

**TIANANMEN AT 35: THE ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN CHINA**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA**
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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JUNE 4, 2024
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TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was held from 10:34 a.m. to 12:42 p.m., in Room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, Representative Chris Smith, Chair, Congressional-Executive Commission on China, presiding.

Also present: Senator Jeff Merkley, Co-chair, Representatives Pelosi, Salinas, Nunn, and Wexton, and Senators Butler and Sullivan.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY AND CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Chair SMITH. (Off mic)—government employees and police joined the Tiananmen students. Their voices echoed through the streets of over 400 cities, demanding a future built on justice, freedom, and dignity.

Late in the evening on June 3rd and into June 4th, 1989, the Chinese Communist Party leadership unleashed the People's Liberation Army upon the protesters. They used brute force and lethal force against peaceful protests; guns and tanks crushed innocent civilians, young and old alike. The precise number of casualties to this day is unknown. There has been no public accounting of the events of that week and no justice for the victims. Rather, those seeking to commemorate the event or seeking information about those killed—like the Tiananmen mothers—are harassed, detained, and arrested themselves.

One of the most iconic figures of the Tiananmen massacre is that of the Tank Man, the solitary figure, with shopping bags in hand, who stood in front of the advancing line of tanks. That act of brave defiance inspired the world and reminds us why the heroic protest movement of 1989 must never be forgotten. Tiananmen is not simply a past event to study and ponder but a present reminder that when the Chinese people are free to assemble, to act, and to speak, they demand freedom, democracy, and political reform.

What happened on Tiananmen Square in 1989 should also remind us that the principles of freedom and democracy are not only American principles. The fundamental human yearning for dignity

and liberty is not limited to any one region or country in the world. They are aspirations that transcend countries and culture, and neither tanks nor torture can erase them. Nonetheless, as we look at China today, the prospects for greater civil and political rights seem as remote today as they did the day after the tanks rolled through Tiananmen Square.

An increasingly aggressive Chinese Communist Party government is more repressive in domestic politics, more mercantilistic in trade and economic policy, increasingly dismissive of international norms, and more assertive in exporting the authoritarian model globally. While repression looks so much different today than it did 35 years ago, the goal remains the same—to preserve the Communist Party's monopoly, absolute monopoly, on political power through any means necessary—state-sponsored indoctrination, a pervasive surveillance state, arbitrary detention, torture, and transnational repression.

At this moment in time, the United States and its allies face a systemic challenge from the Chinese Communist government and its authoritarian allies in Russia, Iran, and North Korea. It is a challenge we cannot avoid and one where promotion of human rights and freedom must be recognized as a strategic advantage against authoritarianism. I am proud to work alongside the CECC and its amazing staff to shine a bright light on Xi Jinping's atrocities these past 5 years. I am proud that the Congress has worked across the aisle to address genocide and to stop any company from profiting from forced labor of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities.

But there's so much more to do. The United States must do a better job leading the free world's democracies in holding the Chinese Communist government accountable through sanctions in the United States and at the United Nations, for its ongoing blatant repression of the Chinese people. We must take all steps to stop the Chinese Communist government's efforts to export their authoritarian model around the world, which they are aggressively doing. We must find more efficient ways to stop American companies from subsidizing tyranny and forced labor. We must better protect Chinese students in the Chinese diaspora from transnational repression.

We must treat the Great Firewall of China like the 21st century Berlin Wall. Tearing it down must be a critical U.S. priority, allowing the dissemination of news and information within China and allowing the Chinese people to communicate freely and securely. At the same time, we must also stand resolutely with those in China and Hong Kong who are imprisoned and disappeared, those persecuted and silenced, those censored and suppressed—the Chinese pastor, the Uyghur, the labor organizer, the Tibetan Buddhist monk, the human rights lawyer, the Hong Kong democracy activist, and countless others living under the repressive policies of the Chinese Communist government.

We must communicate to the Chinese people that their struggle and pain has not been and will not be forgotten. And we—and that we believe that the Chinese Communist Party will eventually be consigned to the ash heap of history. To do anything less dishonors

the spirit of Tiananmen and those who stood so bravely and resolutely for freedom.

I'd now like to yield to our very distinguished cochair, Senator Merkley. I would just make a note—and I apologize to our witnesses. We have a great group of witnesses today. My wife is in the hospital nearby. It's pretty serious—very serious. And I have to leave to be by her side. But, again, I thank you, and I thank my good friend Senator Merkley for his work on this Commission. It's extraordinary.

STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY, A SENATOR FROM OREGON AND CO-CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Co-chair MERKLEY. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And today being June 4th, this is the appropriate day for our hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, because of the focus on the events of June 3rd and 4th, 1989. Focus on not just Tiananmen Square, but the activities across China—hundreds of cities across China. The activities and the response to those activities really shocked the conscience of the world and the conscience of this Congress.

The massacre of peaceful protesters by their own government spurred a decade of debate here in Congress about whether the U.S. should condition trade relations with China on improvement in human rights. Our chairman, Congressman Smith, was at the forefront of those bipartisan debates, along with Speaker Emerita Pelosi. That question was settled in the year 2000, when Congress and President Clinton granted permanent normal trade relations to the People's Republic of China.

Congress insisted, however, that the deal include a mechanism to monitor China's progress on human rights and rule of law. That insistence, that legislation, created this Commission—a bicameral, bipartisan watchdog to assess China's behavior against international human rights standards. But today's hearing is not about this Commission. It is about the people in the People's Republic of China, the oppression they continue to endure, the hopes they continue to hold for a better future, the aspirations that they continue to fight for.

The people gathered in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 were demanding their government respond to their grievances, as well as their aspirations. And the government's brutal response ended lives and ended optimism that day, but it did not end the desire for freedom. It did not end the desire for dignity. Those feelings are universal. They're innate to every human everywhere. It's a spark that cannot be extinguished. Thirty-five years later, that brutal grip of oppression has only tightened. People cannot openly express dissent.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about whether and how the citizens of the PRC find ways to share frustrations and desires, their use of social media or chat groups, or informal networks. What can the 2022 White Paper protests tell us? I also hope to hear how we, American policymakers, can best understand what people in China are saying, what they are feeling, what they are advocating for. It's vital that we listen to their voices, rather than

project our own ideas or politics. I'm interested to learn how people keep the legacy of Tiananmen alive in the face of a concerted and successful effort by the CCP to erase the history of Tiananmen, both on the mainland and now in Hong Kong.

Preservation of memory is another innate human impulse, essential to people's ability to maintain their culture and maintain their identity. Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are core human rights, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Chinese government's relentless effort to suppress them does not diminish the yearning of the people of China to realize them, or our responsibility to speak out for them. And that's why we are here. And that's why I look forward to your testimony.

Is there anything else that anyone would like to weigh in on before we turn to our witnesses?

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANDREA SALINAS,
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM OREGON**

Representative SALINAS. Thank you. Thank you, Chair Merkley. And thank you to Chair Smith as well for holding this important hearing. And thank you to our esteemed witnesses for taking the time to be here today to share your stories with us. I was 19 years old when the Tiananmen Square protests erupted. And I can still remember the infamous image of the Tank Man bravely staring down the military tanks with his grocery bags in hand. And I can still remember hearing the news about the thousands of protesters who lost their lives standing up to oppression.

Now, on the 35th anniversary of the protests, the Chinese people are still prohibited from talking about Tiananmen and have faced reprisals from recent protests such as the White Paper movement. The Chinese government has cracked down on protesters both here and transnationally, which underscores the very important need for this hearing. We can honor the legacy of these courageous protesters by hearing these stories today and ensuring that they are remembered, despite efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to erase them from memory.

With that said, I'm eager to hear from all of you and to discuss how this Commission and Congress can support you in your fight for human rights, democracy, and freedom of speech in China. Thank you.

Co-chair MERKLEY. I will now introduce our witnesses, starting with Zhou Fongsuo. And I'll apologize for my pronunciation, however off it might be. Welcome. He is—he was a Tiananmen student leader and is executive director of Human Rights in China. In 1989, Zhou was a physics student at Tsinghua University in Beijing, who helped set up a broadcast station on Tiananmen Square and provided support and medical help to students who were on a hunger strike. Authorities took him into custody and detained him for a year without trial. After coming to the United States in 2007, he cofounded Humanitarian China to promote the rule of law, human rights, and freedom of expression in China, and to provide humanitarian support to political prisoners and their families. Since 2023, he has served as executive director of Human Rights in China.

Next will be Ruohui Yang, a rights advocate and is currently a paralegal student at Humber College in Canada. In 2020, he founded the Assembly of Citizens, a Chinese student association which organized large-scale June 4th commemoration activities and White Paper movement protests in Canada. Since 2022, he has been an assistant editor for China Spring, where he has strengthened the focus on Chinese human rights issues and political prisoners through his editorial work.

Karin, an alias, is a student at Columbia University who organized a campus White Paper protest solidarity event in 2022. She will testify in disguise, as other organizers of the event were either attacked at Columbia or encountered intimidation from the PRC police.

Rowena He is joining us by video. She is a China specialist and historian of modern China at the University of Texas at Austin. Her focus is the nexus of history, memory, and power, and the relationship between academic freedom and public opinion, human rights, and democratization, youth values, and nationalism. Her first book was entitled *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China.*"

Mr. Zhou, we'll turn to you first.

**STATEMENT OF ZHOU FENG SUO,
TIANANMEN STUDENT LEADER AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA**

Mr. ZHOU. Thank you, Senator Merkley. Thank you, Chris Smith. And thanks to the CECC for organizing this hearing.

I am Zhou Fengsuo, Fengsuo Zhou in English, and I'm currently executive director of Human Rights in China and president and co-founder of Humanitarian China. I was a Tiananmen student leader 35 years ago. It is my honor and duty to testify today, as a survivor of the Tiananmen massacre.

In October 2022, I was at a Halloween parade with a group of young protesters. I was the only adult in the group of about 50. But looking around, I knew many of them. Some of them were guests at my home. Some visited the Tiananmen exhibition. Some were kids of my fellow protesters from Tiananmen. I was really touched when one of them told me that he was arrested a few years ago on Tiananmen Square commemorating the Tiananmen massacre in the very place it happened, even though at that time nobody knew about this.

As I was standing there, I was excited and inspired. And then, without my prompting, they chanted, "Down with CCP, Down with Xi Jinping." At that moment, I was in tears. I realized that after 33 years, we have finally seen the younger generation. They are stepping up to carry the torch of freedom that I have carried with me since 1989 from Tiananmen Square.

In 1989, I was a physics student at Tsinghua University. I was among the first to protest on Tiananmen Square after Hu Yaobang's death. Hu Yaobang was a former party secretary of the CCP, but his death signaled the death of reform in China. That's why we were concerned. That's why we went to Tiananmen Square to protest. And then, on this very day 35 years ago, I was among the last to leave Tiananmen Square when the tanks were rolling

in, the soldiers were pointing guns at us. One of the tanks was only 20 feet away from me.

In between these two dates, I witnessed the most incredible outpouring of Chinese people in support of freedom and democracy. Millions of people gathered on Tiananmen Square from all walks of society, not only students but also journalists, communist government officials, Christians, Buddhist monks, even police and soldiers. It was also my first time meeting people from Hong Kong and witnessing their strong support, and learned from them the techniques of civil society. The solidarity at that moment was so overwhelming, strong, and inspiring.

I installed dozens of loudspeakers on the Monument to the Heroes at the center of the square, and firsthand the people's real voices were heard, echoing across this huge plaza, at the very center of Communist China's political power. In that moment, many Chinese people who were fearful and quiet became expressive and articulate, sometimes even jubilant. Freedom was in the air. Democracy was almost within reach.

Unfortunately, I also witnessed the brutal massacre of these peaceful protesters by the troops armed with tanks and machine guns. The pungent smell of tear gas, the bullet holes in the buildings, the rolling tanks, armored vehicles, and the dead bodies outside of the hospital—in a bicycle shed, because the hospital was so overwhelmed with those who were injured and killed. That was a war. A war conducted by the CCP's invading army against freedom-loving Chinese.

I remember seeing Zhong Qing among those who died. He was a younger classmate of mine at Tsinghua University. He died for our shared dream of a free China. He was a third-year student studying instruments at Tsinghua University. I was shocked beyond belief. I couldn't comprehend what I was witnessing. I realized I must carry his name and continue speaking out on his behalf.

The protesters were not the only ones who suffered under the government's attacks. The military's brutal siege of the capital encountered courageous resistance from the people of Beijing. When martial law was first declared, millions of people poured out from their homes to block the troops. Many of them stood in front of the marching soldiers and rolling tanks in order to protect students like me, some of them carrying their children on their shoulders just to show the soldiers that Beijing was peaceful.

This is why the world witnessed the great Tank Man, who has since become the most important icon of the last century, representing courage against overwhelming power and violence. To date, I'm often asked who this Tank Man is. We probably will never know. Had he survived, he probably wouldn't even realize the significance of his move because there were many like him who stood in front of the tanks.

The whole world watched as the Chinese government turned against its own people and murdered peaceful protesters. Yet President Bush sent a special envoy to inform the Butcher of Beijing, Deng Xiaoping, of the support of the U.S. Government, even after the senseless massacre. Within 10 days, probably, the CCP took the wrong path after 1989, setting the country on the trajectory of

ever-increasing political repression and human rights violations. That is why later this very regime would put Uyghurs in concentration camps, would force Tibetans into self-immolation, and would deprive Hong Kong of its freedom.

If a regime can use tanks in broad daylight to kill its own people and still enjoy the support of the most democratic countries in the world, there's no limit to what it could do—both in terms of internal repression and external aggression. That's why we are seeing the China of today. Domestically, the CCP chooses to erase the memory of the massacre through censorship and brutal repression. It tightened its grip on free speech, banning any mention of the reality of what happened on Tiananmen Square and in the rest of the country, to the extent that many young people today have never heard about it. Twenty years later, after the death of my classmate, Zhong Qing, his brother visited the Tiananmen Museum in Hong Kong. And that was the first time he learned why his older brother died. This museum was shut down by the CCP after the National Security Law. That's why we are building museums here. There's one in Manhattan.

Perhaps in 1989 the CCP could have taken a different path, transforming itself into a social democratic party. But the massacre and the crackdown eliminated the ability of this regime to be positively changed through mere trade and investment. The U.S. Government has deliberately put their heads in the sand, ignoring the cause of human rights activists and political prisoners in China. This strategy may have brought short-term gains, in the form of increased profits and lower inflation, but appeasing the CCP for the benefit of trade has proven to be self-defeating and self-destructive.

What Tiananmen told us 35 years ago, and still today, the most important lesson is that United States policy toward the CCP regime must focus on the democratization of China. Without democratization, the regime will become an even stronger threat toward universal values, including freedom and human rights. Okay, I'm running out of time. Okay, let me just quickly finish this. Today we remember Tiananmen because it reminds us of what a different China could have been, because Chinese people demonstrated their love for freedom and democracy through their protests and their resistance. The fight didn't stop them. For most of us, it was only the beginning of our journey.

Liu Xiaobo gave up a position as visiting scholar at Columbia University to go back to China to join the students on Tiananmen Square. He refused to leave China and died as the first and only Nobel Peace laureate in prison without ever seeing the award. Xu Zhiyong was only a high school student, but the protest and the massacre awakened him. He resolved to dedicate his life to the dream of a free, democratic, and beautiful China. His New Citizens Movement gained tens of thousands of followers from all over China. He was recently sentenced to 14 years in prison.

For me personally, it has been a privilege to work with these amazing freedom fighters, to raise awareness of their suffering, their sacrifice, their dreams, their goals, and to support the Tiananmen Mothers and the other victims of the Tiananmen massacre and the crackdown. Even though the Tiananmen protest and the massacre remain a source of trauma for the Chinese people, it

has simultaneously become a tremendous source of inspiration, healing, and hope. That's why I have collected many relics and artworks from 1989. Each of these items carries a story of life and death, of strength and endurance, that is difficult to find anywhere.

