to empower Chinese Catholics to be able to assume and exercise their religious rights and freedoms, as such rights of citizenship, guaranteed in the Constitution, are implemented in every sector and at every level of Chinese society."

At the CECC hearing on this issue last year, the statement submitted to this Committee by Thomas Quigley of the US Catholic Bishop's Conference highlighted major recent initiatives by the Holy See to improve relations with China, including the Ricci Symposia of 2001 at which Pope John Paul II expressed his hope that the Church would contribute toward China's social progress; and graciously offered an apology for "errors and limits of the past" in the pursuit of Christian Mission in China.

The Holy See continues to pursue its dialogue with the Chinese government in several quarters; and continues efforts for reconciliation and unity in the Church in China. For example, it is seeking to identify bishop-candidates [to succeed elderly bishops, both official/unofficial] who will be acceptable to all segments of the Catholic Church in China, and merit recognition of their rightful ecclesial role by the authorities of SARA. Hopefully, this initiative by the Catholic Church authorities may lead to deeper reconciliation; and to the removal of one of the proximate causes for these severe "crackdowns" and abrogation of the rights of believers, guaranteed by the aforementioned Constitutional provisions.

With regard to the policies and programs of the China's new leadership, it is too early to determine what direction these may take. Transition is usually a time of uncertainty and the three recent Draft documents on Church Regulations mentioned above may simply reflect an inherent tendency toward restriction during such periods of transition.

We believe therefore that options pursued by the US Government should be in context of a policy of consistency, justice and honesty in dealing with China in the political, social/religious and economic arenas. The Chinese government respects, and works best when confronted with, principled, well- articulated and consistent positions that also respect basic Chinese values and are based on commonly accepted international principles.

We also strongly urge continued support for the wide range of general academic and social exchanges that have emerged over the past 10 years. We note with some encouragement the increased interest in Christianity in academic circles and the fact that US Christian universities now sponsor programs, though secular in nature, collaborating with major Chinese universities.

Historically, China did not develop the tradition of Civil Society, let alone a democratic political ethos. Therefore, education and gradual fostering of social consciousness among the people must go first toward these noble ends. Understanding of the positive role of religion in society should increase as the general understanding of the nature of a civic society increases in China.

Modernization and globalization pose serious challenges to the faith and practice of their religious beliefs and convictions for Catholics in China. Ironically, this continued political pressure on bishops, priests, religious sisters and lay leaders in effect hinders them from properly dealing with challenges of contemporary Chinese society, as it undergoes rapid transformation in the economic and social fields. As our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II has repeatedly stated, Chinese Catholics, faithful to their Church and loyal to their nation, as patriotic citizens, can make a great contribution to strengthen the ethical and moral fiber of the Chinese Nation—so it may play its rightful role in the Family of Nations—in quest of world peace and justice for all peoples.

We are convinced that encounters between the American and Chinese people demand respect for China's culture and social mores, which are different from those of the West. In such encounters, it is always helpful to acknowledge one's own shortcomings, especially when challenging others. One should also try to avoid confrontation; and making harsh judgments that unduly simplify complex realities; and even unjustly disparage different, but equally legitimate options. As such, USCCB would urge the committee, and through it, the present administration of the USA govern-

ment, to seek to identify and encourage those leaders in the PRC who are working to bring about positive change in a manner that will preserve social stability and well-being. We should join our collaborative efforts to realize the development of a Civil Society, able to positively exploit the best of modernity for the Chinese people.

This is the approach USCCB strives to take in working with the catholic communities and their leadership in China, to assist them to prepare for a role in the New China, and indeed to engage in programs to bring it about. By way of illustration, I would refer you to the theme of our 20th National Catholic China Conference, "The Role of Religion in China's Emerging Civil Society," to be held this coming November. Information is available on our website at www.usccb.net and on the attachments submitted with this intervention.

We thank the commission and its members for this opportunity to comment on the general situation of religious freedoms in China, and in particular, the prospects for the flourishing of religion under the new leadership. We applaud its continued efforts to promote understanding of the critical issues facing the Roman Catholic Church and indeed all the religious traditions in China today.

