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The Reasons the Chinese Government Will Not Relinquish Coercive Population Control Under the One Child Policy

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Honorable members of the Commission, Representative Chris Smith, Senator Marco Rubio, distinguished fellow panelists, ladies and gentlemen, I am grateful for this opportunity to testify here today, as we commemorate the 35th anniversary of China's brutal One Child Policy.

I have been asked to comment upon "China's insistence on keeping the One-Child Policy, despite looming demographic concerns."

China has not "eased," "relaxed" or "abandoned" the One-Child Policy, Despite Reports

China periodically tweaks its One Child Policy. These minor modifications are routinely exaggerated. For example, under the misleading headline, "China to Ease One-Child Policy," Xinhua News Agency reported that China would lift the ban on a second child, if either parent is an only child, beginning on January 1, 2014. It was already the case that couples could have a second child if both parents were themselves only children. This minor adjustment did not "ease" the One Child Policy. It merely tweaked it.

Indeed, in apparent response to quell overly optimistic speculation that this small change represents a major reform, Xinhua ran another report soon after the original announcement: "Birth Policy Changes Are No Big Deal." In this second article Xinhua states that Wang Pei'an, deputy director of the National Health and Family Planning

Commission (NHFPC), told Xinhua that “the number of couples covered by the new policy is not very large across the country.”¹

The minor modification of the policy that took place on January 1, 2014: 1) did not affect a large percentage of couples in China; 2) was not subject to a timetable in which to implement it; 3) retained the dreaded “birth intervals” between children (if a woman gets pregnant before the interval has lapsed, she risks forced abortion); and 4) makes no promise to end the coercive enforcement of the Policy.

Noticeably absent from the Chinese Communist party’s announcement is any mention of human rights. Even though it will now allow some couples to have a second child, China has not promised to end forced abortion, forced sterilization, or forced contraception. The coercive enforcement of China’s one-child policy is its core. Instituting a two-child policy in certain, limited circumstances will not end forced abortion or forced sterilization.

The problem with the one-child policy is not the number of children “allowed.” Rather, it is the fact that the CCP is telling women how many children they can have and then enforcing that limit through forced abortion and forced sterilization. Even if all couples were allowed two children, there is no guarantee that the CCP will cease their appalling methods of enforcement. Regardless of the number of children allowed, women who get pregnant without permission will still be dragged out of their homes, strapped down to tables, and forced to abort babies that they want.

Further, instituting a two-child policy will not end gendercide. Indeed, areas in which two children currently are allowed are especially vulnerable to gendercide. According to the 2009 British Medical Journal study of data from the 2005 national census, in nine provinces, for “second order births” where the first child is a girl, 160 boys were born for every 100 girls. In two provinces, Jiangsu and Anhui, for the second child, there were 190 boys for every hundred girls born. This study stated, “sex selective abortion accounts for almost all the excess males.”

To say that China has “relaxed” or “eased” its One Child Policy under these circumstances is entirely unwarranted.² Because of this gendercide, there are an estimated 37 million Chinese men who will never marry because their future wives were terminated before they were born. This gender imbalance is a powerful, driving force behind trafficking in women and sexual slavery, not only in China, but in neighboring nations as well.

¹ “Birth policy changes are no big deal.” http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2013-11/16/c_132893477.htm. 11/16/13.

² “China’s One-Child Policy ‘Reform’ Won’t End Abuses: US Group.” <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/policy-07232014161119.html>. 7/23/14; “China Hasn’t ‘Eased’ Its One-Child Policy.” <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/364200/china-hasnt-eased-its-one-child-policy-reggie-littlejohn>. 11/18/13; “China Not Easing One Child Policy, Says Campaigner.” <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/china-not-easing-one-child-policy-says-campaigner>. 11/22/13; “Little Change in Practice for China’s One Child Family Policy.” <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/nov/24/little-change-in-practice-for-chinas-one-child-fam/?page=all>. 11/24/13.