I have with me this blood-stained towel. In the morning, when we were leaving Tiananmen Square, someone was shot. This towel was used to wipe the blood of the person who was wounded. This is evidence of the murder. It's also a sign of hope and life, because this was kept for 33 years in China very carefully, against the government's surveillance for two generations, and gifted to me last year. This T-shirt was made by the students who created the very sculpture of the Goddess of Democracy on Tiananmen Square. This was the reason millions of people protested on Tiananmen Square—democracy and freedom for China. Thank you.

Co-chair MERKLEY. And is that what the Chinese writing is on the T-shirt, is it democracy and freedom for China?

Mr. ZHOU. Yes, sir.

Co-chair MERKLEY. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. And with your permission, I'll enter the balance of your testimony into the record.

Mr. ZHOU. Please.

Co-chair MERKLEY. Thank you. I really appreciate how you have highlighted many individuals who, with very courageous acts, have stood up for democracy and freedom. Thank you.

Mr. Yang.

STATEMENT OF RUOHUI YANG, FOUNDER OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY ORGANIZATION ASSEMBLY OF CITIZENS, AND STUDENT AT HUMBER COLLEGE, CANADA

Mr. YANG. Hello. I just want to say I highly agree with what my Right Honorable friend Mr. Zhou just said. The Chinese Communist Party has unleashed a war on its own people. So that's why I also brought this one with me. This medal was issued to those soldiers who shot students on Tiananmen Square 35 years ago. In normal nations, medals are given to soldiers who are acting distinguishedly and brave on the battlefield against their enemy. But in China, their enemy appears to be their own people. It says, "commemorative of putting down the riot." Those soldiers got this medal not because of their bravery, but because they were cowards. Not for fighting the enemy, but for slaughtering their own people.

My story begins 5 years ago. Five years ago today, the 30th anniversary of June the 4th, I took to the streets for the first time, committing myself to the movement of democracy in China. I was deeply intimidated by the atmosphere of fear cultivated by the Chinese Communist Party in Canada. However, the 2019 Hong Kong anti-extradition movement has further secured my determination to engage in the Chinese democracy movement. In Toronto, I have actively participated with my Hong Kong friends organizing support for the democracy movement supporting the Hong Kong people.

As someone from mainland China, I have faced huge pressure from my own community, dealing with psychological stress from harassment by communist supporters and also the suffering from political melancholy. Things that happened during the protests remind me that the national border cannot stop the CCP from

spreading fear overseas. Some Chinese, organized and encouraged by the consulates, drove their luxury cars through our protesting line shouting insults. They burned our flowers at the Statue of Democracy. Some protesters even received death threats. My life was full of harassment by strangers.

In 2020, Dr. Li Wenliang, the whistleblower of COVID-19, who could have possibly stopped this global catastrophe from happening, was arrested by the Chinese police for “spreading false statements” and labeled a criminal. He died shortly after, due to the virus. But surprisingly I witnessed many young Chinese students attending the memorial event we organized in downtown Toronto, which deeply moved me. I called on everyone to be organized and bound together to overcome the fear and despair, and fight for a life of humanity, human rights, democracy, and freedom.

This led to the founding of our organization, Assembly of Citizens. Over 3 years of COVID-19, the young generation in China has suffered from other human rights disasters. During the White Paper revolution in the winter of 2022, the Assembly of Citizens became capable of organizing events and protests across Canada more professionally and faster as a group. Our friends in Europe created a mailbox for contributors and for resistance fighters inside the Great Firewall; it became one of the most influential Mandarin accounts on X. Dr. Li collected testimony and stories of human rights catastrophes that have been neglected by international society—and told those stories to millions of people every day, while simultaneously facing threats from the Communist Party.

Our friends in the U.S. are making movies, talk shows, and all forms of art in order to spread awareness of the oppression of human rights in China.

Our friends in Japan and Korea are trying to establish creative businesses to emphasize resistance as a lifestyle. Through dealing with various issues, we realized how to avoid division, build professional organizations, and build more inclusive and stronger links with other groups.

Twenty-nine years ago in this very same congressional hall Major General Charles Sweeney, who testified about the decision to drop the atomic bomb, said, “One can only forgive by remembering. And to forget is to risk repeating history.” The last rapid deterioration of human rights under a major power is 1933 in Germany. That’s the year when they enacted the Enabling Act, which brought Germany under dictatorship. In that year, Peter Drucker began writing his first book, *The End of Economic Man: The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Today as we open this book, we feel as if history is actually repeating itself.

Let me adopt some of his words to describe today’s situation in China. The Chinese substitute the CCP for order, but they cannot have real order. And they worship Xi Jinping, because they have no God to worship, showing their very intensity that they must have order, a creed, a radical concept of man. Military intimidation of Taiwan, the suppression of freedom, persecution against LGBTQ groups, the reeducation camps for Uyghurs and Tibetans, and the war against religion are all a sign of weakness instead of strength. The more desperate the Chinese become, the more strongly en-

trenched totalitarianism will appear to be. The further they push down the totalitarian road, the greater will they despair.

However, as soon as we offer an alternative, the whole totalitarian magic will vanish like a nightmare. This is the current situation in China. And this is our mission. We hope we can show all Chinese a new choice, a possibility for a democracy and freedom lifestyle, with dignity and the value of human rights. Therefore, I believe my colleagues can do their job well. I trust that my predecessors from the Tiananmen Square generation can cooperate effectively. I trust that my allies can stand with us. And I also believe that you can make the right choice. Ladies and gentlemen of the committee, I truly appreciate you for listening to my story. We're doing the best we can. But your help is necessary as well. After all, this future belongs to us. It belongs to them. And it belongs to you. Thank you.

Co-chair MERKLEY. Thank you. Thank you much. And thank you for your advocacy and your courage.

We're now going to turn to Karin. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF KARIN (AN ALIAS),
WHITE PAPER PROTEST ACTIVIST
AND STUDENT AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

Ms. KARIN. I would like to begin by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to testify disguised, even though it will only delay the inevitable police visit to my parents. Media Director Scott Flipse told me that only I could evaluate whether the cost of testifying is worth it. But however much this cost weighs on me, the cost for my fellow student activists who have already experienced intimidation, harassment, and even physical assault from CCP agents is 10 times greater. And for the record, all the names in my testimony will be aliases.

I was born and raised in China. Like many Chinese students my age, I wondered about the conspicuous lack of events depicted between 1970 and 1990 in our history textbook. I only learned about June 4th by reading about it on Wikipedia in high school. In 2022, I began an internship in Shanghai with one of China's largest technology conglomerates. Like many young people who grew up in the economic prosperity of the 2010s, sheltered by censorship, I was ready to bask in and contribute to the economic achievements of my nation.

In March an unexpected citywide lockdown began, and this will subsequently be remembered as one of the largest humanitarian crises in China's COVID response. The lockdown has made me realize that despite economic development, the Chinese Communist Party has not changed, even in 35 years, from its totalitarian self. In November 2022, after I returned to university, the fire in Urumqi sparked a global wave of vigils and protests to commemorate the victims.

My friend and I organized a vigil at Columbia in front of Low Library. We spread the word through social media only one day before the event. But to our surprise, not just 10 or 100, but 300 people showed up that night. The scene reminded me of how Chinese students at Columbia 35 years ago gathered at the very same place to demonstrate solidarity with students on the square.

We wanted it to be a peaceful event, but my friend Eva, shortly after delivering her speech, was violently assaulted, struck right on the face three times by an unidentified individual who claimed to be a Columbia student. Later, she turned to the Columbia administration, but no action was taken aside from a suggestion to seek mental health support. Not even a campus safety alert.

I was in a class on China's foreign policy. There were a few Chinese students whose comments were blatant CCP propaganda, like how the concentration camps do not exist. After the vigil, I was always afraid that those Chinese students would recognize me. I was afraid that what happened to Eva at the protest was going to happen to me too, and that Columbia would just do nothing. As China reopened, the momentum of the White Paper protests has died down gradually. My friends and I at Columbia have tried to preserve the spark by continuing to organize events like movie screenings of COVID documentaries and panel discussions.

However, we were always plagued by far-reaching transnational repression. My friend and co-organizer Chris was interrogated by Chinese police when he returned to China last year. He reached out to me on Instagram to inquire about the names of participants of the New York protests. I was informed that he sent those inquiries under police pressure. The CECC has done an extraordinary job in its 2023 report in documenting the CCP's transnational repression, especially that faced by the Uyghurs and the Hong Kongers.

But I want to bring to your attention that even though the White Paper movement has subsided, the intensity of transnational repression against outspoken Chinese overseas students has only escalated, in most cases through personal harassment, transnational surveillance, and the coercion of proxies—meaning the intimidation and interrogation of family members in China. My fellow student activists experienced this retribution in ever-increasing quantities and severity this year. Yet, unlike Hong Kong or Uyghur activists, few can speak forward and tell their story.

According to Columbia's own website, it has approximately 6,000 currently enrolled Chinese students in 2023. Many of them, after completion of their study, will return to China and work in occupations of political or economic importance. As a social science major, I have always believed that a change in society starts with a change in its citizens' minds. In fact, many vocal individuals of the White Paper movement in China were educated overseas. Exposure to freedom made us free. But if these brilliant minds cannot even think and speak freely on American campuses, on American soil, it will be much more difficult for a movement like White Paper to be sparked again.

I don't have time to go through the policy recommendations in my testimony, but I would like to receive questions on them later if possible. Congressmembers, 160 years ago President Lincoln showed us that America was a nation that would hold the power and bear the responsibility to assure freedom to the free. He said, as Americans, "We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope of Earth." That is our union. That is our beacon of liberty for those oppressed around the world.

Congressmembers, 35 years ago you showed those students from Beijing fleeing a brutal massacre that the United States kept its

promise as the last best hope of Earth, a safe haven for people who pursue and fight for democracy and freedom. Now I ask you to show the compassion and support for us, for those first pioneers who lit the spark for all should not be allowed to freeze in the wind and snow.

Co-chair MERKLEY. Thank you very much for your testimony.

And we're now going to have testimony from Rowena He, who's joining us by video. Members have various hearings, briefings, and votes, so we are coming and going, and I apologize that that is the nature of how the House and Senate operate. I'm going to turn the gavel over to my colleague from the House.

Representative NUNN. At this time, I'd like to recognize Rowena He for her opening comments.

As we do an audio check here, I just want to say Rowena He is joining us by video. She is a China specialist, a historian of modern history at the University of Texas in Austin. Her focus is on the nexus of history, memory, and power, and the relationship between academic freedom and public opinion, human rights and democratization, and youth values and nationalism. Her first book was entitled *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China*.

As we work through our audio system, we'll recognize Senator Sullivan for his opening comments. And then we'll come back for Q&A with the panel. Thank you very much for being here today. With that, Senator.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,
A SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank the witnesses for their courage, their testimony, and bravery. And now, in my view, Mr. Chairman, some of this—the fact that you even have to be brave in America, as Karin has shown, is a real troubling aspect of what's happening right now with regard to the Chinese Communist Party's attempts at global reach to suppress dissent. Even trying to depress dissent in the United States.

You know, this anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre is something that most Americans who were alive then, we all remember it. And unlike what the Chinese Communist Party has tried to do to its own people, they have not been able to erase the memory of those horrendous events in the United States or around the world.

I am actually just back from a Senate CODEL with Senator Butler and some other senators, a bipartisan Senate CODEL to Taiwan. And this is a real free society, one of the freest societies in the world. And of course, culturally, it is Chinese. Which is why the CCP is so scared about what's happening in Taiwan. Like Hong Kong, the way Hong Kong was, Taiwan threatens the very central tenet of the Chinese Communist Party's ruling ethos, which is that one man, ruling in perpetuity by crushing all dissent, knows what's good for 1.4 billion people. That is why they're so afraid of Taiwanese democracy.

I want to thank the witnesses again, Mr. Chairman, here, and to recognize also what is one of the most outrageous Chinese Com-

munist Party offenses. And that is how they systematically, regularly target dissidents abroad and their families to make them comply with what they see as correct behavior. And as we are seeing with these brave witnesses today, they're even doing this in the United States of America—hunting down dissidents in the United States of America. I think every single American citizen should be outraged by this.

And, again, I want to thank our witnesses today for their courage. We stand with them. And I look forward to them taking their questions and getting the word out not just to American citizens but to people all around the world on the brutality of this authoritarian regime in Beijing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Senator. I could not agree more with your well-placed opening statement.

With that, I'd like to return to one of our key witnesses, Rowena He, who is now available for us remote. Rowena, the floor is yours.

**STATEMENT OF ROWENA HE, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW,
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, AUSTIN, AND AUTHOR OF
*TIANANMEN EXILES: VOICES OF THE STRUGGLE FOR
DEMOCRACY IN CHINA***

Ms. HE. Okay. Thank you so much. Can you hear me now? Thank you so much for this opportunity to join you from afar in solidarity. I'm currently at Stanford because I wanted to honor my commitment that I made a long time ago to speak here on campus for the Tiananmen anniversary today, June 4th. And as you all know this is a special day because exactly today, 35 years ago, over 200,000 army soldiers, equipped with AK-47s and tanks, were deployed into the capital city of Beijing against unarmed civilians.

I was a teenager at that time. And I always wondered in those days if the world knew what was happening to us. I used to light candles secretly with my friends, my college friends—closing the doors and windows, worrying about being caught. I know many of them are listening to me today, from afar. It means a lot that the CECC is organizing this hearing and giving us a voice on this special day, when the idealism of my generation was so violently silenced in 1989.

Ten years ago, when I first testified for the CECC, I was both hopeful and sad. I had just published my first book *Tiananmen Exiles* despite state efforts to erase the history of 1989; I was also teaching this taboo subject at Harvard, keeping the memory alive among the younger generation. At the same time, I felt so sad because there was still no justice for the victims. A Tiananmen father hanged himself in an empty parking lot before one of the Tiananmen anniversaries. I used to listen to this father's testimony. He was so determined to carry on, seeking justice for his son, Ya Aiguo.

All these years I kept wondering what was in this father's mind when he was walking towards that empty parking lot near Tiananmen Square—that's probably the closest place that he could get to near the Square where his son was killed.

All these years I kept wondering what this father was thinking when he was walking towards that empty parking lot. That was a Rising China age. That was the time when the whole world was

mesmerized by the power and the wealth of the CCP, and it was all about that “China Model” of state capitalism and authoritarianism. This father probably felt that there was nothing in this world that he had, except his life, to remind us that we owe his son justice. And I wanted so much to be able to give him that justice. That was 10 years ago.

Five years ago, I was invited to testify before the CECC again, but I had a commitment to speak at the University of London. I couldn’t make it. And at that time, I had just finished a fellowship at IAS Princeton and accepted a professorship in Hong Kong. And who would have thought that now, 5 years later, on the 35th anniversary of Tiananmen, I would be denied a work visa and banned from returning to my position as Associate Professor of History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Tiananmen is not just about the past. Tiananmen is ongoing. The repression, the political repression, is ongoing. The Tiananmen Mothers are still not allowed to openly mourn their children; the exiles are not allowed to go home to their parents’ sickbeds and funerals. And scholars like me are constantly being punished. We are in freedom; we are outside China, but we are never free. It pains me to watch these younger people, who have just now testified about the repression, talking about fear, about harassment to their family members. Because that’s exactly what we had previously been through.

If there’s any one thing that kept me going, it’s not because of courage, the word people often used to describe me. On the contrary, it’s because of fear. It’s because of the fear that we have lived through, especially after 1989. It’s because of fear that I wanted to continue. I wanted to carry on.

The past 35 years have witnessed a war of memory against forgetting. The CCP has used all the state machinery to erase the history of memory, but not in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, where I just got expelled, used to be the beacon of light for those of us struggling in darkness for 30 years. Every year in Victoria Park, you would know that no matter how difficult it was, no matter how depressing, how daunting my journey of studying Tiananmen was—you knew that on the day of June 4th, today, for 30 years people in Hong Kong would light the candles in Victoria Park—telling the Beijing regime that there’s something in this world that cannot be crushed by guns and tanks, and propaganda machines and jails. That’s our human beings longing for freedom, truth, and justice.

