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THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S CRACKDOWN ON RELIGION IN CHINA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

NOVEMBER 28, 2018

Printed for the use of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China



Available at www.cecc.gov or www.govinfo.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
33–238 PDF WASHINGTON : 2019

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C O N T E N T S

STATEMENTS

	Page
Opening Statement of Hon. Marco Rubio, a U.S. Senator from Florida; Chairman, Congressional-Executive Commission on China	1
Statement of Hon. Christopher Smith, a U.S. Representative from New Jersey; Cochairman, Congressional-Executive Commission on China	4
Tursun, Mihrigul, Uyghur Muslim detained in Chinese "reeducation" camp	6
Hoffman, Dr. Samantha, Visiting Academic Fellow, Mercator Institute for China Studies and Non-Resident Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute	8
Farr, Dr. Thomas F., President, Religious Freedom Institute	10

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENTS

Tursun, Mihrigul	28
Hoffman, Samantha	32
Farr, Thomas F.	41
Rubio, Hon. Marco	46
Smith, Hon. Christopher	48

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Representative Cases From the Prisoner Database of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, submitted by Senator Rubio	50
Letter regarding Statement by Concerned Scholars, submitted by Sean R. Roberts, Director, International Development Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University	51
Statement by Concerned Scholars on China's Mass Detention of Turkic Minorities, submitted by Sean R. Roberts	51
Witness Biographies	54

THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S CRACKDOWN ON RELIGION IN CHINA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 3:09 p.m., in room 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio, Chairman, presiding.

Also present: Representative Smith, Cochairman, and Senators King and Daines.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, A U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA; CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Chairman RUBIO. Good afternoon. This hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China will come to order.

The title of this hearing is the Communist Party's Crackdown on Religion in China. We'll have one panel that will testify today. It will feature Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur Muslim who was interned in and survived a Chinese "political reeducation camp." That's not what I call it. That's what they call it. But in fact, it is something more nefarious than that.

Translating for her is Ms. Zubayra Shamseden. She is the Chinese Outreach Coordinator at the Uyghur Human Rights Project. We'll also hear from Tom Farr, president of the Religious Freedom Institute, and Samantha Hoffman, a visiting academic fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies and Non-Resident Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. I want to thank you all for being here.

The Chinese Government, under the control of the Chinese Communist Party, has long imposed harsh policies against unregistered Christian churches, Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, and other religious adherents.

The Commission maintains a political prisoner database. And since that database was created, it has featured some 6,275 cases involving individuals detained because of their religion. Currently, there are more than 750 active cases and countless others whose names we will never know. The Commission consistently advocates for Members of Congress and the administration to raise individual prisoner cases, and the database is an invaluable tool in that effort.

Religious freedom in China is a vast topic and we will only begin to scratch the surface of it today. But consider the following: Uyghur Muslims are rounded up and interned in camps, Tibetan

monks and nuns are forced to undergo political reeducation sessions, Falun Gong practitioners are reportedly sent to legal education centers for indoctrination, churches are shuttered, crosses removed, and Christian believers harassed and imprisoned.

These are the daily realities in Xi Jinping's China. And it leads many observers to describe the current wave of repression as the most severe since the Cultural Revolution. Even as the government has carried out an extensive campaign to ensure ideological loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party above all else, impacting various sectors of society, not the least of which are religious communities, it has also targeted those who represent and advocate for them, not just the communities but those who represent them and advocate for them.

The 709 Crackdown, as it was called, saw scores of rights lawyers and advocates detained, arrested, and tortured, forced to ingest unknown medications and confess to crimes that they did not commit. These brave men and women have been the tip of the spear in representing China's repressed and persecuted Christians and Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Falun Gong practitioners.

Of the rights lawyers who have courageously defended the rights of their fellow citizens in Chinese court, several continue to serve sentences, including Wang Quanzhang and Gao Zhisheng. Those who have independently documented the truth of Chinese citizens persecuted for their beliefs became targets of the persecution themselves.

