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CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA
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Thank you Chairman Hagel, Co-Chairman Leach, Senators, Congressmen and fellow members of the Commission. I commend the staff for its excellent work on the 2006 Annual Report on human rights conditions and the development of the rule of law in China. I also thank the distinguished group of witnesses gathered today to discuss the current state of freedom of expression, criminal and civil rights defense, and government transparency in providing information about prisoners of conscience in China.

For more than 25 years, the U.S. has pursued a policy of open commercial exchange with China. We have encouraged Chinese leaders to embrace market principles and welcomed China into the global economy. We supported China's accession to the World Trade Organization. We have an optimistic goal of a stable and prosperous partnership between America and China that will be better achieved with China fully participating in the international trading system.

Economic cooperation between the United States and China has greatly benefited both countries and we believe that the dynamic growth that China has realized through free trade and will work for our mutual benefit in the future. With this in mind, we also believe that there is a relationship between open economies and open societies and expect that economic progress is likely to be accompanied by progress in human rights and the rule of law.

Indeed, we approach this Commission with a fundamental belief that progress in human rights and the rule of law are essential for China to maintain its economic progress. We also have a fundamental concern about the relationship between commercial rights of U.S. companies and individual rights. Further, we want U.S. companies to be good corporate citizens in their overseas activities, respectful of the rights of workers and other stakeholders. We must measure how well and how transparently China treats both companies and individuals under the law. We are also concerned about the role of U.S. companies doing business in China as well as how China treats these companies. How these companies perform in their dealings with the Chinese government and in the Chinese commercial environment has a bearing on future progress in human rights for Chinese citizens.