ATTACHMENT A: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA PROFILE
ATTACHMENT B: THE US CATHOLIC CHINA BUREAU/MISSION STATEMENT

Attachment A

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CHINA

Since the early eighties, the People's Republic of China has continued to initiate contacts and respond to overtures of the international community in political, social, cultural, economic and other sectors, including the religious arena. Many segments of U.S. society are re-engaged with China and the Chinese people, as they meet the challenges of modernization in the Third Christian Millennium.

Since the late eighties, the tremendous upsurge of activity on both the institutional and community levels in the Christian churches has been an amazing and inspiring discovery for many. Since the Chinese Catholic Church was cutoff from relationships with the Universal Church for more than thirty years, accurate, reliable information was not easily available. The Catholic Church—while continuing to struggle with solutions to its own internal problems of divisions [caused by external political pressures]—has grown fourfold since 1949, even by conservative estimates. In the past 20 years, it has experienced a phenomenal interest in religious vocations to priesthood and religious life. Widespread interest in Christianity in intellectual circles is manifested by establishment of Religious Studies Departments in many major universities in China.

Despite strict oversight of religious believers of all traditions—implementation of which varies from region to region, and from time to time—the statistics for the Chinese Catholic Church for 2002 are indicative of the courageous efforts of Chinese Catholics to restore, renew, and develop their Church, both as an institution and as a community of Faith.

A Profile of the Roman Catholic Church in China

Catholics	12,000,000
Dioceses	138
Churches	5,000+
Bishops	117
Priests	2,650
Sisters	4,900
Seminaries	34
Seminarians	1,670
Novitiates	40
Sisters in Formation	1,800

[Figures are for both the registered and the unregistered Catholic communities—Tripod Dec. 2002]

In the tradition of the long missionary relationship between Chinese and American Catholics, it is important for the U.S. Church to be sensitive to these developments and seize the opportunity of this new moment in history to work together as Sister-Churches to witness and to serve the Gospel in 21st Century China.

If you would like to assist the Church in China, please contact: U.S. Catholic China Bureau, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079–2689.

Tel: 973–763–1131; Fax: 973–763–1543

E-mail: chinabur@shu.edu; Web: www.usccb.net

Attachment B

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CHINA BUREAU

MISSION STATEMENT

The U.S. Catholic China Bureau exists to foster communication and friendship with the people of China through sharing the values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Founded in 1989, with the encouragement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Bureau is sponsored by a cross-section of Roman Catholic organizations and individuals in the United States who share its purposes and goals.

GENERAL PURPOSES

- To promote understanding among American Catholics about the Catholic Church and the situation of the Catholic communities in China.
- To engage the American Catholics in a new missionary partnership with the Catholics in China.

GOALS

- To promote the development in China of a fully indigenized Local Church with adequate leadership and resources for the pastoral service of the Chinese people.
- To foster reconciliation and unity of the Chinese Catholic Church within the universal Church and under the Apostolic See.
- To foster mutually beneficial relationships between Catholics in the sister-churches of China and the USA.
- To enable the American Christians to encounter and understand the experience of Christians in China in the second half of the 20th century so as to deepen and strengthen our own faith commitment and the missionary dynamism.
- To collaborate ecumenically, and with other religious, educational and cultural programs and organizations consonant with the purposes and goals of USCCB.
- To promote the full exercise of human rights and religious freedoms for people in China.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- Publication of the China Church Quarterly distributed on a subscriber basis.
- Organization of the National Catholic China Conference annually.
- Sponsorship of Religious Study Tours to the PRC.
- Recruitment and screening of qualified persons from the U.S. Church to give Christian witness and service in tertiary educational institutions in China.
- Providing lectures, seminars and workshops on topics of interest to persons in the U.S. regarding religion and Christianity in China.
- Resourcing the religious news services and secular media with accurate and documented information on religious issues in China; the history and contemporary developments of Christianity in China; and news and information about the Catholic Church in China.
- Providing consultation and referrals on other China-related programs and activities of religious and non-profit organizations.
- Channeling material resources and provision of services which address expressed needs of Catholics in China.