One fearless example is citizen journalist and human rights defender Huang Qi. We are extremely concerned that he is in danger of making the ultimate sacrifice for telling these stories because his government is currently deliberately denying him access to medical treatment while he is in prison.

However, set against this grim backdrop, something remarkable has happened—the number of religious adherents in China has grown. This shows the utter failure of the Chinese Communist Party's policies in this regard.

Today's hearing provides an opportunity to better understand the scale and scope of the current crackdown, to identify cross-cutting trends across different religions, to examine the elevated role of the United Front Work Department and what this means for China's faithful, and to put forward policy recommendations to address this crisis.

This Commission has been particularly seized this year with the ongoing crackdown in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region targeting Uyghurs and other ethnic minority Muslim groups. Our annual report that was released in October describes these grave abuses at length, abuses which I believe, and most would agree, constitute crimes against humanity.

During a July hearing on Xinjiang, we heard sobering testimony from Ms. Gulchehra Hoja, a Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service journalist and an American citizen, who had been personally impacted by the crackdown. Dozens of her own family members have been detained, have disappeared.

And as sobering as her story is, she is not alone. Not only have her fellow Uyghur Service journalists been similarly impacted, but

countless other Americans have as well. It seems that every week the Commission—which we chair—is contacted by Uyghurs living in the United States desperate for news about a loved one who has vanished into the growing labyrinth of camps.

Today we are honored to have with us Ms. Tursun. Her story is harrowing, and we are truly grateful for her courage in coming forward.

Also grabbing headlines in recent months is the growing repression facing Christians in China. Beijing authorities recently banned Zion Church, one of the largest unofficial Protestant Churches in the city, which typically drew up to 1,600 worshippers on any given Sunday. Robbed of their worship space, members of the church have reportedly taken to quietly meeting in parks and in homes.

In September, reports emerged of authorities burning Bibles and compelling Christians to sign papers renouncing their faith. Meanwhile the Holy See and the Chinese Government apparently have reached an agreement this fall—the precise details of which have not been made public—it has been reported that Beijing would now recognize the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church in China. The Vatican would recognize seven excommunicated Chinese bishops appointed by the PRC authorities. The Chinese authorities would appoint future bishops while the Pope would have veto power over their nomination.

There is growing concern—rightfully so—that this agreement may put in greater peril those Catholic believers who maintain as part of their faith that they cannot and will not worship under clergy that have been selected by the Chinese Government. There is also alarm that any deal betrays the memory of Catholics who refused to renounce papal supremacy and were persecuted for it, while demoralizing those who still stand faithful.

As the hearing title denotes, the Communist Party is at the center of this crackdown. The Party Central Committee issued a massive restructuring plan for Party and government agencies to be completed by the end of this calendar year. The United Front Work Department, which Xi Jinping, like Mao before him, calls the magic weapon of the Communist Party, was further empowered in this reorganization.

This year its role in overseeing religious affairs was expanded, underscoring the Party's enduring fear at the growth of religious belief as a threat to their grip on power. As the Party conducts United Front work to ensure that outside groups are in line with its agenda, the evidence is also clear that Chinese officials are only too willing to expand their repression overseas to intimidate and harass Americans and legal permanent residents of the United States, including those in the Uyghur community.

Ms. Tursun's story reminds us that China's suppression of religious faith and religious communities is real. It is evil. It is too horrendous to ignore.

In the 21st century, we must not, cannot, and should not accept the mass internment of individuals based on their religious faith, on the basis of their cultural identity. Nor can we accept the efforts to stamp out all unofficial religious communities in China that maintain as a matter of faith that they do not want to be beholden

to the leadership of the Chinese Government, or frankly, any government.

Now without objection—well, I wanted now to turn it over to Congressman Smith, who's our cochair, for his opening statement. And then I want to hear from our witnesses, and I want to thank you all for being here.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY; COCHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The present-day assault on religion in China is the most comprehensive attempt to manipulate and control religious communities since the Cultural Revolution. What is happening under Xi Jinping's leadership is a systematic effort to transform, co-opt, or destroy the very nature of religious communities.