Furthermore, all the reasons the Chinese government has given for this adjustment are economic or demographic: China's dwindling labor force, the country's growing elderly population, and the severe gender imbalance. The adjustment is a tacit acknowledgement that continuation of the one-child policy will lead to economic and demographic disaster. The policy was originally instituted for economic reasons. It is ironic that through this very policy, China has written its own economic, demographic death sentence.

Even if China were to completely abandon the One Child Policy and all population control now, demographers worry that it might be too little, too late to avert the demographic disaster it has caused. As one researcher stated, "Even if the family-planning policy were terminated today, it would be too late to solve our rapidly ageing population, the drastic shrinkage of the labour force and the gaping hole in social-security funds that the country has already begun struggling with."³

Despite the demographic pressure to end the policy, the Chinese government recently denied that it has plans to implement a two-child policy in the near future.⁴

Continuing the One Child Policy makes no demographic sense. China's population problem is not that it has too many people, but too few young people and too few women. Limiting births can no longer justify the policy.

The One Child Policy will turn 35 on September 25, 2015. The fertility rate has fallen to approximately 1.5 children per woman, far below the replacement level of 2.1. These birth rates are dangerously low.

In addition, the most recent modification of the One Child Policy has failed to produce the expected number of births, as couples are self-limiting the size of their families.⁵ Why, then, does the Chinese Communist Party keep the One Child Policy?

1) In my opinion, the Chinese Communist Party will *never* abolish the One-Child Policy, because the government is exploiting the One Child Policy as social control, masquerading as population control.

The One Child Policy was formally instituted on September 25, 1980 in response to the population explosion under the Mao era, when the average fertility was 5.9 children per woman. The One Child Policy began as a means to control the population, however

³ "Critic of One Child Policy in from Cold." <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1224885/critic-one-child-policy-cold> 4/28/13; "Easing One Child Policy May Be Too Late." <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/easing-one-child-policy-may-be-too-late>. 1/7/14.

⁴ "China denies full implementation of 'two-child policy.'" http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-04/10/content_20407560.htm. 4/10/15.

⁵ "Why China's New Family Planning Policy Hasn't Worked." <http://thediplomat.com/2015/04/why-chinas-new-family-planning-policy-hasnt-worked/>. 4/20/15.

brutal and misguided. The terror of forced abortion and involuntary sterilization was a by-product of the Policy.

Now that keeping the Policy makes no demographic sense, I believe that terror is the purpose of the Policy. Forced abortion continues in China, terrifying both women and men.⁶ Some of these forced abortions have been so violent that the women themselves sometimes die along with their full term babies.⁷ Forced abortion is so terrifying that victims at times succumb to mental illness and China has the highest female suicide rate in the world.⁸

Men also are terrorized. Some have been killed or maimed for life.⁹ Others have lost control and murdered family planning officials.¹⁰ Some men have resorted to suicide in protest over the excessive fines imposed by the government.¹¹ The spirit of the Cultural Revolution lives on in the family planning police, who have been able to steal, intimidate, torture and kill with relative impunity.

The Chinese Communist Party is a brutal, totalitarian regime. It has many human rights abuses: the detention and torture of human rights lawyers, activists and journalists; religious persecution, the execution of prisoners to harvest their organs for transplant. However egregious, each of these abuses touches only a sliver of Chinese society. The One Child Policy is unique in that it touches everyone.

⁶ “China Couple Speak of ‘Forced Abortion.’” <http://news.sky.com/story/1150016/china-couple-speak-of-forced-abortion> 10/4/13; “Four Uyghur Women Forced to Abort Their Babies in Zinjiang.” <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/abortion-12302013050902.html>; “Xinjiang authorities try to force six women to abort for violating one-child policy.” <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Xinjiang-authorities-try-to-force-six-women-to-abort-for-violating-one-child-policy-29925.html>. 12/30/13

⁷ “China Couple Speak of ‘Forced Abortion.’” <http://news.sky.com/story/1150016/china-couple-speak-of-forced-abortion> 10/4/13; “Four Uyghur Women Forced to Abort Their Babies in Zinjiang.” <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/abortion-12302013050902.html>; “Xinjiang authorities try to force six women to abort for violating one-child policy.” <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Xinjiang-authorities-try-to-force-six-women-to-abort-for-violating-one-child-policy-29925.html>. 12/30/13.