The Bureau is incorporated as a non-profit, tax exempt organization in the State of New Jersey. It maintains an office on the campus of Seton Hall University. Contributions to the Bureau are deductible for Federal income tax purposes.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID B.T. AIKMAN

JULY 24, 2003

CHINA'S APPROACH TO RELIGION DURING THE HU JINTAO ERA

Political change, even in a country like China that has a one-party political system, often raises hopes for change in many other areas of society. Whether the issue is environmental policies, foreign affairs, or education, people often assume that a new leader will bring new perspectives to old problems. But in the case of China, the elevation of Hu Jintao to General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and to the highest State office offers little immediate promise that the approach of the Chinese government to religious practice will change.

Hu, believed to be from a family with strong Buddhist leanings, was at one time responsible for the implementation of Communist policy in Tibet. During his years there, it became apparent that the priority of China's leaders was to maintain the primacy of Han Chinese political control and to prevent the emergence of any Tibetan groups that might articulate Tibetan national and religious aspirations. Whether then or later, Hu seems to have become acquainted with Mr. Ye Xiaowen, since the early 1990s the director of China's Religious Affairs Bureau, later renamed the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). Mr. Ye, a self-professed atheist and committed Communist, has demonstrated throughout his leadership of RAB/SARA a commitment to vigorous implementation of China's religious policies at the grass-roots level. Ye has expressed the opinion, for example, that Christianity has been growing "too fast" in some parts of China, and at different times he has tried to insert his own opinions of Protestant theological issues into the administration of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), China's officially approved agency for the implementation of State religious policy in respect to China's Protestants.

Even officials of the China Christian Council, the ecclesiastical structure that determines personnel and theological issues within the TSPM, have privately complained that RAB/SARA consistently interferes with ordinary church work. RAB/SARA officials at the provincial level, for example, sometimes arbitrarily determine how many graduates of the theological colleges may actually be ordained within a specific time-frame.

The government policy on how to deal with religion in China was inherited by Hu Jintao from a top-level Communist Party conference on religion that convened in December 2001; in effect 3 months after the implications of the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York had been digested in Beijing. Though Islam was not specifically mentioned in published reports of that conference, China's political leadership appears to have decided that any religion in China, if not strictly supervised, could turn into the regime's Achilles heal. "The Party and Government," the official People's Daily account of the conference said, "can only strengthen their leadership over religious work and their supervision over religious affairs. They cannot allow them to weaken." China's then Communist leader President Jiang Zemin was quoted as saying that the "gist" of supervision of religious affairs was: "Protect the legal, Wipe out the illegal, Resist infiltration and attack crime."

In fact, Jiang's speech at this December 2001 conference reiterated points previously articulated by RAB/SARA director Ye Xiaowen. Ye has said: "Following the ever-greater progress in human society, religions will more and more absorb certain secular moral values and rational elements, and leave behind their fanaticism and fervor, and gradually conform and adapt to real society." In effect, Ye seemed to be asserting the right of China's Communist and State authorities to force religious thought into a mold compatible with the official socialist and secular world view of China's ruling Communist Party. That approach seems to have been continued during the administration of Hu Jintao. For example, efforts to force Protestant Christianity to "absorb certain secular moral values" have been underway for nearly half a decade at the Jinling Theological Seminary in Nanjing, the national seminary of China's officially recognized Protestantism. Under the direction of China's most prominent Protestant leader, Bishop Ding Guangxun, former head of both the TSPM and the China Christian Council and still, in his late eighties, president of the Nanjing Theological Seminary, teachers and students at the seminary have been subjected to a campaign to impose upon them a "theology of reconstruction." In essence, this "theology" is a repudiation of the conservative evangelical viewpoint of the overwhelming majority of China's Christians. Efforts to thrust this new theology down the throats of pastors, officials, teachers, and seminary students associated with the China Christian Council appears to many a throwback to the ugly, coercive political campaigns orchestrated by Chairman Mao Zedong in the 1950s. At that time Bishop Ding was a leader in efforts to humiliate in the public media all Protestant Christians who were unwilling to be associated with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