Regulations of religious affairs issued in February tightened existing restrictions, and new draft regulations will further clamp down on religious expression online. Churches, mosques, and temples have been demolished, crosses destroyed, children under the age of 18 are prohibited from attending services, and the Communist Party is now commissioning a new religious text that will remove content unwanted by the atheist Communist Party.

Xi Jinping talks about realizing the China Dream, but when Bibles are burned, when a simple prayer over a meal in public is an illegal religious gathering, and when over a million Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims are interned in political reeducation camps and forced to renounce their faith, that dream is an unmitigated nightmare. Xi Jinping's war on religion is also a distinct challenge to U.S. religious freedom diplomacy and to international standards on freedom of religion.

There is a dire need to continue shining a light on the stunning and outrageous detention of nearly a million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities. Senator Rubio and I have tried to be a voice for those repressed.

Ms. Tursun's powerful testimony today reminds us that we cannot be silent when the Chinese Government is constructing a high-tech police state in Xinjiang Province whose goal is the forced assimilation of an entire ethnic minority population and the sinicization of their religious beliefs and practices.

I do commend the administration, particularly Secretary Pompeo and Vice President Pence, for speaking out forcefully. I would urge the administration to support the bipartisan Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act that Senator Rubio and I introduced, and to sanction Chinese officials and businesses complicit in these crimes against humanity.

In the past year—and it was referenced by our chairman—pressure has mounted on independent Protestant and Catholic churches. Clergy are now in prison—they have been, but even more so—churches have been forcibly closed, and the human rights lawyers who defend religious believers have been jailed, disappeared, or tortured into silence.

Gao Zhisheng, Jiang Tianyong, and so many others, have been detained, disappeared, and tortured for standing up against persecution.

An open letter signed by over 500 Protestant leaders inspires and should motivate each and every one of us to double our efforts on behalf of those who are fighting this repression. In the midst of an intense campaign of repression, these 500 Protestant leaders wrote: "For the sake of the Gospel, we are willing to suffer all external losses brought about by unfair law enforcement. Out of a love for our fellow citizens, we are willing to give up all of our earthly rights. For the sake of the Gospel, we are prepared to bear all losses, even the loss of our freedom and our lives." This type of courageous conviction requires not only our admiration but our action.

Let me turn just for a brief moment to the issue of Catholicism in China, where a deal has been struck that will reportedly give the Pope veto power over Chinese Government-approved candidates for bishop. Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin admits, "It is not a good deal," but believes it is important to unify the underground Catholic Church and the state-sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association.

Cardinal Zen, however, bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, has questioned whether Vatican officials making these decisions "know what true suffering is." The reports are that the deal is provisional and full details are secret. However, the devil is in the details, including the fate of underground churches, the 30 underground bishops appointed previously over Beijing's objections, and Vatican relations with Taiwan.

I would just note parenthetically that back in 1994, I met with Bishop Xu of Baoding. He celebrated mass. He was out of prison just for a very brief time, was re-arrested a few years later, and he spent probably about 40 years, at least 30 plus, incarcerated. He had absolutely no animosity to the Chinese state. He said, As a true Christian, I love them. I pray for them, even though they beat me. Bishop Xu of Baoding, an amazing man. He is one of those underground Catholic bishops, and as we all know, there are several others who are still being held in detention.

I do hope and pray that this agreement will bring true religious freedom for Catholics in China, but I have my doubts. Since the agreement was reached, underground priests are detained, pilgrimage sites have been closed, crosses continue to be toppled from churches, formerly excommunicated community bishops were welcomed in Rome, and the United Front Department officials in October convened a reeducation session for priests. So that's the harbinger, I think, of some very bad additional things to come.

The President and Xi Jinping will meet, as we know, in Argentina this week seeking ways to defuse U.S.-China tensions. It should be conveyed to Xi Jinping in absolute clarity by our President that his war on religion is not only an egregious wrong against the Chinese people, it is also highly counterproductive strategy. Taking a hammer and sickle to the cross or jailing a million Muslims will not only ensure that a tougher China policy will be widespread and bipartisan but will garner even global support.