But now the organizers of these candlelight vigils are either in exile or in jail. The last court trial that I went to before I left Hong Kong was actually for the trial of the organizers of the Tiananmen candlelight vigil. I had imagined so many times before I went to the court that day, how I would react, how I would feel when I saw my friends on the other side of the courtroom. But when I saw them—when I saw them coming out—Albert Ho Chun-yan and Lee Cheuk-yan, these men who devoted their lives to organizing the candlelight vigils for us—lighting candles to show those of us in darkness that “we are still here” and “we are not giving up.” But now they were on the other side of the courtroom.

That strong sense of helplessness was just so overwhelming, just like a few months ago before their court trial, when the statue of the Goddess of Democracy was removed from my campus at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Twice in my life, first time in my teenage years—the second time when I was a middle-aged woman, as a professor on campus—trying to defend academic freedom on my campus, to protect the younger generation of Hong Kong and China when they were struggling in their fight for freedom and democracy. And twice, we saw that statue of democracy that the students first erected in Tiananmen Square, symbolizing our generation’s longing for the same values represented by your Statue of Liberty in New York City, being taken away.

Tiananmen was not just about repression. It’s also about hope. It’s about a generation’s longing for the universal values of liberty and democracy. And that fateful night of repression changed everything, but we are still—we are still trying to carry on the fight. I think it’s because of all the repression that Congressman Smith mentioned at the beginning, and also the earlier testimony, that makes it even more important that we continue this fight.

People used to ask me why human rights in China matters. They said that we have economic interests, voters’ interests—human rights in China was not our priority. I fully understand how important it is for each of us, every one of us, especially under the difficult economic situation, to bring food to the table for our family and to take care of our loved ones. That’s what we want as human beings. However, Tiananmen was not just about China; it’s not just about 1989. If we look at what happened during COVID, the violation of human rights of one medical doctor in Wuhan, in China, became the violation of human rights of every single human being on Earth.

So 1989 did not end in 1989. It’s an ongoing struggle. If there’s anything we can do—as Milan Kundera describes it: “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.” As expressed in 1984, “those who control the present control the past, and those who control the past control the future.” Let’s work together collectively to make sure that the government in Beijing cannot control our present to control our past, and cannot control our past to control our future. I know that we may lose many battles, but we are going to win the war of memory against forgetting. History is on our side. I will be happy to answer any questions later. Thank you very much.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Professor He, for that powerful testimony.

With that, I’d next like to recognize the senator for her opening comments, and then we’ll get into comment and question.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LAPHONZA BUTLER,
A SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Senator BUTLER. Thank you, Chairman, for the opportunity to address such an esteemed panel. It’s interesting to me that we mark this moment and anniversary with a declaration of courage. Also marked with a great deal of sadness. But what inspires me is that we sit in this moment listening to the fear and concerns, but also underneath, the expectation and hope. And the work of

this Commission, I think, is a critical part of meeting those expectations of hope with these activists, and leaders and academics across the country and the world. I believe that together, as has been declared, we can meet the moment of expectation and hope by continuing to commemorate the sacrifice of so many in 1989. But making that commemoration with a very loud demand—a demand for justice, truth, and freedom.

And I know that, as a part of this Commission, I stand with all of my colleagues in meeting that moment in such a way. Mr. Chairman, I just have a few questions, if that would be okay.

Mr. Zhao, thank you for your bravery, and for being here today and sharing your story. As one who knows truly the firsthand consequences of speaking out on human rights, your perspective and your insight are especially valuable to us. One thing that particularly interests me is how you have worked to unite those who focus on the overall human rights picture in China and those who focus on the specific concerns of the Uyghur and Tibetan communities. Can you tell me a little bit more about how your work with the Uyghur and Tibetan communities has gone, and how you've been effective in developing cooperation among these groups?

Mr. ZHOU. Thank you, Senator Butler. Thank you for coming today. And thank you for your kind words of support and solidarity.

I have worked extensively with Tibetan communities and the Uyghur activists in the past. Of course, we always want to do more. The Tibetan community has been our strongest supporter from 35 years ago to date. They participate in our commemoration rallies everywhere. And I normally go to their celebrations, their events, regularly. And we have a very active community for cultural exchange among the diaspora communities.

So, you know, with that we have tremendous respect for the Tibetan community. They have grown their roots very deeply in the host countries, and they have practiced democracy in their diaspora. You know, both of these are aspects of what we are trying to learn. And we are actually getting a lot of help from them. For example, sometimes we want to have events in our organizations. Early on they gave us, you know, space to hold these kinds of events. And we are forever grateful.

And my organization, Humanitarian China, was one of the earliest supporters of the Uyghur economist, Professor Ilham Tohti when his daughter, Jewher, arrived in the United States. Because her father was arrested at the airport she was here alone. We raised money among our supporters to support her transition. You know, she's made friends since then. And I also talk continuously with the Uyghur community. We are very outspoken on the concentration camps and other issues.

For me, of course, it was when I was in prison that I began to realize that I was in the same situation as all these underprivileged groups under the CCP. You know, we were brainwashed to believe that we were, like, the prized children of the CCP regime. But then, you know, in prison we realized how brutal this regime is against people. Once you're in that kind of situation, you feel a bond with the other underprivileged groups. And it's always my hope that we can do more. Thank you.

Senator BUTLER. Thank you so much for that. As a labor leader in California representing one of the most diverse communities across our state, what I hear in your response is, the tools that have been most effective, and I think it's applicable as we continue to meet this moment, are the experience of shared pain and common humanity, and most importantly, the aspirational purpose that unites us all, no matter what community. And I appreciate you for lifting those tools up as we all work together to broaden this coalition to bring more voices to this incredibly important issue.

My last question, if I can, Mr. Chair, just quickly, would be to Mr. Yang. I've always believed that young people should be empowered to advocate for change as they seek to shape the future in which they will live. So I'm pleased to learn about your efforts to organize students around the world in advocating for human rights in China. Can you share with us your view on the younger generation of Chinese citizens, both within and outside the country, and their—and the perspective may be different from their parents' or grandparents' generation. I'd love to hear the sort of inter-generational perspective of leaders within the community relative to this issue.

Mr. YANG. Thank you, ma'am. First of all, about my family. My father's generation, pretty much my father and my mother and my grandparents were really, really loyal to Communist Party members. So they'll be really unhappy to see me being here. But generally, the condition in China right now is really desperate. Even at this very moment when we are having this meeting right now, someone in mainland China might just be on the way to committing suicide because of the terrible, terrible economic atmosphere in China right now. And the entire society is really desperate, especially for young people. The suicide rate in mainland China, which I believe is included in my nine-page written testimony—you can take a look later—is really high right now. So that's really a catastrophe.

Additionally, overseas we do have—we're really glad to see there's various groups in Europe, in Japan, in America, all over the place. Currently, I'm trying to establish communication and cooperation with these groups and these people that are really helping, really encouraging that we are, like, really showing solidarity. But we might have a little bit different agenda than the Tiananmen Square generation. We're trying to be more creative, utilize modern technology as well as we can. And we are more focused on basic human rights.

We do not have the privilege of talking about the future of Asia, or the shape of the world, because right now due to the atmosphere being so desperate, our goal is just to help as many people as possible at least save their lives—like LGBTQ groups, like those students being persecuted during the White Paper revolution. We somehow would like to return to the basics, and restructure our society as more civilized, more democratic, and with the values of humanity and dignity from the beginning, step by step. And I have—I have myself full confidence that we will complete this task really quick.

Senator BUTLER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Commissioner, Senator Butler. Excellent line of questioning.

With that, I'd now like to defer the chair to the Speaker Emerita, Representative Nancy Pelosi. Madam Speaker.

**STATEMENT OF HON. NANCY PELOSI,
SPEAKER EMERITA OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Speaker Emerita PELOSI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members of the Commission, for paying very important attention to the Tiananmen Square massacre 35th anniversary. It's wonderful to hear. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

And to our guests, our student leaders, our leaders for human rights and democracy in China, thank you for your participation. Thank you for your ongoing courage. Because, unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, that's what it's going to take this time, because the Chinese have a very long arm outside of the country. I was just in London, where they had reached out to show their disagreement with the courage of those speaking out in Hong Kong.

But here we are 35 years later. You were not born yet. Maybe some of your parents weren't even born yet, I don't know. But in any event, it was an event that shocked the world because on live TV—unlike many things that had happened before—we could see a beautiful demonstration of courage, of the statue modeled after the Statue of Liberty, giving respect of the people in Tiananmen Square. And there were people in hundreds of other cities, I understand, at least a hundred other cities, who had come out to speak for democratic freedoms, also for the end of corruption. There were several items on the agenda.

And there were leaders in the Chinese government who were supportive of and sympathetic to the cause. They were soon rejected.

But first—the Chinese rolled tanks over these young people. Many died. Others were arrested. So many—some who escaped came here to Congress. I remember the first day some of them came here, the press of the world was focused on what they had to say. So this attention that this Commission is paying here today is very, very important, because we cannot let anyone think that those champions of Tiananmen Square are forgotten.

As we speak, there is genocide occurring against Muslims in China. As we speak, there is repression in Tibet of culture, religion, and language so that children have to leave Tibet to be raised in their culture. As we speak, China—the Chinese government—I make that distinction from the Chinese people—the Chinese government, the Communist Party, has made a mockery of “one country, two systems” by the suppression that we see in Hong Kong to destroy their democratic freedoms. They're in contradiction with the Basic Law, which they agreed to when the U.K. handed Hong Kong back over to China.

What kind of an argument is that to the world, that they are truly one country, two systems? What kind of a case is that to make to Taiwan, when they are threatening aggression not only to Taiwan, but in the South China Sea? So what has happened in China under the circumstances of the past 35 years has not been

positive in terms of global democracy, in terms of human rights, in terms of promoting democratic freedoms. We don't expect them to have a democratic government, but democratic freedoms and freedom to speak—very important.

I say this in China and I say it at the highest level—the highest, highest level there—we as Americans—if we do not speak out in recognizing the violations of human rights and democratic freedoms in China because of commercial interest, we lose all moral authority to speak out about human rights in any country in the world. This is a challenge to our conscience as a country. The man before the tank was a symbol of such great courage. Not only his, but of all the others in Tiananmen Square, and of yours for speaking out now—student leaders and leaders of human rights and democracy in China, for speaking out now.

I just wanted to—as the writer Lu Xun wrote, “Lies written in ink cannot disguise facts written in blood.” I just want to say, China is trying to deny some of this. When I was there a few years after Tiananmen Square, I said to some of the leaders in the government, there's a rumor that China is trying to revisit Tiananmen Square and change your attitude toward what happened there—maybe free the prisoners and the rest. And they said to me: You're right. It's a rumor. It's a rumor.

But we must remember what happened at Tiananmen because China continues to deny history.

One of my proudest possessions is the poster of the man in front of the tank. It's beautiful, a picture of courage. But not only that, it's signed by almost every dissident who has made his or her way out of China—signatures of courage. But I was saddened to learn on a subsequent visit, after we unfurled the banner in Tiananmen Square, remembering those who gave their lives—that was the early 1990s—but subsequent to that when I went there and was speaking at the universities, what was sad for me was to learn that most of the students didn't have the faintest idea of what that poster was, the man standing in front of the tank. Was it a commercial for a product in America? They had tried to erase that iconic image and what it stood for, as far as young people were concerned in China.

So this is not only wrong, it's mean-spirited because it tries to erase the history. But we cannot forget. And we will not let the history be forgotten. And that's why I'm so grateful to the committee for your work. I thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts about this really important 35th anniversary of Tiananmen Square. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, members of the Commission.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Madam Speaker. We appreciate you joining us.

Ms. HE. Can I jump in to respond to the questions online?

Representative NUNN. Yes. Professor He, if you want to jump in, this will be your time.

Ms. HE. Okay. Thank you. Thank you so much, Congresswoman Pelosi. It means a lot to see you here today with us. I fully agree with you that a government that deployed over 200,000 army soldiers with AK-47s and tanks against unarmed civilians in its capital city should not have any legitimacy. And the narrative that the

post-Tiananmen regime created, that we did this for you—telling the Chinese people that we did this because, if we hadn't, we wouldn't have had this Rising China, was the root of this war of memory against forgetting.

Public opinion about democratization and nationalism, and even war, is all closely connected to the collective memory of the nation's most immediate past. So I think this war is not just about getting justice and getting the truth, but also, has strong—profound implications on public opinion, both domestically and internationally. The CCP has been extremely successful exporting its propaganda outside China, taking advantage of our principles of intellectual freedom, using democracy to undermine democracy.

I've taught on different American campuses and later on Hong Kong campuses. We always faced the challenges of allowing different voices on the one hand, but protecting our campuses from the CCP propaganda that the regime had all the state machinery to back up. It is very difficult; it is indeed a challenge for democracy. And as I mentioned at the beginning, the fact that I, myself, after living through both post-'89 China and surviving 2019 with my students in Hong Kong, and then banned as a Tiananmen scholar from returning to Hong Kong, is already very telling—they are afraid of a history scholar and teacher because they are afraid that people will find out the historical past.

They are so afraid. That was why—that's why they launched the patriotic education campaign in the post-Tiananmen period, in which they emphasized foreign invasions—the Opium War, the Japanese invasion, while at the same time, they twist and manipulate historical memories of every atrocity that the CCP was responsible for. This is something that we need to think about harder in our policy-making—what can we do to protect our campuses?

I would also like to respond to the question raised earlier about engagement. Forgive me if I'm running over—you can tell me. What can we do to engage? I think there's something lost in translation. Often people in this country think of engagement as the way the U.S. engages. Of course, human rights NGOs are doing great work. But we also need to recognize the fact that under the CCP, any organization, any formal official organization, will immediately be banned, and targeted.

So I think it is important that we see those who are invisible but who are doing groundwork on the front line of the battlefield. I felt strongly about this, especially after my experience of working in Hong Kong after 2019, in the past few years. We had to be low profile when we were carrying on in small ways. There are still so many people who are invisible but they are doing important work underground. So maybe we can think about how to support these people in addition to NGOs and social media. For example, after the passing of Article 23 in Hong Kong, I immediately felt that social media had become so quiet. But that doesn't mean that people have given up resisting. They haven't. They have their own way to resist and to express themselves. I could keep going with examples. But thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Professor He.

Speaker Pelosi, do you have any further questions for the Commission? Otherwise, we'll continue with the line.

Speaker Emerita PELOSI. Just to pick up from what we just heard. Everybody says to me, Well, what are you going to do about China? It's a big country. We're a big country. We have to find our common ground. There are areas that we must try to work together on if we're going to solve the climate crisis, for example. We have to try to find some common ground there, and some areas of respect. But that doesn't mean that we ignore what has happened before. So we have to be true to our values, be true to our priorities, and be respectful of the people of China and not equate them with the Chinese Communist Party regime and the rest.

And to recognize—you know, when President Xi came to the United States, not this time for APEC but before—Senator Feinstein, my dear friend, and colleague of the senators who are here—she and I spoke to him about Tibet, in particular. We talked about China, but Tibet in particular. And he said, When it comes to Tibet you don't even know what you're talking about. You should go there. Things are great there. You just don't know. You should go. So I said, Mr. President, I've been trying to get a visa to go to Tibet for 25 years. Does this mean we have a visa to go to Tibet?

So we went to Tibet. And it was like a Potemkin Village. You know, they had tried to make it look as if people were just as happy as can be to have their culture diluted, their language forbidden, their religion mocked, and their people tortured for even the thought or the mention of the Dalai Lama. And so we told him when we went to Beijing after that visit—Jim McGovern said to him, We saw your Potemkin village of Tibet, because it wasn't real. And time prevents me from going into all of the unreality of it.

