



**Tracking and Countering China's Global Transnational
Repression Campaign
Opening remarks by
Chairman Chris Smith
September 12, 2023**

Today's hearing, "Tracking and Countering China's Global Transnational Repression Campaign," will come to order.

In June 2021, on the 32nd anniversary of the 1989 Student Democracy Protests which, as we all know, ended in the horrific Tiananmen Square Massacre, I visited Liberty Sculpture Park in Yermo, California, to witness the unveiling a sculpture made by the artist Chen Weiming.

It was a 20-foot-tall statue that morphed Xi Jinping's skull with a coronavirus molecule, and Chen named it "CCP Virus." It was a bold work of art, rightfully assigning blame to the CCP and Xi Jinping for the horrific pandemic that shook our world.

I was honored to attend, to see Chen's work, and to join him and other heroes of Chinese democracy in speaking out against the atrocities committed by the CCP.

Less than two months later, the sculpture was gone. It was

vandalized and then burned to the ground, likely by a band of CCP agents targeting Chen and other Chinese democracy activists here in the US to punish and scare them into silence.

Unfortunately, Chen's is not a rare case.

With us that day in Yermo was Wei Jingsheng, perhaps the greatest advocate for Chinese human rights and democracy of our time.

Very few people know this, but in May 2022, while driving right here in Washington D.C., a car swerved in front of Wei's car, suddenly braked in front of him while another rammed him from behind. Both cars quickly fled the scene. Wei believes, and I also believe, that this was an attempt on his life.

This, incidentally, is the same tactic that I have heard used against another Chinese individual who ran afoul of the CCP.

And the list goes on.

Major Xiong Yan, who served in the US Army, and who ran for Congress in New York City, was stalked and harassed by Chinese agents here in the US.

Pastor Bob Fu, a leading advocate on behalf of Christians and human rights defenders trying to escape China, threatened with a bomb at his home in Texas.

The brave 8 Hong Kongers on whose heads the authorities have placed bounties and harassed their families just this past summer, solely for speaking out against the atrocities happening in their beloved Hong Kong.

Indeed, I note, that group includes a number of individuals whose outspokenness led them to testify here at the China Commission, so this is really personal.

It also becomes personal when I hear about a fellow legislator from a sister democracy, who has been harassed for speaking out about human rights in China. MP Michael Chong of Canada was harassed for what Senator Merkley and I have repeatedly done, calling the Chinese Communist Party's treatment of Uyghurs what it is: a genocide.

And though Michael has been harassed, he is not intimidated, and he will be joining us here today to tell us his story.

My friends, the CCP has waged a pervasive, coercive campaign around the world against anyone who does not agree with the Party. They target Uyghurs, Hong Kongers, Tibetans, dissidents, activists, students, journalists, or anyone who dares to state their "unapproved" opinions about the PRC.

The CCP uses modern technology to digitally harass and surveil individuals around the globe.

They abuse the Interpol system to punish and return those who exercise their freedom of speech while abroad.

They detain and harass dissidents' family and friends back in China to unjustly attempt to coerce silence – like the sister of Rushan Abbas, who will join us here this morning.

And they even use direct, physical assaults beyond their borders to control what is said about their country and its wrongdoings.

Recently we've seen them go so far as to set up shop right here in the United States, establishing illegal "police stations" in New York City to surveil and harass Chinese emigrants on our soil.

The CCP's strategy of trying to rewrite global norms has succeeded in too many cases. This has led to self-censorship and curtailment of basic freedoms even here in the US.

Students, scared to speak out.

Journalists, scared to write.

Free citizens, scared to attend gatherings.

All of this is happening *beyond* China's borders, and *within* ours. Indeed, as Michael Chong's testimony illustrates, and as underscored in news just this past weekend from Great Britain, where an alleged spy worked at parliament, it is also happening *within our legislatures*.

We cannot and will not let the Chinese Communist Party scare us into submission through these tactics.

Today we will hear from experts and victims alike, who have seen these stories up close. We must work to protect the freedoms of speech, assembly, and opinion – both here in the US and elsewhere abroad.

With that, I'd like to yield to my good friend and colleague, Co-Chair of our Commission, Senator Merkley.