We need to do more in this area. This hearing, again, I think helps us get further clarity, so we can speak authoritatively and passionately on behalf of religious freedom.

Thank you very much.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you.

And now I want to begin with this. I read this testimony earlier and it is—I want everybody to hear it. It is incredibly powerful. It is the testimony that we're about to hear from Ms. Tursun and it is going to be translated.

So I thank you for being here, for your bravery and courage in appearing, and for the great service you are providing your fellow men and women in the world in testifying today about the reality of what is happening, what happened to you, and what is happening to so many.

STATEMENT OF MIHRIGUL TURSUN, SURVIVOR OF TORTURE IN A CHINESE DETENTION CAMP

Ms. TURSUN. I would like to thank the United States Government and the American people for saving my life and bringing me to America, the land of the free.

Because my English is not good enough, I would like my translator to read my statement.

My name is Mihrigul Tursun and I am 29 years old. I am a Uyghur. Over the last three years, I was taken to Chinese Government detention centers three times. I spent a total of 10 months in the camps.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify about my personal experience. I ask that my written testimony be submitted for the record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tursun appears in the Appendix.]

In May of 2015, I returned to China from Egypt where I studied English. I was arrested at the airport and my two-month-old triplets were taken away. The officers handcuffed me, put a dark sack over my head, and took me to a detention center.

After three months, they told me I could be with my sick children until their health improved, and released me. My oldest son had died in their hands.

In April 2017, I was taken to a detention center for the second time. I was interrogated for four days and nights without sleep. After being in the camp for three months, I kept having seizures and losing consciousness. I was finally released to a mental hospital. From there, my father took me home and I gradually recovered.

In January of 2018, I was detained for the third time. They put chains on my wrists and ankles, put a black sack over my head, and took me to a hospital. I was stripped naked and put under a big computerized machine. Then I was dressed in a blue uniform with a yellow vest worn by serious criminals and taken to a camp.

Now I would like to tell you about what I experienced in these camps. I was taken to a cell which was built underground with no windows. There were cameras on all four sides so the officials could see every corner of the room. There were around 60 people in one of the cells where I was held. At night, 15 women would stand up

while the rest of us would sleep sideways, and then we would rotate every two hours. Some people had not taken a shower in over a year.

Before we ate breakfast—which was water with very little rice—we had to sing songs hailing the Communist Party. We had to repeat in Chinese, "Long live Xi Jinping," and "Lenience for those who repent and punishment for those who resist." Anyone who could not memorize a book of slogans and the rules within 14 days would be denied food or beaten. Sometimes there was no food all day, and when there was food, it was mostly a steamed bun.

They forced us to take unknown pills and drink some kind of white liquid. The pill caused us to lose consciousness and reduced our cognition level. The white liquid caused loss of menstruation in some women and extreme bleeding in others and even death.

I also experienced torture in a tiger chair the second time I was detained. I was taken to a special room and placed in a high chair. Bands held my arms and legs in place and tightened when they pressed a button. The guards put a helmet on my shaved head. Each time I was electrocuted my whole body would shake violently, and I could feel the pain in my veins. I thought I would rather die than go through this torture. I begged them to kill me. They insulted me with humiliating words and pressured me to admit my guilt. They told me my mother and son had died, my father was serving life in prison, and that my family was torn apart because of me.

In another cell where I was held, there were 40 women between the ages of 17 and 62. When I left the cell after about three months, there were 68. Most of them were educated professionals such as teachers and doctors.

I witnessed nine deaths in my cell in three months. I cannot imagine how many deaths there must be in all of the camps.

In the camps I met a 23-year-old woman named Patemhan. Her crime was attending a wedding in 2014 that was held according to Islamic tradition, where people did not dance, sing, or drink alcohol. She said 400 people who attended that wedding were all taken to the camps. When she was taken, she had left her two kids in the field. She agonized every day about where her children were. One night she suddenly dropped to the floor and stopped breathing. Several people with masks came and dragged her away.