The actual implementation of policies to control religious expression at China's grass-roots has certainly been deeply affected by the campaign to eliminate the meditation group Falun Gong. It is unfortunate that the unusual teachings of Falun Gong, and in particular the near-divine status attributed to the group's founder, Li Hongzhi, now resident in the U.S., have deflected what might have been popular disapproval among Chinese of the brutal methods used against Falun Gong practitioners. The vast majority of ordinary Chinese, including Chinese Christians, believe that Falun Gong is indeed an anti-social cult with potentially dangerous implications. However mistaken or unfair such apprehensions of Falun Gong may be, they have had two results: a broad disapproval of Falun Gong among most Chinese, and an energized suppression of all religious groups with even the remotest possibility

of being called a "cult." An indirect consequence has been an intense suspicion by the authorities of any Chinese politically opposed to the government who also have strong religious convictions.

In May 2003, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom noted in its annual report that there had been a "deterioration of protections for religious freedom in China." It went on: "The Chinese government commits numerous egregious violations against members of many of China's religious and spiritual communities, including Evangelical Christians, Roman Catholics, Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, and other groups, such as the Falun Gong, that the government has labeled 'evil cults."

To itemize just a few of the "ordinary" harassment of China's Protestant and Catholic Christians in the past several months, here are some incidents:

• July 1, 2003—Authorities arrested 5 Roman Catholic clergy at Siliying in Boading, Hebei province, approximately 70 miles from Beijing. The five priests were all on their way to visit another Catholic underground priest, Fr. Lu Genjun, who had just been released from 3 years' imprisonment in labor camp.

• June 16, 2003—A Catholic priest, Fr. Lu Xiaozhou, was arrested in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, as he was about to administer the Sacrament of Anointing for the Sick to a dying Catholic.

• June 15, 2003—Authorities raided a house church in Liaoning province. 40 Christians were tied up and arrested. They were told their gathering had been "illegal."

• June 11, 2003—Reports from the Jingzhou prison where imprisoned South China Church leader, Gong Shengliang has been held, said that Gong had been repeatedly beaten and was passing blood and urine as a result of his injuries.

• June 6, 2003—Some 12 Christians were arrested in a raid on four homes in Yunnan province. At least eight of the 12 have been sent to re-education through labor camps. This punishment can be meted out without any court procedure up to a maximum of 3 years at a time.

• April 4, 2003—120 house church leaders from the Local Church were arrested in Henan province. Twenty were later released, leaving the remaining 100 in custody.

There are certainly other incidents for which there is insufficient space here to provide details.

Meanwhile, though the incidents do not relate directly to religious practice in China, but to their political activities, there are two very prominent cases of Chinese Christians who have been held for months without charge or trial, or at the very least held under very suspicious circumstances.

The first incident concerns a prominent Chinese physician, permanent resident of the U.S., Dr. Wang Bingzhang. Dr. Wang, who has lived in the U.S. since the early 1980s, has been active in China's fledgling democracy movement among Chinese in exile or temporarily outside China. Wang has been a leading figure in the Free China Movement, an umbrella grouping of some 30 organizations advocating democracy and human rights in China.

Wang and two Chinese traveling companions were kidnapped in broad daylight outside their hotel in the northern part of Vietnam in June 2002. Their kidnappers were men wearing Vietnamese police uniforms but speaking fluent Mandarin Chinese. Wang and his companions were taken by car to a waiting boat which then took them across the border to China. Wang was found tied up in a Buddhist temple in Yunnan province. The Chinese police asserted that he had been kidnapped by a gang that was demanding $10 million in ransom money.

The Chinese police who supposedly came upon Wang Bingzhang and his companions providentially learned that Wang was wanted on "terrorism" charges in Shenzhen, Guangdong province. After several months of being held in Shenzhen incommunicado, during which the Chinese foreign ministry repeatedly denied having any knowledge of Wang's whereabouts, Wang's two companions were released. Wang himself was sentenced in February 2002 to life imprisonment on charges of "terrorism."

Wang was a qualified physician and a deeply committed Protestant Christian. The notion that this 55-year-old churchgoing medical professional was engaged in terrorism is as plausible as the notion that China's political authorities are willing to implement legal due process in the country.