But, again, it's a big country. We're a big country. We want to find a future together that has global security, again, our values respected, because they respect in their governance their own people. That wouldn't be possible but for the courage of our guests here—the testimony here today. Thank you so much for that. So I don't really have a question except to say, when people say we can't ignore them, no, we can't ignore China. We have to find our common ground. But that common ground has to be about respect. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Representative NUNN. I'd like to thank the lady from California. And thank you, Congresswoman, for your advice and your perspective on this. Very good.

Speaker Emerita PELOSI. Thank you.

Representative NUNN. I want to return to the Commission here and say how honored I am to chair this hearing and that Chairman Smith has done great work to bring this team together on the 35th anniversary of Tiananmen Square. Today, we're holding important hearings to highlight not only the demonstrations that occurred over three decades ago, but the challenge that continues. I remember being a child and watching on NBC News as the anchor highlighted this gentleman here [points to photo of the Tank Man]. Standing as a beacon not just to the individuals of China standing up to tyranny, but really a world at the precipice—facing down both Communist China and the Soviet Union and their proxies around the world.

And here, more than anywhere else, we saw the first breaches in that horrible wall of communism's takeover of the world. For

those of you who are here today, both those who were on the ground when it happened and those who continue to be a voice for democracy and human rights, we are so grateful for your experiences and your voice. And we recognize that there is much more that needs to be done. As we gather here today, we not only remember the brave individuals who stood up in the name of democracy in 1989 in the streets of Beijing, but also to examine ways in which the CCP maintains a stranglehold on free speech throughout that country and exports it around the world today—including its detrimental effect and intimidation factor right here in the United States, on U.S. soil today, as one of our witnesses is exemplifying.

This Commission has examined time and time again Xi Jinping's brutal rule and has turned the clock backward on the people of China. And despite the victories won in 1989, we have seen the sun continue to set. His desire to crush political dissidents, silence opposing ideologies and threaten those who would challenge his power, signifies that China has descended into a near total authoritarian dystopia. This overwhelming suppression is not limited to immediate threats to Xi's power, but rather transcends decades of opposing and intolerable narratives. As we have learned today, the inability of those in mainland China to discuss the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstration showcases the lengths to which the CCP will go not only to whitewash history, but to bury those, literally in some cases, who disagree with the Party.

It's critical that we understand why the CCP continues to silence the story of Tiananmen Square and identify the tactics in which they're engaging to repress speech today. So I applaud this Commission for working together not only in a bipartisan and bicameral way, and with the White House to give voice to those who have been silenced. I want to thank our witnesses for their bravery for appearing here today. I'd like to get in a line of questioning.

So with that, I'd like to begin with Dr. Zhou Fengsuo. During these protests that are highlighted behind me, you helped set up the broadcast station to echo your beliefs and help keep fellow demonstrators up to date on what was happening in real time, in a country where free speech—let alone coordinated speech—was nearly impossible. As a young student, walk us through your thought process on the opposition work that you had done to stand up to China leading up to it, and including the day of events in Tiananmen Square.

Mr. ZHOU. I was a physics student, but I was a voracious reader. I read a lot of English literature. I was inspired by the famous speeches and documents. My first speech on Tiananmen Square was comparing the Declaration of Independence with the Chinese constitution, which I believe is arbitrary and dictatorial. It's not really from people's consent, like what the Declaration of Independence was showing us. But at that time I was pushed away after my speech because the student organizers on Tiananmen Square believed I was too radical.

Only in prison when I studied Chinese law—you know, so-called law—I realized just talking about the illegitimacy of the constitution is a crime in itself. That's why the other people were scared. But for me, this was a moment I realized even though it was a scary thought, the moment I shared it, it made such a difference

in me and in the people around me. That's why Tiananmen Square is like a magnet for so many people from different walks of society, even though, you know, before that they were so fearful.

Representative NUNN. Mr. Zhou, the same intimidation that you felt in 1989 China, we're now more than three decades on. You look at individuals in the country. Does that same level of intimidation persist? Is it pervasive under Xi's current CCP?

Mr. ZHOU. It's even stronger now. You know, at that time, we all believed that technology would change China to a better direction. But unfortunately, what happened is exactly the opposite. The CCP used the most sophisticated technology to monitor people, to force people into self-censorship. And that's not happening only in China. It's happening abroad as well. So that has proven to be, you know, one of most disturbing aspects of the technology, and how it happened.

But on the other hand, you know, there are always brave people who are fighting against this. At this moment we're speaking, the Twitter account of Teacher Li on Twitter—the very tweet about today in Beijing, that Human Rights in China wrote for him, is receiving 1.6 million hits. And most of these are people from China on this very single topic. This is, like, 15 hours after its publication. You know, it showed people's will. They are very interested in this. They have to overcome all the difficulties and risk a lot just to access this information. But as they state, they are not forgetting. They are trying to remember.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Mr. Zhou. And I applaud the bravery not only of the folks inside of China but, as you noted, the bravery continues outside of China. And, challengingly, the use of electronics has actually put many of them on the target list. And so I'd like to turn to Karin here. Karin, you have worked hard to continue to "call out" the hypocrisy not only within China, but the threat it has to folks right here on U.S. soil. Your work calling out China's zero-COVID policy illustrates the broader context of the CCP's desire to maintain control of a population well beyond the shores of Beijing's territorial integrity, but to intimidate folks like yourself, right here on U.S. territory. You can highlight here the complete lockdown of an entire country of over a billion people, but yet they still had resources to come after you. Karin, share your story with us and how this suppression and tracking extends far beyond China's coastline.

Ms. KARIN. Yes. Thank you for your question, Representative. I would like to begin by saying that I personally haven't experienced any direct intimidation or harassment, but many of my friends and more and more this year are experiencing intimidation, harassment, and interrogation. When they are here, they might just get a call from their parents asking them to hop onto a Zoom call. And then in the window of the Zoom call, next to their parents, they will see the face of CCP police, ready to interrogate them unexpectedly. And part of the reason that I'm testifying in disguise is because I was afraid what happened to my friend Eva might happen to me again.

But the larger reason as to why I'm afraid actually has more to do with not knowing what's going to happen to me. I don't know if tomorrow I'm going to get punched in the face three times like

Eva was or be like the girl from the Berklee School of Music who received a threatening message that her hand was going to get chopped off for just doing the vigil at the school. And at Columbia, a school with a massively influential CSSA, and almost 7,000 Chinese students, I think there will always be this feeling of uncertainty as to when, and from whom, and what format the retaliation or transnational repression is going to happen.

Representative NUNN. Well, Karin, to both you and your colleagues, we salute not only your bravery but your steadfast commitment to speaking truth to power—whether it's here in the United States or overseas.

I'd now like to call on Professor Rowena He. Identify for us, Professor, you're coming to us remote here, but you've seen from your work CCP suppression both inside mainland China and that tradition of censorship now spilling over. The CCP has influence over the Chinese diaspora, as well as political activists here in the United States. What have you been able to identify as to how they've carried this out beyond Beijing's immediate threshold of control?

Ms. HE. Thank you. For decades, I lived in fear. People often ask me, What are the difficulties of researching Tiananmen or any forbidden memory, taboo subjects by the Beijing regime? I think first of all, it was fear. This is a problem for the entire China field, not just for me, and also for journalists reporting from inside or outside China. If you do a good job with integrity, you will very likely, sooner or later, lose access to the country that you study or report on. So the implications, again, are profound. The regime has full control of who can get in and who will be denied work visas. It's almost mission impossible.

How is it possible that you are studying China, but Beijing is going to control your access to China? So you do a good job, and then you lose your job, as I mentioned at the beginning. This is conflict of interest. We need to figure out collectively what we can do about this. Academic freedom, intellectual freedom—is the core of any inquiry. The CCP has been doing this in the post-'89 China. There is always such an unbalanced relationship between the state power and its people, between the power and the powerless like me. They use all state machinery to control you. Instead of trying to resolve the political and social issues being brought up, the regime punishes those who raise those issues, people like Liu Xiaobo and those who signed Charter 08, when people openly asked for political change and transformation again after Tiananmen. And the result was, Liu Xiaobo became the second Nobel Peace Prize laureate who died as a political prisoner. So those kinds of implications on individuals are profound. And we need to find a way to protect individuals who speak truth to power, including myself. When I first returned from the battlefield, that's what I called it, when I was being banned after defending our universal values on the front line, I didn't know what was going to happen to me, and what was going to happen to my family in China.

And I think each of us, people like Fengsuo, can tell you a story about how we were punished because of work and were not allowed to return to China to be at the sickbed of our loved ones before they died. So Tiananmen is not just about politics; it's not even just

about facts. It's about humanity. It's also about the values that we defend. And the CCP has been successful in twisting the values and changing the narrative. We are facing a big crisis with the CCP taking over public opinion about the China Model, presenting it as an alternative of civilization for the world now that democracy is failing. If that narrative takes over, then we would really be in crisis. I'm now exiled officially, after studying Tiananmen for over two decades. Democracy is my only home. I hope that we will work together to safeguard and preserve democracy. I will have no home to move to if democracy fails. Let's protect and preserve democracy.

Please allow me a few more minutes to respond to your question about the 1980s, and the Tiananmen generation. We were a generation of what I call "inbetweeners." We were born toward the end of Mao's Cultural Revolution and grew up during Deng's open reform era. On one hand, we were instilled with the ideas of sacrificing for the great cause; at the same time, we were exposed to individualistic new ideas. That was reflected in the two songs sung throughout the Tiananmen Movement in 1989. The first one was the Communist Party's "Internationale." And then the second one—"Nothing to My Name" by the rock singer Cui Jian.

So people often ask me, how is it possible that the students were singing the communist "Internationale" while falling in front of communist machine guns? This is what I call the betrayal of loyalty in my book.

But I don't think the White Paper Generation has that kind of illusion about the regime. Maybe we don't see any cracks now, but I think the hope lies in the future generation; engagement with the future generation. I think that they know better what this regime is capable of. And that's where the hope is.

We may not be able to tell when the change will take place until it happens. Any major historical change, before it happened, people would tell you it's impossible, including the fall of the Berlin Wall. But after it happened, everyone said that it was inevitable. With that, I think that we leave a note of hope with the future generation present today who testified together with us. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Professor Rowena He.

I'd now like to turn from the generation of Tiananmen Square to where we are now inside China. Mr. Yang, you have been a journalist. You have been on the front lines, both covering and reporting this. And you are part of a new generation of individuals standing up for free speech. To what extent do you think the Tiananmen massacre influenced your generation of Chinese students? And has censorship fueled the type of threat that was talked about by other members on the panel today? And to what extent would you recommend change?

Mr. YANG. Thank you, sir. First of all, the Tiananmen Square massacre to our new generation, I've been having conversations with many of my colleagues. And to many of us, the most surprising part and most encouraging part of the Tiananmen Square massacre is not—we're not really surprised by the bloodshed that has been conducted by the Communist Party, because we have already witnessed what's happening in Tibet, what's happening with

the Uyghurs, what's happening in Hong Kong. So we are kind of prepared as to how brutal the Communist Party could possibly be.

And for many of us, the new generation, when we first learned about the Tiananmen Square massacre, the most surprising part was not the brutal murder and slaughter. It's actually we were really surprised to find that our nation at one time was so close to freedom, was so close to breaking the chain of thousands of years of dictatorship and autocracy. And we're really encouraged that this land still has hope, that these people are trustworthy. But the circumstances are such that the atmosphere is really being manipulated by the Communist Party. So we're not really able to observe and witness the real circumstances in China right now. But the main goal is we are still looking ahead, and with real confidence about the future of this land, and to our people.

And sorry, what's the second question again?

Representative NUNN. Aspects that you've seen for reform or holding the Chinese Communist Party accountable—either in your reporting or speaking out against it?

Mr. YANG. Right. So currently we do have lots of case studies and experience of people who have been harassed and intimidated by the Chinese Communist Party overseas. Especially for someone like me, who has decided to be openly against the Communist Party. We do have lots of pressure, lots of intimidation, sometimes really harmful trauma we need to go through. So that's why we are currently including the proposal I've brought in my nine-page report to you, that we are doing the best we can to try to seek the resources to reestablish a safe space, a public zone with democracy and the value of humanity. In that case, we could help our colleagues, members, or people in our community to rehabilitate from this trauma. That's one of the most important steps we need to take, and to walk away from the trauma and move on.

Representative NUNN. Thank you, Mr. Yang.

We heard about the physical violence, the intimidation occurring here in the United States. You've reported from Canada. Tell us how the transnational threat coming from the CCP, including places in Canada, has had an impact on communities there.

Mr. YANG. Right, absolutely. I just had a case that came up I believe a couple weeks before. One of my friends in London, which is in Ontario, brought this to my attention—the whole story is they have, like, a festival in college, and someone brought a Korean flag there—and many of the Chinese students were really upset about this scenario. So my friend was thinking, like, You guys can't do this. This is discrimination. And he was seriously bullied by these Chinese nationalists—we call them “pinkies” or patriarchs of the Communist Party—communist lovers, etc. They seriously threatened my friend and really tried to intimidate him.

So we are currently still working with the other MPs and Canadian police to deal with these kinds of circumstances right now. And besides that, I have personally experienced lots of swearing and intimidation from the Mandarin-speaking community in Toronto. Besides that, one of the most shocking parts is what I mentioned in my speech, that we—in 2019 placed plastic flowers as a 30-year memorial for the Tiananmen Square massacre at the Statue of Democracy at New York University. After around one or two

days, I realized that that the flowers had been burned, and there were really dark marks on the floor—on the wall and the floor around them. But no one really deals with it.

So that's part of what we are trying to do right now. That's why from our Canadian side we're trying the best we can to have a coalition and push a bill forward called C 70, which is regarding foreign registration and regulations.

Representative NUNN. I want to thank our witnesses not only for their testimony but for their individual bravery in standing up and shedding light on this. Whether it was in 1989, sir, or whether it's today in 2024. As a career-long intelligence officer who worked in China, there was hope. There was an opportunity to make a change.

But we have seen that door quickly shut, whether it's in the direct ramifications of what's happening and the transition of Hong Kong back to dictatorial rule by Beijing, whether it's what's happening to the people inside of China, whether they be Uyghurs or minority members being oppressed by their own government, or, as you have highlighted, individuals who are the children of the 1989 revolution within Tiananmen Square, or the next generation, who continue to be both hunted, bullied, and clearly abused.

We have to make a change. By calling out China you are doing a direct service not only to your fellow countrymen but to individuals and humanity around the world. I'm truly emboldened by your bravery. And I thank you for being here with us today.

With that, as chair, I'd like to recognize Commissioner Representative Wexton for her comments and questions before the witnesses today. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JENNIFER WEXTON,
A REPRESENTATIVE FROM VIRGINIA**

Representative WEXTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As members of the Commission already know, last year I was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy, or PSP. I describe it as Parkinson's on steroids and I don't recommend it. PSP makes it very difficult for me to speak. So I use an assistive app so that I can participate and you can understand me. I want to thank the Chair and Co-chair for allowing me to do both today.

China's continued suppression of the free press is a grave human rights concern. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to bury the memory of its crimes at Tiananmen Square. That's why I'm happy to be leading the revolution with Chairman Smith, marking the 35th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. It is critical that the Chinese government end its censorship of speech about the Tiananmen Square massacre and stop its intimidation of families mourning those lost in 1989.

This question is for the whole panel, starting with Karin. What are the primary challenges faced by activists working to preserve the remembrance of the Tiananmen Square massacre, despite censorship by the Chinese government?

Ms. KARIN. Thank you for your question, Representative. Since I'm currently a student on an American campus, I think I can only speak on behalf of my other fellow student activists here on Amer-

ican campuses. And I think the greatest challenge that we face right now is the looming fear of transnational repression, not knowing what form it's going to take tomorrow, or not knowing from whom it's going to come. And I mentioned in my testimony that, unlike Uyghur or Hong Kong dissidents, Chinese overseas students encounter distinct obstacles when attempting to reveal such instances of transnational repression and coercion by the CCP.