After more than three months in the camp, I came out and was again able to see my kids. Thanks to the help of many wonderful people, I was able to come to the United States. Words cannot describe how joyful I felt when I landed in Virginia two months ago. But I'm not completely free from my traumatic experience and I fear that the Chinese Government is still monitoring me. My brother recently left a voicemail on my cell phone. He said, "How could you do this to your parents? What kind of daughter are you? You should go to the Chinese Embassy right away and denounce all of the things you said about the Chinese Government in the interview you gave to Radio Free Asia and tell them you love China. Tell them you were pressured by the Uyghur organizations in the U.S. to lie about your detention and torture in the camps. And take back everything you said. Otherwise, China can get you wherever you hide."

I am trying to start a new life in America, go to school, and take care of my son and daughter. But now I'm terrified that the Chinese Government could still threaten me from so far away.

Please protect the Uyghurs in America from the Chinese Government's threats. Please help Uyghur refugees around the world who will be taken to the camps if they are forced to return to China. Please take action to save the people who are being tortured right now.

I hope the U.S. Government will take strong action against the officials responsible for torturing me and for the death of my little boy and the death of so many innocent Uyghur people. My people look to the United States as a beacon of hope. It is the only country that can tell China to stop its ethnic cleansing of the Uyghur people.

I still remember the words of the officers when I asked what my crime was. They said, "Being a Uyghur is a crime."

Distinguished Congressmen—if you ever go to China, please ask where my mother, father, and siblings are. Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you very much.

Ms. Hoffman? Take the microphone, please.

STATEMENT OF DR. SAMANTHA HOFFMAN, VISITING ACADEMIC FELLOW, MERCATOR INSTITUTE FOR CHINA STUDIES; AND NON-RESIDENT FELLOW, AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE'S INTERNATIONAL CYBER POLICY CENTRE

Ms. HOFFMAN. Chairman Rubio, Chairman Smith, distinguished members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to discuss this topic of critical importance.

I will begin with four observations about the nature of the Chinese Communist Party's crackdown on religion. First, the CCP's crimes against scapegoated religious groups are directed from the highest level of the Chinese Communist Party. The clearest central-level authority directing these actions is the United Front Work Department of the CCP Central Committee.

The United Front Work Department oversees ethnic affairs and, by definition of this role, is ultimately responsible for the concentration, internment, and reeducation of predominantly Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The United Front Work Department oversees religious affairs and the effort Xi Jinping describes at the 2015 Central United Front Work Department Conference as persisting in the direction of sinicization of religion in China.

It is by definition not only responsible for the mass internment of Muslims in Xinjiang but also the growing persecution of Christians and other religious groups in China.

Number two, the CCP's actions are linked to a state security strategy that prioritizes the protection and expansion of the CCP's power, not the protection of China with or without the CCP.

The crackdown on religion is a visible manifestation of a much larger effort to defend the CCP's version of the truth. Embedded in the explanation for the sinicization of religion is the closely related CCP concept of cultural security. Cultural security does not protect Chinese civilization. Instead, it aims to eliminate ideolog-

ical threats that political opponents can use as vehicles to challenge the Party.

In reality, the CCP's claims to hold the truth may be more strongly contested by everyday social demands that, intentionally or not, expose falsehoods in the CCP's narrative. It is one likely reason why the Party, in addition to religious communities, also sees, for instance, the women's rights movement or activities of student labor organizers in China as a threat. Beyond mobilization power, it exposes the CCP's false narrative that Chinese culture and the Chinese people are somehow different in regard to universal human rights.

Third, the CCP's choice to employ language such as a "people's war against religious extremism" to describe its actions suggests that the CCP is acting on a broader threat perception. This threat perception has always been present in the CCP's thinking, but the clearest source of the present-day crackdown is the Falun Gong sit-in demonstration in 1999 where senior members of the Chinese Communist Party, including of the People's Armed Police and the PLA, were involved in using the same state security resources that were meant to protect the Party, to mobilize—and instead of using those resources against the group that they are supposed to mobilize against, actually being a part of that group.