⁸ “Forced abortion at 7 Months – The Horror of China’s One Child Policy Sparks Further Outrage.” <http://www.christianpost.com/news/forced-abortion-at-7-months-the-horror-of-chinas-one-child-policy-sparks-further-outrage-101764/> 8/7/13; “Chinese couple seeks damages for forced abortion.” http://www.worldmag.com/2014/01/chinese_couple_seeks_damages_for_forced_abortion 1/10/14.

⁹ “China: Family Planning Official Stabs Man to Death,” <http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/blog/?p=147>. 4/5/11.

¹⁰ “Crazed Chinese father-of-four stabs two government officials to death over one child policy.” <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2376771/Chinese-father-kills-1-child-policy-officials-registering-4th-child.html> 7/24/13.

¹¹ “Chinese father of four commits suicide over one-child policy fines so his children can go to school.” <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/chinese-father-of-four-commits-suicide-over-one-child-policy-fines-so-his-c>. 5/26/14; “Farmer drinks poison after being fined for violations of family planning policy.” <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/830847.shtml> 12/8/13

2) The One Child Policy Is Enormously Profitable for the Chinese Communist Party.

The One Child Policy's system of fees and fines is an important source of revenue for the Chinese Communist Party. These fines are arbitrary and inconsistently applied throughout China, but may be as much as ten times a person's annual salary. Very few can afford to pay these "terror fines." In high profile cases, the fines may run in the millions of dollars.¹²

It has been estimated that the Chinese Communist Party has received as much as \$314 billion in family planning fines since 1980.¹³ The use of these fines is not subject to accountability, so they may be used simply to line the pockets of the family planning officials or to fund other government projects under the table. This system (or lack thereof) provides a strong incentive to keep the Policy in place.¹⁴

3) The One Child Policy's Infrastructure of Coercion Can Be Turned to Crush Dissent of Any Kind

There is growing unrest inside China. "[I]nternal Chinese law enforcement data on so-called "mass incidents" – a wide variety of protests ranging from sit-ins to strikes, marches and rallies, and even genuine riots – indicated that China has seen a sustained, rapid increase in those incidents from 8,700 in 1993 to nearly 60,000 in 2003, to more than 120,000 in 2008.¹⁵ Meanwhile, there are as many as 1 million Family Planning Officials.¹⁶ This army of Family Planning Officials can be turned in any direction to crush dissent of any sort. Does the Chinese Communist Party regard this army as necessary to maintain control in a tinder-box situation?

¹² "Zhang Yimou's children spark one-child policy debate." <http://en.people.cn/90782/8236414.html>. 8/8/13.

¹³ "The Brutal Truth: A shocking case of forced abortion fuels resentment against China's one-child policy." <http://www.economist.com/node/21557369>. 6/23/12.

¹⁴ "Huge Fines for Violators of One-Child Policy, but Little Accounting." <http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/12/huge-fines-for-violators-of-one-child-policy-but-little-accounting/>. 12/12/13; "Population Control Is Called Big Revenue Source in China." <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/27/world/asia/chinese-provinces-collected-billions-in-family-planning-fines-lawyer-says.html>. 6/26/13; "China has collected \$3.1 billion from one-child policy violators so far this year." <http://qz.com/154079/china-has-collected-3-1-billion-from-one-child-policy-violators-so-far-this-year/>. 12/5/13; "Chinese Family Planning Officials Misappropriated \$260 Million in Fines." <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/293660-chinese-family-planning-officials-misappropriated-260-million-in-fines/>. 9/20/13.