And I think the situation faced by Uyghur or Hong Kong dissidents is objectively much worse than ours. We, the Chinese overseas students, often feel that we have too much to lose. By coming forward to tell our stories, not only do we risk the families, the core families of ours in China, but also the social connection that we have here with our peers, Chinese students. But if institutions here are willing to offer students more support and protection of identity, as CECC is doing today by allowing me to anonymously testify, then I think more Chinese students will be willing to come forward and tell their stories. I think this is the largest challenge faced by our community. And this is the solution to it. Thank you.

Ms. HE. Can I jump in?

Representative WEXTON. Go ahead.

Ms. HE. I think this is such an important, excellent question. I hope I can jump in. As an individual, I've been attacked all these years, first by the nationalist students and also, at the same time, as Karin mentioned, the fear of our families being taken hostage by the regime. And we see that this is starting to happen in Hong Kong as well. So things are deteriorating. And we face this as human beings.

That's why I argue in my book that sometimes being idealistic and trying to fight for a human rights course in China—you can be selfish. That means that you choose to do what the right thing to do is, but the human price—the personal price to pay is not just you. Because the CCP is always seen by association. They also punish your loved ones in order to control you. They intrude on your private space in order to control your public activism. I think that's something that we have to face as human beings. They take advantage of the most beautiful thing in human life, that's your love for your family members. And then they control you.

And secondly, I think engagement in—as a scholar, for me as a teacher, on campuses, either before in Hong Kong or on American campuses, I think it's also extremely important not just to focus on Chinese students, or American students, or Hong Kong students. I think the engagement, the community that we built—like, for example, when I was at Harvard, I organized annual Tiananmen conferences every year, even after the semester ended. And the students wanted the Tiananmen Mothers to know that, whatever the CCP was doing and saying, that we, young people here, still remember, and we still care.

I think that message from the younger generation is important. It's also a message of hope. And I believe that many of us, not just someone who studies Tiananmen—I think many of us on American campuses—in Hong Kong, it's very difficult now. But I know my colleagues still carry on. But if you're in freedom, if you're in democracy, please make full use of the classroom space that we have

to engage and to educate the younger generation not just about China, not just about Tiananmen, but about the importance of standing up for those who cannot speak for themselves, like the Tiananmen Mothers. Thank you very much.

Mr. YANG. I think it's my turn right now. So if I haven't got the question wrong, it's pretty much about what barriers we're facing, what circumstances we're facing, and what kind of support we need. So at the current stage, I'll be really direct, based on what I have in the data and what I have experienced.

First of all, I think there are four important categories for the new generation to deal with. And not only the new generation, but pretty much for every protester against the Chinese Communist Party overseas.

First of all, the most important one is identity. While relatively safe, you might face the risk of returning to China at any time. That could be a huge consequence. And additionally, funding support. Many of the young organizations—from what I know—are broke, and most of them survive on donations and fundraising, not nearly enough for what the political activists need. For example, I've been spending a couple hundred dollars on speakers, and this still hasn't been paid back yet. But it still takes time.

Additionally, legal support. In many cases we do need many of the various policies to support the activists on doing what we're doing right now. For instance, where I come from in Canada, we do have a little bit of a shortage on these kinds of circumstances. So we are trying the best we can to push our bill forward through the Congress in order to get the political and legal support in a more legitimate way.

Eventually, the last but one of the most important things is, we do need support from the professional side. For instance, the technical rules of having the meetings or the SOP or standard formula of how to deal with conflict, or sexual harassment, these kinds of procedures. We need some advice from the professional side. But this one is pretty much linked with the second point, which is the founding problem. The main goal is just trying to establish our community and our organizations to be more professional, to be more standard. And this is one of the most important things that our generation is trying to establish and complete. Thank you.

Mr. ZHOU. Yes, I would like to add on. For me over the last 35 years the main challenge here is the collusion of the large tech companies with the CCP regime in silencing the commemoration of Tiananmen. My own accounts across two different platforms were shut down at different times because I commemorate the Tiananmen anniversary. And what's more important is that the FBI investigation revealed that every company with business in China has such an operation that they would sometimes even hire a state security agent to tell them what to do in terms of censorship and surveillance.

That puts everyone in danger, not only us. And, for example, Apple, when some protester in China used AirDrop to distribute the messages—and Apple stopped this function very soon, very quickly, as it was happening. And just recently I met someone who used AirDrop in China and his information was leaked. They turned him in. There's no other way other than Apple providing

some insider information from the company so that this kind of service can be tracked. So that's the kind of area I think in which we need more clarification.

I would urge that there be a hearing on how U.S. tech companies work with the CCP in this aspect, because a large part of the transnational repression is also enabled by the online surveillance. You know, for example, someone was revealed online because the website that he used leaked the information of his IP address somehow to CCP hackers, either willingly or unwillingly. But, yes, we must look into this. This is a very broad issue. Thank you.

Representative WEXTON. Thank you. Does any member have any additional questions for any member of the panel? Hearing none, I want to thank the witnesses for their bravery in speaking out against oppression and in support of the Tiananmen victims and democratic self-determination. As an American who has lived her entire lifetime in a free society and a democratic republic, I can only imagine the repression that you all have seen. Please know that you have friends here on both sides of the aisle in Congress.

Staff Director TOZZI. Did anyone want to say anything finally for the record? Professor He.

Ms. HE. Yes, thank you. Thank you so much. It just means so much—I was traveling nonstop, and I wondered if I could do this. But I'm so grateful to have this opportunity. I'm so glad I could do it. I hope that people will remember the Tiananmen Mothers and remember those young people who lost their voices in 1989. Also the struggles of the Hong Kong people right now—ongoing. Please pay attention to them, to how Hong Kong is now becoming really another city of China, politically, in terms of the repression.

And please fight with us in solidarity. Very often we feel weak, we feel vulnerable. We find it difficult. It's just so meaningful to be with Fongsuo and the other two witnesses from the younger generation, 35 years after Tiananmen. I see that the torch is being passed on. And if we want light, we must conquer darkness. Thank you so much.

Staff Director TOZZI. Anyone else?

Mr. ZHOU. Yes, I would add something. The White Paper protest, the success of it—you know, it was the first public protest that forced the CCP into changing its policy—showed that there is a very vibrant cyber community engendered by Twitter, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook. And so it's very important to keep this civil society, in cyberspace, strong and alive. And for example, today there is just a tremendous commemoration of what happened 35 years ago, way stronger than any time in the past. But it is happening because there is cyberspace. And, you know, what happened during the White Paper protests also showed that the narrative in this civil society virtual space is crucial for change in China.

The White Paper movement also showed that the overseas diaspora organizations are important and effective in bringing change to China today. You know, when Peng Lifa's message was silenced in China, it was preserved and broadcast all over in this virtual space, parallel to the censored space in China. This is why my organization now wants to focus our work on digital rights and freedom of expression, and then the diaspora community building, es-

pecially with young people and the new immigrants who are disillusioned by Xi Jinping.

Furthermore, I want to applaud the recent steps taken by law enforcement and Congress to push back against transnational repression. I have seen perceptible changes in the environment because of recent actions, but the Chinese diaspora overall still lives in fear in the shadow of the CCP's repression. It is vitally important that we continue to work toward providing a secure environment for people to live free of persecution. In doing so, the United States must center its policy toward China around China's democratization and respect toward human rights.

In conclusion, I thank the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for your unfailing support on this very important issue. On the 35th anniversary of Tiananmen, I urge you to listen to the voices of the Chinese people who have fought for freedom and to protect the rights of those who seek to express themselves freely and openly. I believe in the future of a democratic, free, and beautiful China. We are all working toward it. Thank you.

Staff Director TOZZI. Thank you.

Mr. Yang or Karin?

Ms. KARIN. I would like to also briefly add two things I think the policymakers could do to address this very specific transnational repression that Chinese students on American campuses are experiencing right now. The first is to compel the Chinese Student and Scholar Associations, known more commonly as CSSAs, on American campuses to be transparent about their funding sources. CSSAs provides a community for Chinese students who have only recently arrived in America, but at the same time many of its members receive funding from the Chinese consulate or embassies and serve as eyes for the consulate to identify and silence pro-democracy students.

By compelling CSSAs to disclose their funding, we can ensure that this community, important to many, does not become a vehicle of the CCP's long arm of repression. The second thing, I think, is to urge universities to establish a comprehensive response mechanism and support networks for students facing transnational repression. This could include many things, like setting up campus task forces against transnational repression and offering security support for on-campus events in which students participating potentially face the risk of being identified and harassed. If we are able to put such a response mechanism in place, then more pro-democracy Chinese students will feel more comfortable expressing their political thoughts in campus spaces, without needing to go through what I or my friends were forced to go through. Thank you.

Staff Director TOZZI. Thank you.

Mr. YANG. Thank you. Basically, my report is a bit too long. So I'll just bring the most important thing that I believe right here. On the political advice, I will say the U.S. can be a partner with China on trade, but it has to be based on the American people as partners in human rights with the Chinese people. This is the most important thing. And eventually I want to talk to all the people who're watching this live. Coming to North America or coming to a free place is not the end. It's not even the beginning of the end.

It's the end of the beginning. There is a long way to go. There's a long struggle to go. But luckily, we've got Congress, we've got every free government—responsible government on our side. We've got pretty much all the people who love freedom and democracy on our side. So maybe you are melancholy or feeling stress right now. Please carry on. We are with you and everyone's with you. And we are eventually going to make it.

Staff Director TOZZI. Well, thank you. And with those closing words, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:42 p.m., the hearing was concluded.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ZHOU FENG SUO

In 2022, I attended a Halloween parade in Manhattan with a group of around fifty young people, dressed in protest garb and carrying signs challenging the Chinese Communist Party. I was the only older adult in the crowd, but I recognized many of the attendees. Several were students who would go on to organize major White Paper protests, and some were the children of fellow Tiananmen protesters. I had met many of them in prior months, as they visited the June 4th Memorial Museum. I was deeply touched when one protester told me that they had spent 7 months in prison a few years prior for commemorating the massacre on Tiananmen Square. As I stood in this crowd of young people, I felt very excited and inspired. Without any prompting, they shouted, “down with CCP, down with Xi Jinping.” At that moment, I was in tears. I realized that after 33 years, I was finally seeing the younger generation stepping up to carry the torch of freedom that I have carried with me ever since 1989, from Tiananmen Square.

In 1989, I was a student studying physics at Tsinghua University in Beijing. I was among the first to protest on Tiananmen Square when Hu Yaobang died, and I was among the last to leave when the tanks were rolling in, one only 20 feet from me. In between, I witnessed the most incredible outpouring of Chinese people in support of freedom and democracy. Millions of people gathered on Tiananmen Square from all walks of life: students, ordinary Chinese people, communist officials, Christians, and Buddhist monks. It was also my first time meeting people from Hong Kong, and witnessing their strong support. The solidarity at that moment was so overwhelming, strong, and inspiring. I installed dozens of loudspeakers on the Monument to the People’s Heroes at the center of the square, and for the first time, the people’s heartfelt voices were heard echoing across the huge plaza, at the center of China’s political power. In that moment, many Chinese people who were fearful and reticent became expressive and articulate. Freedom was in the air. Democracy was almost within reach.

I also witnessed the brutal massacre of these peaceful protesters by elite troops, armed with tanks and machine guns. The pungent smell of tear gas. The bullet holes on the buildings along the most important street in Beijing. The rolling tanks and armored vehicles, and the dead bodies outside of the hospital, laying in the bicycle shed because the hospital was so overwhelmed by those who were wounded and killed. The scene was that of a war zone; a war conducted by the CCP’s army against the Chinese people. I remember Zhong Qing, my younger schoolmate from Tsinghua, who died for our shared dream of a better China. He was only a third-year student, studying in the instrument department at Tsinghua University. When I realized he was dead, I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. I realized I must carry on in his name and continue speaking out on his behalf.

The protesters were not the only ones who suffered under the government’s attack. The military’s brutal siege of the city encountered courageous resistance from the people of Beijing. When martial law was first declared, millions of people came out to block the troops. Many of them stood still in front of the marching soldiers and rolling tanks in order to protect the student protesters like me. That is how we witnessed the great Tank Man, who has since become one of the most important icons of the last century, representing courage against overwhelming power and violence.

The whole world watched as the Chinese government turned against its own people and murdered peaceful protesters. Yet, the response from democratic countries was weak: the United States imposed only limited sanctions, and President H.W. Bush sent a special envoy to inform Deng Xiaoping of his support, even after this

senseless massacre.¹ The CCP took the wrong path after 1989, setting the country on a trajectory of ever-increasing political repression and human right violations. That is why, later, this regime would put Uyghurs in concentration camps, force Tibetans into self-immolation, and deprive Hong Kong of its freedom. If a regime can use tanks in broad daylight to kill its own people and still enjoy the support of most democratic countries, there is no limit to what it could do, in terms of both internal repression and external aggression.

Domestically, the CCP chose to simply erase the memories of the massacre through censorship and brutal repression. It tightened its grip on free speech, banning any mention of the reality of what happened that summer, to the extent that many young people in China today have never heard of it. Twenty-eight years after my classmate Zhong Qing's death, his brother visited the Tiananmen Museum in Hong Kong. It was the first time that he learned why his older brother died.

Perhaps the CCP once could have taken a different path, transforming into a social democratic party, but the massacre and crackdown in 1989 eliminated the ability of this regime to be positively changed through mere trade and investment. United States policymakers have deliberately put their heads in the sand, ignoring the cause of human rights activists and political prisoners in China. This strategy may have brought short-term gains in the form of increased profit, but appeasing the CCP for the benefit of trade has proven to be self-defeating and self-destructive. What Tiananmen told us 35 years ago, the most important lesson, is that the United States policy toward the CCP regime must focus on the democratization of China. Without democratization, the regime will become an even stronger threat toward universal values including freedom and human rights.

Today, we remember Tiananmen because it reminds us of what a different China could have been; because Chinese people demonstrated their love of freedom and democracy through their protests and resistance. The fight didn't stop then—for most of us, it was only the beginning of our journey. There was Liu Xiaobo, who gave up a position as a visiting scholar at Columbia University to fly back to join the students on Tiananmen Square. He refused to leave China and died as the first and only Nobel Peace laureate who died in prison without ever seeing the award. There is Xu Zhiyong, who was only a high school student when the massacre happened, but who was resolved from that moment on to dedicate his life to the dream of a free, democratic, and beautiful China. His New Citizens' Movement gained tens of thousands of followers, from all over China. He was recently sentenced to 14 years in prison.

For me personally, it has been a privilege to work with these amazing freedom fighters, to raise awareness of their suffering, their sacrifices, their dreams, and their goals, and to support the Tiananmen Mothers, and other victims of the Tiananmen Massacre. Even though the Tiananmen protests and massacre remain a source of trauma for the Chinese people, it has simultaneously become a tremendous source of inspiration, healing, and hope. That's why I have collected many relics and artworks from 1989. Each of these items carries a story of life and death, of strength and endurance, that is difficult to find elsewhere.

Even though the CCP has tried, in many ways successfully, to erase the memory of the Tiananmen protests, it remains the most sought-after information for young people from China. They are eager to embrace the Tiananmen protests as a source of energy and inspiration. Many of them are willing to risk a lot to preserve the memory. Zeng Yuxuan, a law student from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, reached out to me when she saw that I was touring a banner in commemoration of Tiananmen. Tragically, she was arrested in Hong Kong for possessing this banner and sentenced to 6 months in prison, then sent back to China, and she has not been heard from since. I am always moved by her message about the Tiananmen protests. She told me that even though the great protests ended in tragedy, it is something precious that binds us all, across generations.