The other case of egregious persecution of a political oppositionist of Christian faith is that of Yang Jianli. Arriving in the U.S. in 1986, Yang earned a Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of California at Berkeley and a Ph.D. in political economy from Harvard University. A winner of numerous academic and other awards, Yang was the founding president of the Foundation for China in the 21st. Century, a non-profit organization dedicated to the establishment of democracy in China. He has appeared several times to give testimony before numerous Congres-

sional hearings on Capitol Hill. He was an eyewitness of the June 4 Tiananmen Massacre in Beijing. In June 2003, the House passed Resolution 199 condemning the fact that Yang had already been held for nearly a year without criminal charges being filed, or access to a lawyer, or any contact with his family or relatives. Finally, after nearly 15 months of incarceration, he was formally charged last week with spying for Taiwan and permitted for the very first time to see his lawyer. He was also a devout Christian and a member of All Saints' Episcopal Church in Brookline, MA.

Wang Bingzhang and Yang Jianli were certainly opposed to the current political system in China and did their best to advocate change. To that extent, there were no friends of China's Communist Party leadership. It is true that they were not specifically charged with any crime related to religious practice. But their desire to see a more open China, a China in which freedom of conscience would be written not just in the heart yearnings of their compatriots but in the manuals of China's police authorities is one which all men and women of faith can and should support. It is my hope that the Congressional China Commission will look broadly into statements and actions that uphold the American conviction of the inviolability of freedom of conscience and religious practice.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JACQUELINE M. ARMIJO

JULY 24, 2003

I would like to thank the Committee for inviting me to share my knowledge of the history and contemporary situation of the Muslim peoples of China. This knowledge is based on more than 20 years of research on this highly important, but neglected topic, and more than 7 years lived in China.[1]

With a Muslim population conservatively estimated at 20 million, China today has a larger Muslim population than most Arab countries, and yet little is known about this community. Of China's 55 officially recognized minority peoples, 10 are primarily Muslim: the Hui, Uighur, Kazak, Dongxiang, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Uzbek, Bonan, and Tatar. The largest group, the Hui, are spread throughout the entire country, while the other nine live primarily in the northwest. I will begin by concentrating on the Hui, and then address the situation of the Uighurs of Xinjiang.[2]

Shortly after the advent of Islam in the seventh century, there were Muslims in China, for sea trade networks between China and Southwest Asia had existed for centuries. Small communities of Muslim traders and merchants survived for centuries in cities along China's southeast coast. This early interest in China as a destination for Muslim travelers is reflected in the famous hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, 'Utlub al-'ilm wa law fi Sin, "seek knowledge, even unto China."

Although Muslim communities were established in China as early as the seventh century, it was not until the thirteenth century, during the Yuan dynasty, that tens of thousands of Muslims from Central and Western Asia settled in China. Most of the Hui population today are descendants of these early settlers. Despite centuries of relative isolation from the rest of the Islamic world, the Muslims in most regions of China have managed to sustain a continuous knowledge of the Islamic sciences, Arabic, and Persian. Given extended periods of persecution combined with periods of intense government efforts to legislate adoption of Chinese cultural practices and norms,[3] that Islam should have survived, let alone flourished, is an extraordinary historical phenomenon. Although some scholars have attributed the survival of Muslim communities in China to their ability to adopt Chinese cultural traditions, when

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[1] I first studied in Beijing from 1982–83 while an undergraduate, and returned in 1993 to complete my doctoral dissertation on the early history of Islam in China. I subsequently worked as a consultant on HIV/AID prevention projects, and minority education projects.

[2] According to the 2000 China national census, the Hui population of China is approximately 9.2 million and the Uighur population is 8.6 million. The other Muslim populations are: Kazak 1.3 million; Dongxiang 400,000; Kyrgyz 171,000; Salar 90,000; Tajik 41,000; Uzbek 14,000; Bonan 13,000; and Tatar 5,000.

