

**Testimony of
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Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and
Human Rights
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Chairman Merkley, Co-Chair McGovern, distinguished Members of the Commission; thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

As Secretary Blinken noted in his recent speech, “the scale and scope of the challenge posed by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) will test American diplomacy like nothing we’ve seen before.” Few things are more emblematic of this challenge and the need to contest the PRC’s behavior than its transnational repression. It is the most sophisticated form of repression that exists in the world today. It is pervasive, it is pernicious, and it presents a threat to the values we hold dear as Americans and the integrity of the rules-based international order.

From the ongoing cases of Uyghurs at risk of refoulement to the May 18 indictment of Shujun Wang and four PRC intelligence officers in New York for spying on activists in the United States, the reach and frequency of the PRC’s global repression is growing more alarming by the day. The historical data also proves that this phenomenon is not a recent one. NGOs have documented thousands of cases over the last several years of the PRC conducting involuntary returns to the PRC from over 120 countries worldwide.

Additionally, the extent and sophistication of PRC tactics are deeply concerning. They include physical threats, harassment, and surveillance against individuals; threatening individuals’ family members within the PRC with detention, imprisonment, or the loss of economic opportunities; digital threats including online harassment, surveillance, and other malicious cyber activity, and use of disinformation and online smear campaigns; misuse and attempted misuse of other states’

immigration enforcement mechanisms and international law enforcement systems, including INTERPOL; and applying direct bilateral pressure on other nations to return individuals to the PRC. PRC agents apply these tactics against individuals of all nationalities, including U.S. citizens in the United States.

In response to these threats, the Biden-Harris Administration is executing a multi-faceted strategy to counter, deter, and mitigate their prevalence and impact. It is grounded in an approach that is:

- 1) **Whole-of-government** – the Administration has spearheaded a sustained interagency effort to encourage information sharing within the USG on the PRC’s transnational repression; coordinate on public-facing materials to raise awareness; threat information sharing with partners, conduct outreach and offer resources to victims; and optimize accountability tools.
- 2) **Inclusive** – we are proactively engaging the full spectrum of stakeholders impacted by the PRC’s transnational repression, including most importantly, the targeted communities themselves, such as Uyghurs, Tibetans, Falun Gong practitioners, Hong Kongers, and human rights defenders; civil society representatives; like-minded and affected governments; and the business and investor community.
- 3) **Agile** – to address the PRC’s ever-evolving tactics and reach, we are increasing cooperation with government and non-government partners to collect data about the incidence, methods, and perpetrators of transnational repression, publicize it, and adapt our approach accordingly.
- 4) **Results-oriented** – Our involvement in cases of transnational repression has literally saved lives, and we prioritize our engagement to achieve practical results for individuals at immediate risk.

The Administration’s strategy revolves around four key pillars.

First, we are using all available tools, in coordination with our interagency partners, to promote accountability for the PRC’s transnational repression and to help support those brave enough to speak out against serious human

rights abuses in the PRC. These tools include visa restrictions, investment restrictions by the Treasury Department, export controls by the Commerce Department on technology that could be misused to help facilitate transnational repression, and, of course, law enforcement actions in the United States to investigate and prosecute perpetrators. The Secretary's March 2022 announcement of visa restrictions against PRC officials involved in transnational repression and the Treasury Department's December 2021 announcement of investment restrictions against PRC entities manufacturing and exporting surveillance technology are two recent examples of actions taken by this Administration.

Second, we are curbing the PRC's ability to perpetrate these abuses by engaging third countries that may be implicated, willingly or not, in the PRC's transnational repression efforts, as well as international law enforcement agencies and the private sector. We are facilitating more rapid diplomacy for individuals at risk of refoulement, including immediate and high-level engagement with host governments to prevent forced repatriation and help ensure their safety. We continue to support INTERPOL reforms and good governance that strengthen safeguards to prevent countries from using INTERPOL systems for political or other improper purposes to target peaceful activists or those fleeing repression. Our federal assistance programs are empowering civil society activists and others to mitigate and counter the PRC's transnational repression through providing digital security tools and financial assistance. Through the Summit for Democracy and other forums, we are engaging with the private sector to ensure that firms are cognizant of and have the tools to counter the PRC's increasingly sophisticated digital authoritarianism.

Third, we are we are building the resilience of targeted communities in the U.S. and around the world, including through listening sessions led by U.S. government officials, to better understand the needs and develop tailored responses. Through our engagement in Washington and at our embassies, we are proactively engaging with affected communities, understanding their challenges, and developing solutions in partnership. Additionally, we are amplifying the voices of affected communities by shining a light on transnational repression and bringing it out from the shadows. We are

now reporting on transnational repression in the Department's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, and the annual Trafficking in Persons Report. We are also supporting affected communities by advocating for individual cases of transnational repression where family members of activists and others have been imprisoned or disappeared in the PRC.

Fourth, we are engaging our allies and partners to mount coordinated multilateral responses. For instance, we work with partners to jointly advocate for political prisoner cases, many of which have ties to transnational repression. This included a "Voices of Political Prisoners" event co-led by Secretary Blinken and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Landsbergis at the December Summit for Democracy. Additionally, in coordination with the Commerce Department and with the support of Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, we partnered with Australia, Norway and Denmark to launch the Export Controls and Human Rights Initiative, which seeks to stem the tide of PRC and other authoritarian governments' misuse of technology. Through the US-EU Trade and Technology Council, we are working with our European partners on developing common standards that will address the misuse of technology that threatens human rights and facilitates transnational repression. Lastly, we have sought to call out repressive acts that fall in the category of transnational repression in statements or resolutions at the UN General Assembly and other UN bodies. And we intend to do more.

In closing, let me repeat – the PRC's transnational repression poses a direct threat to human rights and democracy, the rules-based international order, and even our own citizens and institutions. It also poses a direct threat to citizens and communities in the United States. We must reckon with this serious threat, and we are combatting it with the attention, seriousness, and resources it deserves.

Our close partnership with Congress will be integral to this effort. Bipartisan legislation such as the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, among many other bills, have given us the tools we need to confront the PRC's

egregious atrocities and human rights abuses. We welcome an ongoing partnership with Congress to refine our tools and our diplomatic approaches to address the PRC's transnational repression threat.

Chairman Merkley, Co-Chair McGovern, distinguished Members, let me again express my appreciation for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.