The Color Revolutions in eastern and central Asia during the early 2000s are another example. Making scapegoats of groups like Uyghurs, or Christians, or Tibetans, the CCP points to examples like the Color Revolutions and Jasmine Revolutions, or even the Velvet Revolutions in Eastern Europe to justify the tightening and expanding of its own power.

The CCP warns that internal and external hostile forces seek to infiltrate political parties, religious and ethnic groups and incite division in Chinese society. The anxiety is aimed at shoring up loyalty within the Party and convincing Chinese society of their need for the Party's paternalism.

Finally, the root cause of the CCP's actions are not the victims of its aggression. The victims are scapegoats used to mask the CPC's core weaknesses and to justify the expansion of the CCP's unchecked power. The core weaknesses are the unending contestation for power within the Party and the Party's struggle to maintain control over China's narrative. These weaknesses do not make the CCP's failure inevitable. In fact, as the CCP's victims in Xinjiang have learned, this combination of strength and weakness can be catastrophic.

So, if you take one point away from my testimony today, it's that in order to help the victims in Xinjiang and help other persecuted religious groups in China, we need to think more broadly than those groups themselves. And that means that the Committee needs to think about long-term responses. And I don't have those answers for you today. But what I can offer you are short-term solutions that can at least help to stall the CCP's progress.

First, a strong response to the CCP's persecution of religious groups must address the problem at its core. Individuals in Xinjiang, such as Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, are directly implementing the CCP's securitization policies, and Xinjiang should

be immediately sanctioned. Sanctions should not, however, end at the local and regional levels of government.

Beyond the actual source of the problem is a broader state security strategy that is clearly centrally directed. The U.S. Government should start by targeting all officials connected to the control of religions. This includes known members of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Central Committee Xinjiang Work Coordination Small Group office, and high-level officials in the United Front Work Department. I've listed several specific individuals in my written testimony.

Second, sanctions should also extend to both Chinese and international companies that are involved in the construction of the Chinese surveillance state, which support the CCP's human rights violations. It's not a complete solution, but it could stall the CCP's progress and buy time while policymakers research more long-term effective policies. And I would just add that if anyone is concerned about economic damage to U.S. companies, that line would put a monetary price on human life.

Finally, overseas Chinese communities must be protected. Western governments must take steps to protect overseas Chinese from all kinds of CCP encroachment that has taken place for decades but are now increasingly augmented and drawn to our attention.

Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you.

Dr. Farr.

STATEMENT OF DR. THOMAS F. FARR, PRESIDENT, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE

Mr. FARR. Chairman Rubio, Cochairman Smith, Senator King, thank you for holding this important hearing.

Before I begin, let me say that after hearing the testimony of the brave Ms. Tursun, no one can doubt the evil of the regime we are here to discuss.

Thank you for inviting me to give my views on the Vatican's provisional agreement with that regime. It's noteworthy that this Sino-Vatican agreement was concluded amid the most systematic and brutal attempt to control Chinese religious communities since the Cultural Revolution.

President Xi Jinping's strategy includes persecution intended to alter the fundamental nature of at least three religions. One is Islam as practiced by the Uyghurs in Xinjiang Province, which we've heard about. Another is Tibetan Buddhism, the object for decades of a brutal Chinese strategy of violence and cultural destruction.

The third is Roman Catholicism, whose distinctive teachings on human rights and religious freedom for all people pose a particular obstacle to the Chinese state, especially to the Marxist-Leninist understanding of religion, human nature, and human dignity.

I want to explore the possible effects of the provisional agreement on what is a very dangerous moment for Catholics in China. The Vatican's primary goal is said to be that of unifying Chinese Catholics by approving bishops who are in communion with Rome but at the same time recognized by Chinese authorities. Other ob-

jectives are said to include reducing Chinese persecution of Catholics.

These are worthy goals, but it's difficult to see how the agreement will achieve them or help achieve them. Beijing has spent decades attempting to manipulate and control the Catholic Church, especially through the government-controlled Catholic Patriotic Associations.