¹⁵ "China's Social Unrest Problem – Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission." Murray Scott Tanner, Ph.D. http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Tanner_Written%20Testimony.pdf. 5/15/14; *see also*, "Rising Protests in China." <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2012/02/rising-protests-in-china/100247/>. 2/17/12.

¹⁶ "Family Planning: Enforcing with a smile." <http://www.economist.com/news/china/21638131-enforcers-chinas-one-child-policy-are-trying-new-gentler-approach-enforcing-smile>. 1/10/15. If China's Family Planning Officials were an army, they would tie with North Korea as the sixth largest army in the world. "World's Largest Armies." <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/armies.htm>.

4) The One Child Policy Breaks Bonds of Trust, Discouraging Dissent

In addition to official Family Planning Police, the One Child Policy employs a system of paid informants – “womb police.” Anyone can inform on an illegally pregnant women – her neighbors, friends, co-workers, people in the village who watch women’s abdomens to see who might be pregnant. On May 15, 2012, I testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights, together with Mei Shunping, a victim of five forced abortions. She described the way her factory enforced the One Child Policy. “If one worker violated the rules, all would be punished. Workers monitored each other.” The women became informed on one another. Predictably, friendships were destroyed.¹⁷

In addition, if an illegally pregnant women runs away to escape a forced abortion, members of her extended family may be detained and tortured.¹⁸ This puts enormous pressure on the woman to give herself up for an abortion. The system of paid informants and the persecution of family members and neighbors rupture the natural bonds of love and trust in Chinese society. People feel that there is no one they can trust.

Could the Chinese Communist Party be exploiting this rupture in relationship to divide and conquer? If people cannot trust anyone, they cannot organize for democracy.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the Chinese Communist Party will not relinquish coercive population control because 1) it enables them to exert social control through terror; 2) it is a lucrative profit center; 3) it provides and infrastructure of coercion that can be used to crush dissent of any sort; and 4) it ruptures relationships of trust, so that people cannot organize for change. I believe that the Chinese Communist Party is maintaining its grip on power by shedding the blood of the innocent women and babies of China.

China’s One Child Policy is the largest and most disastrous social experiment in the history of the world. Through it, the Chinese Communist Party boasts that it has “prevented” 400 million births. This is the hallmark of Communist regimes – the peacetime killing of their own citizens. Now China faces demographic disaster. Ironically, the Chinese Communist Party instituted the One Child Policy for economic reasons, but through it, it has written its own economic death sentence.

¹⁷ “Testimony of Mei Shunping, Victim of Five Forced Abortions in China.”
<http://archives.republicans.foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/HHRG-112-FA16-WState-ShunpingM-20120515.pdf> 5/15/12.

¹⁸ Testimony of “Wujian,” Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, 11/10/09.
<http://www.womensrightswithoutfrontiers.org/index.php?nav=cases&nav2=wujian#anchor>

Policy Recommendations:

We respectfully request that the U.S. government urge the Chinese government to:

- *Abolish the One Child Policy and all forms of coercive population control;
- *Offer incentives for couples to have girls;¹⁹
- *Offer pensions to couples who do not have a son, ensuring that parents of girls will not become impoverished in their old age; and
- *Abolish the *hukou* system, so that all children will have access to healthcare and education.

In addition, we respectfully request that the U.S. government:

- *Establish principles of Corporate Social Responsibility, to ensure that U.S. corporations do not allow coercive population control measures to be taken against their employees; and
- *Defund UNFPA, unless and until UNFPA stops supporting or participating in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization in China, in violation of the 1985 Kemp-Kasten Amendment.

¹⁹ We have found in our “Save a Girl” campaign that the encouragement of modest monetary support is enough to make the difference between life and death to a baby girl. “Twin Girls Saved from Abortion in China, Husband’s Family Only Wanted Boys.” <http://www.lifenews.com/2014/05/30/twin-girls-saved-from-abortion-in-china-husband-family-told-wife-they-only-wanted-boys/> 5/30/14.