[3] During the early part of the Ming period (1368–1644) China's cosmopolitan and international initiatives gave way to a period of conservatism and the redirection of imperial resources toward domestic issues and projects. During this period numerous laws were passed requiring "foreigners" to dress like Chinese, adopt Chinese surnames, speak Chinese, and essentially in appearance, become Chinese. Despite these restrictions and requirements, the Muslims of China continued to actively practice their faith and pass it on to their descendants. By the end of the Ming dynasty there were enough Chinese Muslim intellectuals that were thoroughly educated in the classical Confucian tradition, that several scholars developed a new Islamic literary genre: religious works on Islam written in Chinese that incorporated the vocabulary of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist thought.

asked themselves, Chinese Muslims usually attribute their survival to their strong faith and God's protection.

In 1644, the Qing dynasty was established, marking the beginning of a period of unparalleled growth and expansion, both in terms of territory and population. Travel restrictions were lifted, and the Muslims of China were once again allowed to make the pilgrimage to Mecca and study in the major centers of learning in the Islamic world. During this period several Hui scholars studied abroad and upon their return they started a movement to revitalize Islamic studies by translating the most important Islamic texts into Chinese and thus making them more accessible.

However, despite the opportunities for travel and study that arose during this period, the Qing dynasty also represented a period of unparalleled violence against the Muslims of China. As reform movements led by Muslims who had studied overseas spread, conflicts arose between different communities. In several instances the government intervened, supporting one group against another, leading to an exacerbation of the conflict, outbreaks of mass violence and the eventual slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Muslims, and several rebellions.

One of the most common stereotypes of the Muslims is that they are an inherently violent people. In order to show how such prejudices evolve I would like to briefly summarize the events leading up to the slaughter of as many as 750,000 Muslims in southwest China in the 1870s. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, China experienced a massive population explosion resulting in millions of Han Chinese moving into the frontier regions. As more immigrants moved into Yunnan province along the southwest frontier, there were increasing clashes with the indigenous peoples, and the Hui who had settled there in the thirteenth century and whose population is estimated to have been one million. The Han settlers, not unlike white settlers throughout much of colonial history, did not view the local peoples as full humans, and citizens with equal rights under the law. In a series of disputes between these immigrants and the Hui, local Han Chinese officials (who themselves were not local residents), repeatedly decided to support their fellow Han Chinese against the local residents. The Muslims sent envoys to Beijing seeking justice to no avail. Fighting escalated and after a government led massacre of the Muslim population of the provincial capital Kunming, a Chinese Muslim scholar started a rebellion and in 1856 established an independent Islamic state centered in northwest Yunnan. The state survived for almost 16 years, and the Muslims worked closely together with other indigenous peoples. However, following the quelling of other major rebellions, the Chinese Emperor ordered his troops to concentrate their efforts on Yunnan; the massacres that ensued wiped out the majority of Muslims in the region. Estimates of the percentage killed range from 60 to 85 percent, and more than a century later, their population has still not recovered its original number. Another consequence of the rebellion was a series of government regulations severely restricting the lives of Muslims.[4] From a Han Chinese perspective, the insistence on the part of the Muslims to fight for their rights even against overwhelming odds, was a sign of violent tendencies, rather than a desire for justice regardless of the consequences.

During the communists rise to power in the 1940s, many Muslims agreed to support them in exchange for guarantees of religious freedom. Although in the early years of the PRC these promises were respected, during subsequent political campaigns, culminating with the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the Muslims of China found their religion outlawed, their religious leaders persecuted, imprisoned and even killed, and their mosques defiled, if not destroyed.[5]

In the years immediately following the Cultural Revolution, the Muslims of China lost no time in rebuilding their devastated communities. Throughout China, Muslims began slowly to restore their religious institutions and revive their religious activities. Their first priority was to rebuild their damaged mosques thereby allowing communities to create a space in which they could once again pray together, but also so that the mosques could reassert their role as centers of Islamic learning. Over the next two decades mosques throughout most of the country organized classes for not only girls and boys, and young adults, but also for older men and women who had not had the opportunity to study their religion. Beginning in the late 1980s

[4] Muslims were no longer allowed to live within city walls, were restricted to certain occupations, and in most cases lost all their personal property, businesses, farm land, and communal property, such as schools and mosques.

[5] During this period all worship and religious education were forbidden, and even simple common utterances such as insha'allah (God willing), or al-hamdulillah (thanks be to God) could cause Muslims to be punished. Despite the danger, Muslims in many parts of China continued their religious studies in secret.

and continuing to the 1990s Islamic colleges have also been established throughout most of China.