Those Catholics who remain loyal to the magisterium of the Church, the Holy Father, and fundamental Catholic teachings on human dignity and human rights are part of an underground Church whose adherents are subject to arrest, torture, and disappearance. Unfortunately, although the agreement is only two months old, there are already signs that its provisions will exacerbate this divide rather than heal it. The text of the agreement, as Mr. Smith said, has not been made public, but its contours are generally known.

Chinese Catholic bishops will now be chosen in a process that begins with local Communist-controlled Catholic Patriotic Associations presenting the names of candidates to dioceses where a vacancy for a bishop occurs. Diocesan priests and lay Catholics will then vote on the candidates. The winner's name will be sent to the government-controlled Council of Bishops who will then provide the name to the Vatican. There the candidate could either be accepted or rejected by the Pope.

The Vatican apparently hopes that the Pope's veto power will ensure the orthodoxy of the new bishops and facilitate reconciliation among China's divided Catholics. Unfortunately, it seems to me highly unlikely that a Chinese-controlled Council of Bishops will forward to the Vatican the name of a bishop candidate who is a faithful Catholic. A man chosen in this process is unlikely to be a witness to the truth proclaimed by the Church about, for example, the sanctity of life, human dignity, or religious freedom for everyone. It seems far more likely that the name of a candidate bishop sent to Rome will be chosen for his acquiescence to the Communist regime if not for his fidelity to its anti-Catholic purposes. Of course, the Pope can veto such candidates, but for how long? Vacancies in bishoprics do not harm the Chinese Government. They harm Chinese Catholics.

The insidious effects of this bargain may already have shown themselves. Two official Chinese bishops attended the recent Synod on Youth in Rome, as Mr. Smith mentioned, apparently at the invitation of Pope Francis. But these bishops were and are Communist apparatchiks. They are both leaders of the aforementioned Council of Bishops controlled by the government. Unaccountably, the two left Rome before the synod was finished. Perhaps, Mr. Smith, they left to preside over the reeducation classes for priests you mentioned. Whatever the cause of their abrupt departure, it was not the action of bishops faithful to the Holy Father or the Catholic Church.

Unfortunately, the persecution of Chinese Catholics has not decreased. If anything, it has intensified since the signing of the agreement. Mr. Smith gave a couple of examples. Let me mention also that within a month of the signing of the agreement, two Marian shrines had been destroyed by Communist officials in China.

Unfortunately, the Sino-Vatican agreement seems to mirror the Vatican's failed Cold War diplomacy of the 1960s which was, frankly, unrealistic about the evil of Communism. It deeply wounded the Church in parts of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the Vatican does have a distinct moral authority to counter the root causes of totalitarian evil, just as Pope John Paul II did in the 1980s in collaboration with President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher.

In my view, the Holy See's role should be now as it was then, to press for human rights and especially for religious freedom for all religious communities in China and elsewhere. Given the current vile assaults on Uyghur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists, the Vatican should be standing with them.

As for China's Catholics, the Vatican should demand nothing less than libertas ecclesiae, the freedom of the Church to witness to its adherents, to the public, and to the regime, its teachings on human dignity and the common good.

I sincerely hope I am wrong about the long-term effects of the Sino-Vatican agreement, but I don't believe it will help the Roman Catholic Church, China's Catholic minority, or the cause of religious freedom in China. The Chinese know what they are doing. The Vatican's charism in China, on the other hand, is not diplomacy but witness to the truth about God and man.

Thanks for inviting me to address this important topic.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you all for being here.

I'm going to now turn it to—we have a vote at 4 o'clock. I'll stay—we have a few minutes after 4 to continue—and obviously the cochair is here. But I wanted to give Senator King a chance at the first question.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to thank our witnesses for moving and important testimony. It's rare that we have an opportunity to hear so directly about something like this that is so abhorrent and so at variance. In fact, it's almost impossible for us to understand, where freedom of religion is a basic premise of our entire society.

And that leads me to my first question—and maybe Mr. Farr, you could tackle this. Why are they doing this? Why would a country that has a great culture, and history, and tradition, and strength, and a lot of entrepreneurship and—why are they being so cruel to relatively small groups that would appear at least to be a little—not a major threat to the endurance of their regime? Why are they going out of their way to do something which is bound to bring down upon them the opprobrium of the world?