I am reminded, often, of this legacy that ties together everyone who has fought for freedom in China. When I heard of Peng Lifa, the Sitong Bridge Warrior, I was immediately reminded of the great feat of Tank Man in 1989. Peng Lifa staged his protest at the most visible place, during very tight security for the 20th Party Congress. He used a loudspeaker and smoke generator so his message would be seen, and managed to broadcast for more than 30 minutes in Beijing before he was arrested and disappeared.

Miraculously, his message spread like wildfire. Although domestic censorship limited its initial reach, in the United States, in Berlin, in Toronto, in Tokyo, everywhere, Chinese students were mobilizing. They formed groups and stood up in the

¹“The Other Tiananmen Papers: A ChinaFile Conversation,” ChinaFile, July 8, 2019, <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/other-tiananmen-papers>.

name of duty, a phrase borrowed from the now very famous Tiananmen slogan: “It’s my duty,” said a protester riding a bicycle to Tiananmen Square. The voice of these young activists was carried back to China by tens of millions of VPN users, who were locked in their own homes under the Zero-COVID policy.

Eventually, this spark of protest spread out across China, and grew in Shanghai after the unjust deaths of Uyghur families in the Urumqi apartment fires, thus forcing the CCP to change their policy in response to people’s protests for the first time in the CCP’s history.

Their story, the story of the White Paper protesters, reverberates in me. The story of one young student who gingerly posted banners, then found friends and realized she wasn’t alone, exactly mirrored what we went through in 1989. The moment that people began to gather, they realized that there are millions of people just like them that share the same opinions but were forced into silence and indifference because of fear and self-censorship. But when they heard each other, they realized not only that they were not alone, but their voices reflected the true voices of people in China who can’t speak out. This happened 35 years ago on Tiananmen Square, but today these discussions happen in cyberspace, through platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and eventually flooded onto the heavily censored and surveilled domestic apps such as WeChat and Douyin.

Over the last 5 years, we have seen Uyghurs forced into concentration camps, the forced takeover of Hong Kong, Tibetan children torn away from their families, and, of course, the horrible Zero-COVID policy. We are undoubtedly in a dark moment for human rights in China. Yet, rather than giving up, Chinese people still fought to find their voice in cyberspace. Millions of people use VPNs to circumvent the Great Firewall. The internet is a vital place for civil society discourse and actions, when these kinds of activities are completely forbidden in China. There is, has been, and will be a huge impact on China through this space.

The White Paper Movement also showed that overseas diaspora organizations are important and effective in bringing change to China, even today. The voice of Peng Lifa was preserved outside of China, while it was silenced completely within China at first. It’s because of his message reverberating back over China that eventually, people were able to act at the same time and under the same slogan. This is why Human Rights in China, my organization, wants to focus our work on digital rights, freedom of expression, and diaspora community building, especially among young people and new immigrants who are disillusioned by Xi Jinping.

I am also alarmed by the increasing censorship within China, which now extends to Hong Kong. The Tiananmen Massacre is, in many ways, a salient litmus test. For decades, Hong Kong held a yearly vigil for the victims of the massacre. Yet, since 2019, we have witnessed a city darkened by the CCP, while admirable heroes such as Chow Hang-tung, and others, have risked and lost everything for the sake of remembering Tiananmen. Just a few days ago, seven people in Hong Kong were arrested, including Chow Hang-tung, her mother, and former colleagues, for continuing her work and posting on social media about the Tiananmen Massacre.

Unfortunately, Western tech companies have played a significant role in enabling the Chinese government’s censorship. Two social media accounts on different platforms, belonging to Humanitarian China, an organization I co-founded, have been shut down because of our involvement in Tiananmen commemoration events. An FBI investigation revealed that companies with business in China must comply with CCP directions on censorship.² During the White Paper Movement, the people used Apple’s AirDrop technology to spread Peng Lifa’s message, until the service was suddenly shut down, in another case of cooperation with the Chinese authorities. Apple did not respond to our concerns, even after student activist Wang Han protested with a week-long hunger strike in front of Apple headquarters.

Both the White Paper Movement and Tiananmen commemoration face the same strict online censorship, enabled by the willing cooperation of U.S. companies. This is where policymakers can make a difference. Through the White Paper Movement, we have seen proof that Chinese cyber-society has the power to influence China and bring in fundamental change. However, the companies that enable the existence of this vibrant cyber-society remain vulnerable to the CCP, and have not done enough to protect vulnerable users or stand up against the CCP’s demands. Companies must be held to account for their role in supporting the CCP’s censorship, surveillance, and harassment. I encourage Congress to investigate how U.S. tech compa-

²Drew Harwell and Ellen Nakashima, “Federal prosecutors accuse Zoom executive of working with Chinese government to surveil users and suppress video calls,” *The Washington Post*, Dec. 18, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/12/18/zoom-helped-china-surveillance/>.

nies comply with the CCP's demands, thus exposing every user to direct threat of surveillance.

Furthermore, I applaud the recent steps taken by law enforcement and Congress to push back against transnational repression, and I have seen perceptible changes in the environment. But the Chinese diaspora still lives in fear, in the shadow of the CCP's transnational repression. It is vitally important that we continue to work toward providing a secure environment for people to live free of persecution. In order to do so, the United States must center its policy toward China around China's democratization and respect toward human rights.

In conclusion, I thank the congressional-Executive Commission on China for your unfailing support on this very important issue. On this 35th anniversary of Tiananmen, I urge you to listen to the voices of the Chinese people who have fought for freedom, and to protect the rights of those who seek to express themselves freely and openly. I believe in the future of a democratic, free, and beautiful China. Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RUOHUI YANG

Five years ago today, on the 30th anniversary of June 4th, I took to the streets for the first time, committing myself to the movement for democracy in China.

I was deeply intimidated by the atmosphere of fear cultivated by the Chinese Communist Party in Canada. I was cautious around everyone, wearing sunglasses and masks.

However, the 2019 Hong Kong anti-extradition movement further secured my determination to engage in the democracy movement. In Toronto, I actively participated with my Hong Kong friends in organizing support for the Hong Kong people. As someone from mainland China, I also faced considerable pressure from my own community, dealing with psychological stress from harassment by Communist Party supporters and suffering political depression filled with powerlessness. I constantly worried about receiving midnight phone calls from China, from my father—a Communist Party official—hysterically threatening to cutoff my tuition to force me to return to China. I worried about being unable to complete my studies and being forced back to a land where expressing different opinions means facing bullying from teachers and classmates.

Things that happened during the protests reminded me that the national border cannot stop the Communist Party from spreading fear overseas. Some Chinese, organized by the consulate, drove their luxury cars through our protest lines, shouting insults. They burned our flowers at the Statue of Democracy; some protesters even received death threats. My life was filled with harassment from strangers, and I felt isolated within my own community.

In 2020, Dr. Li Wenliang, the whistleblower of COVID-19, who could have prevented this global disaster, was accused by Chinese police of spreading “false statements” and subsequently labeled a “criminal.” He died from the virus shortly after. Surprisingly, many young Chinese students attended a memorial event I organized in downtown Toronto, which deeply moved me. I called on everyone to organize and band together to overcome this fear and despair and fight for a life of human rights, freedom, and democracy—which led to the founding of our organization, “Assembly of Citizens.”

Before the summer of 2022, we remained a secret society. In our group, we had events like movie screenings and discussion sessions and learned the history of the Tiananmen generation. More importantly, we have tried to re-establish a union based on respect for human rights, and equality among individuals, fighting to create a public space and seeking Chinese Democracy. With our solidarity, the Assembly of Citizens successfully organized the Tiananmen Square massacre anniversary event as a young generation during the summer of 2022, and this is the point that we started to turn to the public. It was also the moment that I decided to stand on the stage and openly protest against the threat and fear of the CCP spreading.

Over the 3 years of COVID-19, the young generation in China has suffered from our human rights disaster. The most familiar way of life has been modified, it has accelerated the awakening of human rights, it has also caused the establishment of various young groups around the world. During the White Paper Revolution winter of 2022, the Assembly of Citizens became capable of organizing protests and events faster and more professionally to support the movement in China. Our friends in Europe became the mailbox for contributors and resistance fighters inside the Great Firewall, becoming one of the most influential Mandarin accounts on X. Rowena He collected the testimonies and stories of human rights catastrophes inside the Great Firewall and told these stories that have been neglected by international society to

millions of people every day, simultaneously facing the threat of the CCP. Our friends in the U.S. are trying to make movies, talk shows, and other forms of art to spread awareness of the oppression of human rights. Our friends in Japan and Korea are establishing cultural and creative businesses to emphasize resistance as a lifestyle. Through dealing with various issues, we realized how to avoid division, build a professional organization, and more inclusively and strongly link with other groups.

We inherited the spirit of resistance from the Tiananmen generation, along with our characteristics. Our actions reflect what Taiwanese people often mention: “a lifestyle of democracy and freedom.” Based on this spirit, although our political beliefs may be different, we were able to effectively connect with Taiwanese, Tibetans, Hongkongers, Uyghurs, and other groups to combat our common terror and oppression of human rights.

Twenty-nine years ago, in the same congressional hall, Major General Charles Sweeney, who testified about the decision to drop the atomic bomb, said, “One can only forgive by remembering. And to forget is to risk repeating history.” The last rapid deterioration of human rights under a major power was in 1933 in Germany, the year they enacted the Enabling Act, a law that brought Germany under dictatorship. In that year, Peter Drucker began writing his first book, “The End of Economic Man: The Origins of Totalitarianism.” Today, as we open this book, we feel as if history is repeating itself. Let me adapt his words to today’s situation in China.

The form which the totalitarian revolution has been taking indicates in itself that such an order will eventually arrive. That the Chinese substitute the CCP for order when they cannot have real order, that they worship Xi Jinping when they have no God to worship and no concept of man to respect, shows by its very intensity that they must have an order, a creed, and a rational concept of man. The more fervently they turn to nationalism, the more feverishly they search for something else. And the more eagerly they will embrace the new order when it appears. Military intimidation against Taiwan, the totalitarian organization of society, the suppression of freedom and liberties, the re-education camps for the minorities, and the war against religion are all signs of weakness, not of strength. They have their roots in the blackest, unfathomable despair. The more desperate the Chinese become, the more strongly entrenched totalitarianism will appear to be. The further they push down the totalitarian road, the greater will be their despair. As soon as they are offered an alternative—but no sooner—the whole totalitarian magic will vanish like a nightmare.

Nothing the totalitarians can do to fortify their power will be the slightest protection against the sweep of a new order which will again give the masses a positive creed instead of a gospel of pure negation; which will again affirm the validity of life and of society instead of preaching senseless sacrifice; which will again give man dignity and value instead of denying his very existence. Not even the totalitarian education which seizes the youngest infants, and which has been regarded generally as the greatest danger to civilization, will alter the situation in the least. The youth of China may be regimented for a positive idea and order. They can only be kept regimented for the negative and for the sake of the organization as long as there is no alternative. Children can be educated to think exclusively in one direction, but they cannot successfully be educated not to think at all.

This is the current situation in China, and this is our mission. We hope that through continuous efforts abroad, we can show all Chinese people a new choice, an option and possibility for a democratic and free lifestyle that can endow us with positive beliefs and values, affirm the legitimacy of our lives and public society, and let them feel the dignity and value of humanity.

The competition and confrontation between the U.S. and China should not be a racial or national confrontation, nor an ideological one. Instead, it should be a confrontation between a lifestyle of democracy and freedom and authoritarianism. Using Blinken’s China policy as a reference, we believe that the U.S. should cooperate with the Chinese people at the global level and compete with the party nature of the CCP, the CCP’s foreign propaganda ideology, and confront the CCP’s actions, the police and surveillance State, and authoritarian ideology.

We hope that the U.S. Congress and government will incorporate a perspective that upholds basic human rights and maintains peace when formulating policies. It is advisable to refer to America’s experience in dismantling totalitarianism in the 20th century when developing current policies toward China and policies concerning the Chinese diaspora within the U.S. Effective communication with overseas Chinese and the mainland population is essential. President Reagan used Soviet jokes to highlight the Soviet people’s struggle and consulted numerous knowledgeable scholars about the USSR in the formulation of policies toward it. These policies played a crucial role in the later transformation and dissolution of the Soviet Union.

We need to work with the pro-democracy Chinese organizations and expatriate Chinese communities, and through their efforts, establish connections with people inside the firewall, showing them the lifestyle of democracy and freedom, and encouraging them to further pursue human rights inside the wall. They have already done much work voluntarily abroad; here I aim to systematically organize these efforts based on my connection.

Specifically, we should achieve this goal through a positioning change and three stages.

A positioning change: The United States is a trade partner of China on the premise that the American people are partners in human rights with the Chinese people.

The United States should no longer recognize the controlled areas of the People's Republic of China, including Hong Kong, as a free market. The foundation of a free market is the autonomous decisionmaking of market entities. However, the level of freedom essential for the survival of free markets in Hong Kong and mainland China—personal freedom, freedom of speech, thought, expression, academic freedom, freedom of communication, freedom of information dissemination, and judicial independence—are at their lowest level since the reform and opening up policy. The overall societal freedom is crazily regressing back to the Cultural Revolution era; thus, the micro-foundations of a free market no longer exist in China. When the Party leads everything in the market, the signals from market entities are severely concealed and distorted by the will of the Party. Any so-called “free trade” with Beijing supports the war machine of the dictatorship, shifting contradictions, and providing resources, which is a disguised form of appeasement. Using free trade as cover may alleviate inflation and wealth disparity with cheap goods in the short term, but it allows China's low human rights-advantaged products to flood the market. It is both short-sighted and akin to drinking poison to quench thirst.

China should only consider restoring its status as a market economy after it elevates its human rights standards to meet the requirements of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This is a clear signal that, through U.S. trade policy and joint action with allies, a clear message is sent to the Chinese people at home and abroad that Americans and the entire world are paying attention to the human rights abuses they experience daily. Attention is given to overtime work, unfair labor practices, unpaid wages, unfinished buildings, disappearing freedoms in academia, speech, communication, media, rights protection, children's education rights, deteriorating rule of law, and mental health in China. With the increased strength of China, the human rights situation of the Chinese will be improved as well. Americans will consider the survival circumstance of the Chinese as superior instead of their business profit.

Based on this, in order to promote the improvement of human rights in China and strengthen ties with the Chinese people, combating the authoritarian propaganda and control of the autocratic government, we should act in three stages:

These three stages are: Shaping a safe environment for overseas Chinese, cultivating professional talent and organizations, and promoting human rights reform in China. This is also the best way, from a macro perspective, to address the collective political trauma of the Chinese people, and to promote anti-war and resistance forces in China.

Stage One: Creating a Safe Environment for Overseas Chinese

1. Pay attention to the cross-border repression of dissidents, especially regarding personal safety. Strictly manage agents of the CCP in various countries. Restrict or even prohibit their activities directed by foreign governments.
2. Strengthen research on the history of Chinese political violence and trauma. Provide mental and psychological health experts and various trauma recovery groups to the Chinese community, including international students, to support their recovery from political violence and trauma.
3. Pay attention to building independent Chinese community organizations and networks, separate from the Communist Party. Assist intellectuals, opinion leaders, and middle-class elites coming from China in forming various associations independent of the Chinese Communist Party. And assist with training in various systems such as equality, anti-discrimination, non-violence, parliamentary rules, etc. And provide opportunities for exchange with other ethnic networks to explore how to establish related organizations.
4. Change the way of discussing issues related to China, based on human rights and using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a standard to measure Chinese actions. In discussions about China, reduce debates about capitalism/communism, progressivism/conservatism, fairness/efficiency, the rise of

the East and the decline of the West/civilizational conflicts, and superpower disputes, to avoid providing material for domestic authoritarian propaganda in China.

5. Implement reciprocal privacy policies for Chinese software such as WeChat. Require their overseas versions to be isolated from mainland versions, lifting data censorship, and requiring data to be stored locally.

