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**Statement of Rep. James P. McGovern
Co-chair, Congressional-Executive Commission on China**

**Hearing on “Techno-Authoritarianism: Platform for Repression
in China and Abroad”**

Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 10:30 a.m.

As delivered

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing on the Chinese government’s use of technology and digital platforms to expand and export its repressive policies.

Where there was once optimism that the Internet and new technologies would create a more open, democratized global commons, there is now a cloud of darkness. Anti-democratic and authoritarian governments have learned to harness such technology as a means to assert social control.

This is no longer just about human rights abuses suffered by people over there. It is about the risks we now face from the phones in our pockets.

Take TikTok. It is immensely popular in the United States and can be a lot of fun, or so my kids tell me.

It was developed by a Chinese company. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. But we hear reports that videos on topics sensitive to its government are blocked or disappear. Americans deserve to know whether China's censorship regime is intruding on their daily lives.

This concern is why the Commission, under my chairmanship in the last Congress, expanded its reporting to include "Human Rights Violation in the United States and Globally."

Our soon-to-be-released annual report will document how the Chinese government silences criticism, chills the expression of political views, and undermines international norms.

The Commission's next hearing will look at the economic coercion aspect of this trend.

We cannot forget that the Chinese government's techno-authoritarianism is felt most gravely by the Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. The surveillance regime they have set up in Xinjiang is the most advanced and enveloping in the world.

Is this the model for the rest of the China and the world? This is the key question we hope today's witnesses will address.

How can the United States ensure that its exports do not abet the spread of the surveillance state? Can we harness international partners? How do individuals make sound consumer choices?

We are addressing an immensely complicated and technical set of issues. I'm pleased that our witnesses bring a breadth of expertise to these evolving challenges. I hope you will continue to share your research with us.

Thank you, and I look forward to your testimony.