Within China, when asked how to explain the recent resurgence in Islamic education, community members cite two main reasons: a desire to rebuild that which was taken from them, and the hope that a strong religious faith would help protect Muslim communities from the myriad of social problems presently besetting China in this day and age of rapid economic development. Chinese Muslim studying overseas reiterate the need to equip themselves and their communities for their future in a state which seems to be ideologically adrift.[6]

After many years of living in China and interviewing religious teachers and students, I am convinced that these studies have an overwhelmingly positive influence on Chinese society. Older Muslims are finally able to study their religious traditions, and young people are able to learn the guiding moral traditions of Islam, including a respect for the state and its laws. As both of my daughters attended the public Hui preschool in Kunming for several years, I can attest to the extraordinary degree to which the teachers promoted civic responsibility and community values.

Moreover, Muslim religious leaders have been able to assist in the national government's efforts to stem the increasing number of rural households who are sacrificing their children's education, particularly their daughters', as recent economic reforms have resulted in school fees that are crippling families incomes. Imams have worked together with the All-China Women's Federation to remind peasants in rural areas of their religious obligation within Islam to educate all their children. Women have also played a very active role in the revival of Islamic education, both as students and as teachers. The women are well aware of the importance of educating girls, for as one said to me, "educate a man, educate an individual; educate a women, educate a nation."

The Muslims' emphasis on education, both secular and religious, is not a surprise. As other minority groups who have survived the vicissitudes of state persecution over time, they have learned that the only thing that cannot be taken away from them is their education. Consequently, Muslims in China have always be over represented among teachers, professors and college graduates.

At present the government still maintains very strict control on all aspects of public religious practice and education throughout China. The government controls the faculty, student and curriculum of Islamic schools. It controls the appointment of imams in mosques, and decides which ones will be allowed to lead prayers at the Friday services. I will now turn to the situation of Muslims in Xinjiang.

CONDITIONS IN XINJIANG

Although Muslims throughout China face a variety of challenges and are the subject of a wide range of discriminatory actions, the situation for the indigenous peoples of Xinjiang is unprecedented in its severity, surpassing even the repressive policies facing the Tibetans. Muslims that hold official positions, including faculty at the universities are forbidden to carry out any religious activity in public. They are not allowed to attend mosque, fast during Ramadan, or in any other way respect their religious traditions in public. There are signs on mosques refusing entry to anyone under 18 years of age. Islamic education outside the one officially controlled school is forbidden.

The state has conflated the practice of Islam with separatist activity and completely overreacted in its illegally prohibiting almost all forms of Islamic education and public religious practice. Large numbers of Muslims in Xinjiang have been thrown in jail and sentenced without public trial. And an untold number have been executed for accused political crimes.

Once the overwhelming majority in Xinjiang, Uighurs and other Muslim peoples will soon be outnumbered by Han Chinese immigrants. And although the government is committed to spending millions of dollars on development projects there, the primary beneficiaries in virtually every major industrial and development project, have been the immigrant Han Chinese population, and often with tremendous negative environmental impact on the region.

SPECIFIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

• All Muslims should have the freedom to practice their religion, and all parents should have the freedom to bring their children with them to mosque.

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[6] Over the past decade an increasing number of Chinese Muslims have decided to pursue their religious studies at Islamic universities overseas.

• All Muslims should have the freedom to take part in Islamic studies classes, and pursue a deeper understanding of their religion.
• All schools in predominantly minority areas should be allowed to teach the cultural traditions and history of the minority people there. At present the curricula of all primary and secondary schools in China are controlled at the national level, and minority peoples are not allowed to study their own history and culture.[7]
• The current quota of only 2,000 people being allowed to make the annual pilgrimage to Mecca should be increased to at least 20,000 (which is the normal amount that would be allowed using the Saudi calculation of one hajj visa for every 10,000 Muslims in a given country); and there should be no age restrictions (presently only people 60 and older are allowed to make the pilgrimage).
• The government is making it increasingly difficult for Muslims to receive a passport, thereby limiting their ability to take part in the hajj, study overseas, and take part in business activities. Religious belief should not be used as a reason for denying an individual a passport.
• Over the past decade, throughout China mosques and Muslim neighborhoods dating back centuries have been destroyed as a result of real estate and public development projects. Efforts should be made, ideally through international organizations like UNESCO, to protect Muslim neighborhoods and preserve historic mosques as national heritage sites. These communal spaces are of fundamental importance to the survival of these communities.
• Muslims in official and public roles should not be coerced into publicly renouncing their religious obligations, for example being forced to eat during daylight hours during Ramadan, the month of fasting.
• Remove ethnicity from national id cards as it leads to discrimination in employment, housing, and traveling.

RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO XINJIANG

• The government should allow Uighurs and other indigenous peoples to freely study and learn their own languages and history.
• The decision to discontinue the use of the Uighur language at all universities in Xinjiang should be rescinded. According to numerous reports, last summer thousands of books in the Uighur language were burned by government officials in Xinjiang.
• Although Radio Free Asia broadcasts in Uighur, VOA does not.
• The US should support the establishment of local non-political NGOs by indigenous peoples to promote economic, educational and public health development projects.

CONCLUSION

At the present time many Muslims in China continue to hope and pray that the US Government will use its influence to persuade the Chinese state to uphold its moral and international obligations to allow for the freedom of religion and the survival of indigenous cultures. Recent actions by the US, including the decision to acquiesce to Beijing's labeling a small obscure Uighur group, the ETIM (Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement) as a "terrorist organization," have done much to undermine Chinese Muslims' faith in the US as protector of basic human rights.

And although there are numerous reports made by the Chinese state, and often repeated in the Western press that radical separatism is a common desire in Xinjiang, in fact in dozens of conversations, spanning 20 years now, I have never heard a Uighur call for violent attacks on the Chinese state. They have spoken with an increasing despair that they simply be allowed to practice their religion, continue to use their language in their studies, and uphold their traditional cultural practices, as citizens of China.

I entreat our government to encourage the Chinese state to uphold the basic rights of the Muslims in China. Current repressive tactics not only undermine the Muslims rights to pass on their religious and moral values and cultural practices to their children, they also undermine the Muslims' trust in the Chinese Government.

In conclusion, although maintaining their religious beliefs and practices over the centuries has been a continual challenge, Muslims in China have always been confident of their identities as both Muslims and Chinese. Although many have presumed that these identities were somehow inherently antagonistic, the survival of Islam in China for over a millennium belies these assumptions. Islamic and Chinese

[7] Outside of Xinjiang, Chinese Muslims are able to offer classes for preschool students, and in after school programs and summer programs for older children.

values have both proven to be sufficiently complementary and dynamic to allow for the flourishing of Islam in China, and God willing, it will continue to.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK HAGEL, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEBRASKA, CO-CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today's hearing. China's progress on human rights has unfortunately not matched its economic progress over the last few years. While the Chinese Government has begun to address questions regarding human rights abuses, significant issues remain.

The Chinese Government severely restricts religious freedom, despite guaranteeing it in the Chinese Constitution. Members of religious groups not recognized by the government are routinely subjected to intimidation, harassment, and detention. Although Chinese law expressly prohibits religious persecution, the devout are often punished while their persecutors' crime is overlooked.

Despite the Chinese Government's repressive actions, membership in unregistered churches, mosques, and temples is growing in China. More Chinese citizens practice a religion today than ever before.

However, there are signs that the Chinese Government is becoming more receptive to a dialogue on religious issues. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has been invited to visit China—the trip is planned for the next 2 weeks. Beijing has hosted the Dalai Lama's special envoy to China twice in the past 11 months. These are welcome developments.

The United States cannot impose its own standards and values on China, or any nation. But we also cannot ignore China's failure to deal with this problem. We can encourage and work with the Chinese Government to help improve the condition of its citizens. Expanding religious freedom is one such action.

In the coming years, President Hu and Premier Wen must sustain China's unprecedented economic growth as well as expand religious freedom and other basic human rights. The U.S. challenge is to convince China that economic strength and religious freedom are not contradictory; but complementary paths to prosperity.