Stage Two: Cultivating Professional Talent and Organizations

1. Support the establishment of a Chinese human rights data base. Counter the comprehensive control of news inside China, comprehensively statisticians, and sort all possible contributions from inside the Firewall. And according to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, these are human rights violation events. Create quantified annual human rights reports and present the real human rights situation of the people in China. Through data base categorization and survey questionnaires, collect experiences of maintaining rights inside China, and write manuals and instructions for avoiding pitfalls in rights defense.
2. Form a panel of experts on specific rights issues both inside and outside China, provide various templates, documents, laws, publicity materials, and process flows and create overseas rights support groups. Make it convenient for rights defenders to cooperate anonymously across borders. Visualize the data according to the age of the people, the types of human rights infringements, locations, hot topics, and others, forming a survival manual for inside the Firewall. Let everyone understand the real human rights situation of their living environment and its impact on them.
3. Absorb exiled Chinese elite scholars/Chinese policy interns with a background in China into Federal Government/congressional staff/think tanks. Make U.S. China policy clearer, more accurate, and vividly convey to the Chinese people. Let the public realize the dangers of authoritarianism and stay away from authoritarianism under nationalist slogans.
4. Establish bipartisan groups for Chinese human rights/community awareness/cultural integration. Help Chinese/international students quickly popularize and have channels to practice American values after entering American society, changing the wrong concepts originally held in China, learning to respect freedom of speech and political freedom.
5. Support various academic research and artistic creations on various human rights issues in China, including publishing, film, podcasts, talk shows, literary works, stage plays, and creative design.
6. Pay attention to Chinese humanities scholars in exile, absorb them into various think tanks, or form various organizations. Create historical works and literary works based on human rights for Chinese people, revealing the impact of the lack of human rights on daily life. And form reading lists, collections, data bases, etc., to facilitate the Chinese people reading about, and understanding, the importance of human rights.
7. Increase academic research on the human rights situation of Chinese people and the psychology and concepts of Chinese people. Enable the academic community to interpret and observe human rights issues from the perspective of the Chinese people. Change the structure of the human rights report of the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, paying more attention to the human rights issues of ordinary people.

Promoting Human Rights Reform in China

1. Encourage overseas Chinese organizations to provide support for rights defenders in China. Summarize the experience of defending rights inside China and share.
2. Through overseas Chinese organizations, provide various literary works, real information, and data bases to the Chinese people inside the Great Firewall to help them understand the real situation.
3. Using data base reports and industry research reports, sanction all Chinese companies that use high-tech technology to participate in government projects that violate the human rights of the Chinese people, including their executives/staff.
4. Link human rights to trade, cancel China's Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) trade status and China's Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status, implement tariff penalties/import controls on organizations/companies that violate human rights, and limit American companies from obtaining products and soft-

ware that violate human rights. Limit China's cost competition advantage gained through low human rights standards.

5. Warn or punish human rights violators, and carefully review their and their families' visas, and bank accounts.

These steps will require the efforts of the Tiananmen generation, the efforts of our new generation, and the efforts of many people in China. I can dedicate my life to this because, as a young person who never experienced the Tiananmen Square incident, when first learning about the history of June 4th, the initial shock did not come from the Communist Party's ruthless bloody suppression, but from the realization that our country once had such a different social atmosphere. We were moved to tears by the images of the square and the saying 'To Tiananmen Square, it's my duty.' In our lowest and saddest moments, we realized that we are not alone. For someone like me, an exile who has never personally seen a glimmer of dawn in my homeland, that moment of June 4th represented a brightness of humanity that dispelled my prejudices about this land, reinforcing my belief that the people in this country deserve another possibility, that there is still hope for this land. More importantly, it made me realize that my country, once, through everyone's efforts, almost broke free from the shadow of millennia of autocracy and dictatorship.

Therefore, I believe that my colleagues can do their jobs well, I trust that my predecessors of June 4th will cooperate effectively, I believe that my compatriots and allies can stand with us, and I also believe that you can make the right decisions. Ladies and gentlemen of the legislature, thank you for listening to my story. We are doing our jobs; now it's your turn.

After all, this future belongs to us, to them, and to you as well.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF "KARIN"

I would like to begin by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to testify disguised, even though it will only delay the inevitable police visit to my parents. Media Director Scott Flipse told me that only I could evaluate whether the cost of testifying is worth it. But however much this cost weighs on me, the cost for my fellow student activists who have already experienced intimidation, harassment, and even physical assault from CCP agents is ten times greater. For the record, all the names in my testimony will be aliases.

I was born and raised in China. Like many Chinese students my age, I wondered about the conspicuous lack of events depicted between 1970 and 1990 in our history textbook. I only learned about June 4th by reading about it on Wikipedia in high school.

In 2022, I began an internship in Shanghai with one of China's largest technology conglomerates. Like many young people who grew up in the economic prosperity of the 2010's, sheltered by censorship, I was ready to bask in and contribute to the economic achievements of my nation. In March, an unexpected city-wide lockdown began. This would subsequently be remembered as one of the largest humanitarian crises in China's COVID response.

When the residents of Shanghai cried for help, the government "addressed not the problem, but the person who voiced the problem." The lockdown made me realize that despite economic development, the Chinese Communist Party had not changed, even in 35 years, from its totalitarian self.

In November 2022, after I returned to the university, the fire in Urumqi sparked a global wave of vigils and protests to commemorate the victims. My friends and I organized a vigil at Columbia in front of the Low Library. We spread the word through social media only 1 day before the event. To our surprise, not just 10, or 100, but 300 people showed up that night. The scene reminded me of how Chinese students at Columbia 35 years ago gathered at the very same place to demonstrate solidarity with students on the square.

We wanted it to be a peaceful event. But my friend Ava, shortly after delivering a speech, was violently assaulted—struck on the face—by an unidentified individual who claimed to be a Columbia student. Later, she turned to the Columbia administration, but no action was taken aside from a suggestion to seek "mental health support." Not even a campus safety alert.

I was in a class on China's foreign policy. There were a few Chinese students whose comments were blatant CCP propaganda, like how the concentration camp in Xinjiang does not exist. After the vigil, I was always afraid that those Chinese students would recognize me. I was afraid what happened to Ava at the protest was going to happen to me, too. And that Columbia's administration would do nothing.

As China reopened, the momentum of the white paper protest died down gradually. My friends and I at Columbia have tried to maintain the spark by continuing to organize events like movie screenings of COVID documentaries and panel discussions on campus. However, we were always plagued by far-reaching transnational repression.

My friend and co-organizer, Chris, was interrogated by the Chinese police when he returned to China last year. He reached out to me on Instagram to inquire about the names of participants in the New York protests. I was informed that he sent those inquiries under police pressure.

The CECC has done an extraordinary job in its 2023 report in documenting the CCP's transnational repression, especially that faced by the Uyghurs and Hong Kongers. But I want to bring to your attention that even though the white paper movement has subsided, the intensity of transnational repression against outspoken Chinese overseas students has only escalated, in most cases, through personal harassment, transnational surveillance, and the coercion of proxies—in this case meaning the interrogation and intimidation of family members in China. My fellow student activists experienced this retribution in ever-increasing quantities and severity this year. Yet unlike Hong Kong and Uyghur activists, few can step forward and tell the story.

According to Columbia's own website, it had 6,880 currently enrolled Chinese students in 2023. Many of them, after completion of their studies, will return to China and work in occupations of political or economic importance. As a social science major, I have always believed that a change in society starts with the change in its citizens' minds. In fact, many vocal individuals of the white paper movement in China were educated overseas. Exposure to freedom made us free. But if these brilliant minds cannot even think and speak freely on American campuses, on American soil, then it would be much more difficult for a movement like White Paper to be sparked again.

I believe there are two things that policymakers could do. The first is to compel the Chinese Student and Scholar Associations (CSSAs) on American campuses to be transparent about their funding sources. CSSAs provide a community for Chinese students who have only recently arrived in America, but at the same time, many of its members receive funding from the Chinese consulate and serve as eyes for the consulate to identify and silence pro-democracy students. By compelling CSSAs to disclose their funding, we can ensure that this community, important to many, does not become a vehicle of the CCP's long arm of repression.

Second, urge universities to establish a comprehensive response mechanism and support network for students facing transnational repression. This could include setting up campus task forces against transnational repression, creating guidelines of resources available for students to seek help when they feel unsafe, and offering security support for on-campus events in which students participating potentially face the risk of being identified and harassed. If we are able to put such a response mechanism in place, then more pro-democracy students will feel comfortable expressing their political thoughts in campus spaces, without needing to go through the fear and trauma that I and my friend Ava were forced through.

Congress members, 160 years ago President Lincoln showed us that America was a nation that would "hold the power, and bear the responsibility [to] assure freedom to the free." He said as Americans, "We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth" that is our union, that is our beacon of liberty for those oppressed around the world.

Congress members, 35 years ago, you showed those students from Beijing fleeing a brutal massacre that the United States kept its promise as the last best hope of earth, a safe haven for people who pursue and fight for democracy and freedom. Now I ask you to show compassion and support for us, that those first pioneers who lit the spark for all not be allowed to freeze in the wind and snow.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS SMITH

Thirty-five years ago today the world watched as millions of Chinese gathered to peacefully demand political reform and democratic openness. The hopes and dreams of those heady days ended with needless violence—tears, bloodshed, arrest, and exile. Mothers lost sons, fathers lost daughters, and China lost an idealistic generation to the tanks that rolled down Tiananmen Square on June 4th, 1989.

On this solemn occasion, we reflect on the bravery and sacrifice of those who stood for democracy and freedom on that fateful day. We grieve with those who still don't know what happened to their lost loved ones. And we demand that the Chinese

Communist government make a full public accounting of those killed or missing and end its Orwellian efforts to censor what is a dark chapter of Chinese history.

It is also important to reflect on the events that led up to that fateful day in 1989 and consider why they still matter for the cold war competition that now shapes U.S.-China relations.

The students who initially gathered in the center of Beijing in April 1989 did so to mourn the death of Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang—someone they viewed as a political reformer.

In the days to follow, thousands would gather in Tiananmen Square and in over 400 other cities. Their numbers grew as the days passed until more than a million people—including journalists, workers, government employees and police—joined the Tiananmen students in demanding a future built on justice, freedom, and dignity.

During the evening of June 3d and into June 4th, 1989, the Chinese Communist Party leadership unleashed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) upon the protesters. The PLA used brute and lethal force against peaceful protest. Guns and tanks crushed innocent civilians, young and old alike.

The precise number of casualties is unknown. There has been no public accounting of the events of that week and no justice for the victims. Rather, those seeking to commemorate the event or seek information about those killed, like the Tiananmen Mothers, are harassed, detained, and arrested.

One of the most iconic images from the Tiananmen Massacre is that of the "Tank Man"—the solitary figure, with shopping bags in hand, who stood in front of the advancing line of tanks. That act of brave defiance inspired the world and should remind us that Tiananmen is not simply a past event to study and ponder, but a present reminder that when the Chinese people are free to assemble and to speak, they demand liberty and political reform.

What happened on Tiananmen Square in 1989 should also remind us that the principles of freedom and democracy represent a fundamental human yearning for dignity and human rights that is not limited to any culture or country. They are universal aspirations that neither tanks nor torture can ever destroy.

Sadly, as we look at the China of today, the prospects for greater civil and political rights seem as remote as the day after the tanks rolled through Tiananmen Square.

An increasingly aggressive Chinese Communist government is more repressive in domestic politics, more mercantilist in trade and economic policy, increasingly dismissive of international norms, and more assertive in exporting the authoritarian model globally.

While repression looks much different today than it did 35 years ago, the goal remains the same: preserve the Communist Party's monopoly on political power through any means necessary—state-sponsored indoctrination, a pervasive surveillance State, arbitrary detention, torture, and transnational repression.

The U.S. and all freedom-loving people cannot be neutral when the Chinese Communist Party tramples human rights with impunity or while genocide and crimes against humanity are being committed.

A choice has to be made: You either stand with the Tank Man or you stand with the tank. There is no middle ground.

That choice is even starker now than it was 35 years ago. The U.S. and its allies face a systemic challenge from the Chinese Communist Party and its allies in Russia, Iran, and North Korea. It is a challenge we cannot avoid and one where promotion of human rights and freedom must be recognized as a strategic advantage against the dark forces of authoritarianism.

The United States must do a better job leading the free world's democracies in shining a light on the atrocities being committed by the Chinese Communist Party and holding those responsible accountable—whether through more robust use of existing sanctions authorities or better leveraging American influence at the United Nations.

We must take all steps to stop the Communist Chinese Party's efforts to export their authoritarian model around the world. We must find more efficient ways to stop American companies from subsidizing communist tyranny and forced labor. We must better protect Chinese students and the Chinese diaspora from intimidation and even violence while they live in the United States.

And we must treat the "Great Firewall" of China like the 21st century Berlin Wall; tearing it down must be a critical U.S. priority that will allow the dissemination of news and information within China and allow the Chinese people to communicate without fear.

At the same time, we must resolutely stand with those in China and Hong Kong who are imprisoned, censored, and disappeared—the Christian pastor, the Tibetan

Buddhist monk, the Uyghur Muslim, the labor organizer, the human rights lawyer, the Hong Kong democracy activist, and countless others living under the repressive policies of the Chinese Communist Party.

They are the ones who will ultimately bring political change in China. We must communicate to them and the Chinese people directly that their struggle and pain has not and will not be forgotten, and that we believe the Chinese Communist Party will eventually be consigned to the ash heap of history. To do anything less dishonors the spirit of Tiananmen and those who continue to stand so bravely and resolutely for freedom.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today being June 4, this is an appropriate day for a hearing of the congressional-Executive Commission on China because of the focus on the events of June 3–4, 1989, at Tiananmen Square, and in cities across China. Those events shocked the conscience of the world, and the conscience of this Congress.

The massacre of peaceful protesters by their own government spurred a decade of debate here in Congress about whether the United States should condition trade relations with China on improvements in human rights. Our chairman, Congressman Smith, was at the forefront of those bipartisan debates, along with Speaker Emerita Pelosi.

That question was settled in 2000 when Congress and President Clinton granted permanent normal trade relations to the People's Republic of China. Congress insisted, however, that the deal include a mechanism to monitor China's progress on human rights and rule of law. That insistence and that legislation created this Commission, a bicameral, bipartisan watchdog to assess China's behavior against international human rights standards.

But today's hearing is not about this Commission. It is about the people in the People's Republic of China, the oppression they continue to endure, the hopes that they continue to hold for a better future, and the aspirations they continue to fight for.

The people gathered in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 were demanding their government respond to their grievances as well as their aspirations. The government's brutal response ended lives and ended optimism that day, but it did not end the desire for freedom and the desire for dignity. Those feelings are universal and innate to every human everywhere. It is a spark that cannot be extinguished.

Thirty-five years later, that brutal grip of oppression has only tightened. People cannot openly express dissent.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about whether and how the citizens of the PRC find ways to share their frustrations and desires. Do they use social media, chat groups, informal networks? What can the 2022 White Paper protests tell us?

I also hope to hear how we, American policymakers, can best understand what people in China are saying, what they are feeling, what they are advocating for. It is vital that we listen to their voices rather than project our own ideas or politics.

I am interested to learn how people keep alive the legacy of Tiananmen in the face of a concerted and successful effort by the CCP to erase the history, both on the mainland and now in Hong Kong. Preservation of memory is another innate human impulse, essential to people's ability to maintain their culture and maintain their identity.

Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly are core human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Chinese government's relentless effort to suppress them does not diminish the yearning of the people of China to realize them or our responsibility to speak out for them. That is why we are here. I look forward to your testimony.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

Good morning. I join my colleagues in welcoming everyone to today's hearing on the 35th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in China.

Thirty-five years ago, Chinese authorities ordered their military to forcibly remove protesters who had occupied Tiananmen Square for weeks, and who were calling for economic and political reform.

Estimates of how many people were wounded and killed when the tanks rolled in range from the hundreds to a few thousand; the exact numbers are still unknown. What we do know is that the violence unleashed that day meant that

hardliners in the Chinese government had gained the upper hand over reformists, with consequences that are still being felt today.

