



**Statement of U.S. Senator Marco Rubio,
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “The Long Arm of China:
Exporting Authoritarianism with Chinese
Characteristics”**

Wednesday, December 13, 2017

As prepared for delivery.

Good morning.

This is a hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The title of this hearing is “The Long Arm of China: Exporting Authoritarianism with Chinese Characteristics.”

We will have one panel testifying today. The panel will feature:

- **Shanthi Kalathil:** Director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED);
- **Glenn Tiffert, Ph.D.,** expert in modern Chinese legal history and visiting fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution;
- **Sophie Richardson, Ph.D.,** Director of China research at Human Rights Watch.

Thank you all for being here.

Before we move to the topic at hand, I want to take a moment to recognize Ms. Deidre Jackson on the Commission’s staff. After 38 years of government work, including nearly 16 years at the Commission, this is her final hearing before retiring at the end of the year. We thank her for her faithful service and contribution to this important work.

The focus of today's hearing is timely. This is an issue that merits greater attention from U.S. policymakers. Chinese government foreign influence operations, which exist in free societies around the globe, are intended to censor critical discussion of China's history and human rights record and to intimidate critics of its repressive policies.

Attempts by the Chinese government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence and control discussion of "sensitive" topics are pervasive, and pose serious challenges in the United States and our like-minded allies.

The Commission convened a hearing looking at China's "long arm" in May 2016—the focus at that time was on individual stories from dissidents and rights defenders, journalists and family members of critics of the regime who shared alarming accounts of the intimidation, harassment, pressure and fear they felt as a result of their work.

This was especially true for those with family still living in China. These issues persist.

Just recently, Chinese authorities reportedly detained around 30 relatives of the U.S.-based Uyghur human rights advocate Rebiya Kadeer—a frequent witness before this Commission.

We'll no doubt hear similar accounts when Dr. Richardson explores some of what Human Rights Watch documented in its recent report on China's interference at United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Beyond that, we hope today to step back from individual accounts regarding China's long arm, and examine the broader issue of Chinese Communist Party influence around the world. What animates their efforts? What is their ultimate aim? What sectors or institutions are most vulnerable? And what can we do about it?

Given the scope of the issue, we will only begin to scratch the surface.

When examining these foreign influence operations it is important we understand the Communist Party infrastructure that exists in support of this endeavor.

The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is one of the Party's agencies in charge of influence operations at home and abroad. Chinese President Xi Jinping, elevated the UFWD's status in 2014, calling their work the "magic weapon" for the "Chinese people's great rejuvenation." The UFWD is charged with promoting a "positive" view of China abroad and exporting the purported benefits of its authoritarian model.

United Front officials and their agents, often operating under diplomatic cover as members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, develop relationships with politicians and other high-profile or up-and-coming foreign and overseas Chinese individuals to, in the words of Wilson Center Global Fellow Anne-Marie Brady, "influence, subvert, and if necessary, bypass the policies of their governments and promote the interests of the CCP globally."

A key element in these "long arm" efforts has focused on information technology and Internet governance or "sovereignty," asserting *national* control of the Internet and social media platforms not only in recent domestic cyber legislation and development plans but also at international gatherings.

We look forward to Ms. Kalathil's testimony, which will further explore this important dimension of the Chinese government's efforts.

China has developed tools to surveil social media and mobile phone texting platforms, and to disrupt overseas websites that contain content the government deems politically sensitive.

Earlier this year it was reported that "real-time" censorship of instant messaging platforms is now taking place.

Private group chats are censored without users' knowledge. As it relates to China's "long arm," the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab—a human rights and information technology research center—reported in mid-January 2017 on Chinese government censors' work to prevent Tibetans inside and *outside* of China from discussing the Dalai Lama's major religious teaching in India in January 2017.

The Chinese government is also clearly targeting academia. The Party deems historical analysis and interpretation that do not hew to the Party's ideological and official story as dangerous and threatening to its legitimacy.

Recent reports of the censorship of international scholarly journals illustrate the Chinese government's direct requests to censor international academic content, something which Professor Tiffert will address.

Related to this, the proliferation of Confucius Institutes, and with them insidious curbs on academic freedom, are a major concern—an area which CECC cochairman Smith has been sounding the alarm on for some time.

Chinese foreign investment and development, which is slated to reach record levels with the Belt and Road Initiative, is accompanied by a robust political agenda aimed in part at shaping new global norms on development, trade and even human rights.

There is much more that has been publicly reported on in the last few months alone, and even more that we will likely never know:

- The academic whose scholarly paper provides background on the banned Chinese Democracy Party or other politically sensitive issues refused a visa to conduct research in China; or,
- The Hollywood studio that shelves the film script with a storyline involving China's abuse of the Tibetan people; or,
- The Washington "think tank" that puts out policy papers critical of legislative initiatives that would negatively impact the Chinese government, all the while never revealing their financial ties with senior Chinese officials; or
- The American Internet company willing to censor content globally in order to obtain access to the Chinese market.

There are endless scenarios. And there is a growing body of important research on the topic.

Without objection, we'll keep the hearing Record open for 48 hours to submit some additional relevant materials in that regard, including the executive summary of an important report by the National Endowment for Democracy, "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence," which outlines in part China's influence operations in young democracies including two in our own hemisphere in Latin America.

Each year, the Commission releases an Annual Report which painstakingly documents human rights and rule of law developments in China. China's Great Firewall, rights violations in ethnic minority regions, harassment of rights defenders and lawyers, suppression of free speech, onerous restrictions on civil society—these are the shameful markings of an authoritarian, one-party state.

But to the extent that the same authoritarian impulses animate the Chinese government's efforts abroad, it directly threatens our most deeply held values and our national interests.

Chinese leaders are engaged in the long game and it is something that policymakers in the U.S. and like-minded allies must take seriously.

Please join me in welcoming our witnesses **Ms. Shanthi Kalathil**, Director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies at NED, **Dr. Glenn Tiffert**, a visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and **Dr. Sophie Richardson**, China Director of Human Rights Watch.