Through 2020, an annual vigil for the victims of Tiananmen Square was held in Victoria Park in Hong Kong. In fact, Hong Kong was the only Chinese city in which commemorations were allowed, a result of the “one country, two systems” arrangement. But in 2021, Victoria Park was empty because the national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 made public mention of the massacre a jailable offense.

The new Article 23 law, passed in Hong Kong in March, doubles down on this. Six people were arrested a few days ago for “inciting hatred” against Beijing by posting messages about a “sensitive date”—the June 4th Tiananmen Square anniversary.

In fact, for years the PRC has used every tactic it can to erase the memory of Tiananmen, from restricting internet searches and removing books to physical repression.

So we are here today to commemorate that which cannot be commemorated in China. We are here to remember and pay tribute to those who were killed on June 4, 1989, and those who were wounded, and those who were imprisoned for their participation. We are also here to remember the demands of the protesters 35 years ago, their ideas, their hope, and their courage. We are here because memory is both the preservation of the past, and a source of power and inspiration for the future.

As one of our witnesses will tell us today, even though the Tiananmen protests and massacre remain a source of trauma for the Chinese people, they have simultaneously become a tremendous source of inspiration, healing, and hope. Another witness will tell us, “We inherited the spirit of resistance from the Tiananmen generation.”

Memory and memorializing can and should be an empowering process. We are here today to contribute to that process, in honor of the Tank Man and all the protesters in Tiananmen Square on that fateful day, June 4, 1989.

Thank you.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE RECORD

QUESTIONS FOR ZHOU FENG SUO FROM SENATOR BROWN

June 4, 2024 marks 35 years since the wish for freedom and democracy by the Chinese people was met with violent suppression by the Chinese government. Lethal force was used against those using two of their universal human rights: speech and assembly. I’d like to thank Chair Smith and Co-chair Merkley for holding this important hearing. China’s citizens deserve a transparent account of the tragic events of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, and we must do more to counter the Chinese government’s continued attack on human rights.

Question. Despite international efforts urging Chinese President Xi Jinping to take concrete steps to end the repression of ethnic and religious minorities, journalists, members of the LGBTQ community, and the Chinese people as a whole, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) continues to harass diaspora communities and critics of the PRC—not just in China, but around the world. Many of you mention the Chinese government’s use of transnational repression as a way to intimidate and harass Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers, the Taiwanese, journalists, human rights advocates, and others. The Committee held a hearing on this topic last year, where witnesses shared ideas on how to address this serious challenge.

My question for you is: What steps do you believe the U.S. should take, in partnership with our allies, to preemptively address and halt transnational repression?

Answer.

1. Law enforcement needs to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators who are acting on behalf of the CCP regime in the United States. The recent indictments of Wu Xiaomeng and others are very effective. The diaspora organizations like HRIC can work with law enforcement to provide the most up-to-date information.
2. Require any organizations that take CCP money or work closely with the CCP to disclose and register, especially CSSAs (Chinese Students and Scholars Associations) and Hometown Associations. This should also include lobbying groups, universities, and other institutions.
3. Compel U.S. companies with businesses in China to disclose how they comply with CCP authorities. Require U.S. tech companies to take concrete action to prevent harassing, threatening, and surveillance in cyberspace, targeting diaspora activists.

4. Government agencies should work closely and regularly with human rights organizations to understand the full scope of CCP transnational repression.

Question. This commission has spent time discussing concerns over the use of surveillance technology by the Chinese government. As has been widely reported, Chinese electric vehicles and other connected vehicles utilize technology to gather sensitive data on drivers and the environments they are in.

Mr. Zhou, you briefly mentioned how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has used technological repression against your organization, and Mr. Yang also suggested that Chinese companies that use high-tech technology to participate in government projects to violate human rights be sanctioned.

I have called for banning Chinese electric vehicles from the U.S., one of many reasons being the potential security threat they pose. Given your experience, do you believe that the CCP may be using data collected by Chinese electric cars and other connected vehicles as a surveillance tool?

Answer. Yes, every company in China serves the CCP regime as the ultimate goal. There is no doubt that CCP utilizes every tool possible for the purpose of surveillance and eventual domination of the democratic countries. Electric vehicles are a natural choice and will pose significant threats.

QUESTIONS FOR RUOHUI YANG FROM SENATOR BROWN

Question. Despite international efforts urging Chinese President Xi Jinping to take the concrete steps to end the repression of ethnic and religious minorities, journalists, members of the LGBTQ community, and the Chinese people as a whole, the People's Republic of China (PRC) continues to harass diaspora communities and critics of the PRC—not just in China, but around the world. Many of you mention the Chinese government's use of transnational repression as a way to intimidate and harass Uyghurs, Tibetans, Hong Kongers, the Taiwanese, journalists, human rights advocates, and others. The Committee held a hearing on this topic last year, where witnesses shared ideas on how to address this serious challenge.

My question for you is: What steps do you believe the U.S. should take, in partnership with our allies, to preemptively address and halt transnational repression?

Answer. The U.S. Government urgently needs to implement a reciprocal policy against China. This policy, crucial for our national security, must be revised promptly following any policy alteration in China. As the guardian of its citizens and interests, the U.S. Government must explicitly target the individuals and organizations that have connections with Chinese diplomatic missions, which includes all bodies cooperating with China, such as the CSSA, across universities within U.S. territory, all the Chinese national or regional fellowship and commercial associations, and other parties mentioned by Chinese state media or foreign offices. These groups must be queried, registered, and notified about their foreign agent status and the constraints they must conform to for any potential detrimental activities within U.S. territory.

The People's Republic of China has become a one-party authoritarian state. In practice, the various consulates within U.S. territory primarily serve as agents of the Chinese Communist Party, a.k.a. the CCP, rather than the Chinese state or citizens. China's current decisionmaking mechanism on foreign policy is monopolized by the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the CCP (commonly called the Central Foreign Affairs Commission) instead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Another fact is that the superior organ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, the State Council, primarily serves the decisionmaking of the CCP rather than that of the National People's Congress or the government. The principle of strengthening CCP leadership was first mentioned in the "Opinions of the CCP Central Committee on Strengthening the Party's Political Construction" in 2019 and again brought up by the amendment to the Organization Law of the State Council in 2024. Both of them request comprehensive leadership by the CCP over miscellaneous state departments. China's "wolf warrior diplomacy" gradually commenced during this period. Therefore, all Chinese diplomatic missions overseas are front organizations of the CCP. It is worth remarking that as we are writing this piece, Xi Jinping, the chairman of the CCP, has just chaired the fifth meeting of the Central Comprehensively Deepening Reforms Commission of the CCP. He has once again emphasized the importance of integrating party leadership into various aspects of corporate governance.

Considering the realities above, it is essential to differentiate between ordinary Chinese citizens, the CCP and its executive bodies, the Chinese government, and China's unique transnational modern corporate entities. It is also critical for U.S.

policymakers to explicitly distinguish whether the individuals and groups are associated directly with the CCP and its front organizations within U.S. territory.

To counter the influence of CCP infiltration, the U.S. must acknowledge the intrinsic importance of overseas Chinese and Chinese American intellectuals, students, and human rights activists. Their distinctive perspectives and backgrounds can be harnessed to combat the CCP's massive propaganda. The U.S. Government should support the overseas Chinese in formulating their community associations, which should be non-political and binary, and focus on social integration and community development. The primary goal for the U.S. is to assist them in disseminating their work and allow them to partake in the American policymaking process to counterbalance the ideological influence of the CCP.

Due to tightening restrictions on freedom of expression, many Chinese scholars and human rights lawyers have been exiled overseas. The U.S. should now utilize these Chinese experts to comprehend China's censorship mechanics. It is crucial to provide them with convenient issuance of visas and improved working conditions, allowing them to exemplify the reality of China to American voters through the media.

The long-term resolution is that the Chinese communities overseas that are self-sufficient and independent of the influence of the CCP must be strengthened to bankrupt the narrative of the CCP that endeavors to obfuscate the difference between cultural belongingness to the Chinese culture or community and corpse-like loyalty or obedience to the CCP among domestic and overseas Chinese residents and Chinese Americans. It should commence to consolidate support from the communal, cultural, and political activist groups. It could even begin with the younger generation of dissenters in exile, letting them reconstruct the civil society that once existed in China with their thoughts and activities.

Question. In your testimony, you wrote: "Any so-called 'free trade' with Beijing supports the war machine of the dictatorship, shifting contradictions, and providing resources, which is a disguised form of appeasement. Using free trade as a cover may alleviate inflation and wealth disparity with cheap goods in the short term, but it allows China's low human-rights-advantaged products to flood the market. It is both short-sighted and akin to drinking poison to quench thirst."

For my entire career, I've fought against trade policies that undermine workers both at home and abroad. One effort that Congress passed recently to address the continued use of forced labor to help counter China's human rights abuses is the bipartisan Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. This law, implemented in June 2022, creates protection against the funding of forced labor among ethnic minorities.

Do you have thoughts on what additional action is necessary to prevent the Chinese government's continued human rights violations against more than a million Uyghurs and other Muslims who've been coerced into forced labor programs?

Answer. Concerning the current issues of Xinjiang "re-education camps" that have disastrously affected the lifestyle and cultural identity of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other minorities in Xinjiang, it must be pointed out that to define it as genocide or religious extermination against Uyghurs and other minorities is counterproductive to truly alleviating or bringing to an end these human rights violations. I am not attempting to deny the appalling atrocities committed by the CCP against its citizens, but the definition of genocide will presumably make many American voters assume it is a political gimmick. It will also strengthen the misconception among Chinese residents in China that the U.S. is exploiting this issue and using it as a justification to implement sinophobic foreign policies or even a potential Chinese Exclusion Act in the 21st century. Considering that the CCP can misinterpret it in their propaganda agenda and exacerbate Islamophobia among Chinese citizens, it can put Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang in more dangerous circumstances.

A more practical solution is to put the Xinjiang "re-education camps" and other issues correlated to human rights violations in China into a larger overall picture. We consider the re-education camps in Xinjiang to be a series of social experiments by the CCP to impose totalitarian control on every aspect of society. In their agenda, Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other minorities in Xinjiang are persecuted not only due to their distinguishable ethnic and religious differences but also because they are living in a distinct, self-reliant society that is out of the reach of CCP totalitarianism, which, from the perspective of the CCP, must be reorganized following the CCP's ideology. The CCP has already attempted to reorganize the non-minority Han Chinese society, which has been continuously developing since the Chinese economic reform in the 1980s and the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989. In this case, they have achieved some limited success in imposing and reinforcing authoritarian rule. Nevertheless, the necessity for economic growth and international prestige has hampered their effort to transform Chinese society into a more totalitarian one. The

COVID-19 pandemic provided them with an opportunity to realize their ambition. From 2020 to 2022, the Zero-COVID policy made many Chinese residents realize the brutal face of the state and the CCP, which sacrificed their basic living standards and natural rights to pursue a goal that aimed to impose totalitarian control on every aspect of life. If we look back to what happened in China during these three years, we will discover that many of the suppressive approaches and mass surveillance are directly duplicated from the Xinjiang re-education camps. This is why China's "White Paper Revolution," a series of protests against the harrowing Zero-COVID policy imposed by the CCP, is derived from Xinjiang, the northwestern province of China, with the most brutal, scrutinized, and totalitarian social control. Many Chinese residents have realized that the most significant terrorism in their country does not come from Uyghurs or other Muslim minorities, but from the CCP itself as state terrorism.

China's manufacturing industries are built on such widespread human rights violations: the lack of safeguards for intellectual property rights, the censorship and suppression of whistleblowers and customer complaints, the connivance of companies' infringements of basic labor protections, the lack of judicial independence that allows giant corporations to be shielded by governments, the censorship of media resulting in a lack of independent investigative journalists, and the government's massive subsidy policy for specific companies at the expense of trade freedom, allowing Chinese companies to dump cheap and inferior products all over the world without regard for their product quality, brand reputation, and sustainable operating capabilities.

On the other hand, many ordinary Chinese people have gradually discovered the misery that this massive infringement of human rights has brought to their everyday lives. Extensive works of art and literature have portrayed the negative impact of this violation of human rights on every ordinary Chinese person. Suppose American politicians and voters chose to disregard the growing suicide and unemployment rates, the decline in personal income, and the distress, anguish, and despondency of Chinese citizens toward their society in China. If so, the CCP will exploit this to isolate their opponents and construct a siege mentality in Chinese public opinion and make them feel that the motivation behind the attention to the Xinjiang re-education camps from the U.S. is to contain China and to implement sinophobic imperialist and neocolonial policies in China.

Hence, American politicians should have more awareness of the massive human rights issues in China and regard the persecution of ethnic minorities, such as the Uyghurs and Kazakhs, as the foretype of China's human rights crisis rather than an ethnic or religious conflict. Only this sort of strategy can encourage more Chinese people to recognize the human rights problems in Xinjiang, including the forced separation of families, systemic brainwashing, forced labor, invasion of private property, and language extinction, since these things are more likely to occur in the lives of every ordinary Chinese citizen in the future. I believe this is the fundamental solution to preventing further deterioration of human rights in Xinjiang and other regions in China.



**United States House of Representatives
Congressional-Executive Commission on China**

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Witness Signature

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*Witness Biographies***Zhou Fengsuo, Tiananmen student leader and Executive Director of Human Rights in China**

In 1989, Zhou Fengsuo was a physics student at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He started the Voice of Student Movement radio station and organized demonstrations that demanded democratic reform. During the protests, Zhou and other students set up a broadcast station on Tiananmen Square and provided support and medical help to students who were on hunger strikes. About a week after the massacre, authorities took Zhou into custody and detained him for a year without trial. Though wanted by Chinese authorities after he left China, he returned in 2014 and was detained after he went to a Beijing detention center to give money to political prisoners.

After receiving an MBA from the University of Chicago, he embarked on a successful career in trading and investment, but never gave up his advocacy for human rights and democracy in China. In 2007, he co-founded Humanitarian China to promote the rule of law, human rights, and freedom of expression in China and to provide humanitarian support to political prisoners and their families. Since 2023 he has served as Executive Director of Human Rights in China, mobilizing and empowering young Chinese human rights advocates in the diaspora and building advocacy coalitions with the Uyghur and Tibetan communities.

Ruohui Yang, rights advocate and student in Paralegal Studies at Humber College in Canada

Ruohui Yang is dedicated to advancing human rights and democracy in China. In 2020, he founded Assembly of Citizens, a Chinese student association that organized large-scale June Fourth commemoration activities and White Paper movement protests in Canada. Since 2022, Ruohui has been an assistant editor for China Spring, where he has strengthened the focus on Chinese human rights issues and political prisoners through his editorial work. He is also the founder of social media platforms that seek to organize Chinese youth and counter the PRC's propaganda globally. The platforms try to help Chinese young people recognize the deteriorating State of human rights in China and build a sense of community among advocates for freedom and democracy in China.

Karin (an alias), student and White Paper protest organizer at Columbia University

Karin will testify in disguise because other organizers of the event were either attacked at Columbia or faced intimidation by PRC police.

Rowena He, China specialist and historian of modern China at the University of Texas at Austin

Rowena He is interested in the nexus of history, memory, and power, and their implications for the relationship between academic freedom and public opinion, human rights and democratization, and youth values and nationalism. Her first book, *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices of the Struggle for Democracy in China*, was named as one of the Top Five Books 2014 by the Asia Society's ChinaFile.

Dr. He received the Harvard University Certificate of Teaching Excellence for three consecutive years for the Tiananmen courses she created. She joined the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2019 and received the Faculty of Arts Outstanding Teaching Award in 2020 and 2021. In October 2023, she was denied a work visa to return to her position as an Associate Professor of History at CUHK.

Dr. He publishes and speaks widely beyond the academy. Her op-eds have appeared in the Washington Post, The Guardian, The Globe and Mail, the Wall Street Journal, and the Nation. Born and raised in China, she received her Ph.D. from the University of Toronto.