Mr. FARR. It's a good question, Senator, and a big question.

Let me give you what I think—to cut to the chase—is the answer. Religion threatens Communism. Communism is a totalitarian understanding of the world and of what a human being is. Most religions posit an authority greater than the state. This constitutes a threat to the state, which is one reason we have the guarantee of religious free exercise in the First Amendment to our Constitution. Our Founders wanted to limit the power of the state by protecting the right of people to have a fidelity to something that's more important than government. Communism is precisely the opposite of this.

So I think religion by its nature threatens them, particularly those religions that have deep theological reasons for fidelity to an authority greater than the state. The Catholic Church is distinguished by its adherence not only to an authority beyond the state, but to the right of everybody, every citizen in a state, to have religious freedom. That view constitutes a threat to the regime. I think that is the answer to your question, although it is more complicated than that. But I think that is the core answer.

Senator KING. It just seems that it is a disproportionate response to what is a relatively small threat given the numbers of people that——

Mr. FARR. If I might just add, sir, the "threat" is growing because people are converting to religion in China. There is one estimate, speaking here about Christians, that within 20 years, China will have more Christians than any other country in the world. This scares the dickens out of the Chinese.

Senator KING. Ms. Tursun, let me ask you a variation of the same question. Why do you think you were treated so abominably? What threat did you present to the Government of China?

Ms. TURSUN. In China, many are facing religious persecution; it is not only just me. I am just one very simple representative of many.

Senator KING. But why, is my question.

Ms. TURSUN. Just because we are the owners of that land. The land belongs to us.

Senator KING. Let me ask another question. Ms. Hoffman, you talked about some kind of response. Is the United States responding in any concrete way today to this gross violation of human rights? Are there sanctions in place? Are there high-level discussions, negotiations—anything? Is there—are we doing anything about this is my question.

Ms. HOFFMAN. I think—just to first add to your first question in order to answer that question. The root causes of what the CCP is doing in Xinjiang and elsewhere are the Party's weaknesses. It is the contestation for power within the Party that's unending. It is the Party's fear of loss of narrative control. And so it scapegoats groups like the Uyghurs to justify shoring up loyalty within the Party as well as to justify to the people their need for the Party's control.

So I think that while it is important that the U.S. Government has certainly called attention to the issue in Xinjiang, I think that the U.S. Government needs to be thinking longer-term and broader-term.

Senator KING. Have we imposed any Magnitsky Act sanctions or anything of that nature?

Ms. HOFFMAN. I believe one. Yes, one. But I think that sanctions need to go to the highest levels of the Chinese Communist Party. But that's only a starting point. Solving the problem is thinking long-term and I don't know that the U.S. Government is doing that yet.

Senator KING. A 19th century philosopher said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." And we may be seeing that playing out before our eyes when there are no essential checks and balances. This is, unfortunately, a part of human nature.

Thank you all for your testimony, and I appreciate your being here today.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you, Senator King.

I wanted to—first of all, Ms. Tursun, I wanted to thank you for coming. I know you are—I could see how difficult the testimony was for you.

Ms. TURSUN. Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. And I want others who are here—I can see people holding up pictures and articles about your loved ones who are unaccounted for. And I want you to know we see that and we—if we were to—just the sheer volume, the number of cases and individuals that have gone through this is so massive that it would take forever to document it. But none of them are forgotten. The reason why we spend—this is I believe our fourth hearing, with other activity that we have done and—but today you've been their voice, Ms. Tursun, and I wanted to thank you for that.

I have three questions that I hope you can address. The first is you testified briefly about fear—that even here in the United States you are being watched, harassed and followed. That is disturbing to us that someone living in this country, the Chinese Government could try to intimidate, whether it be through phone calls or other activity that you described in your written testimony.

The first is, we obviously will talk to you after this to ensure that appropriate law enforcement authorities are aware of this to ensure that nothing—that you will be safe in this country and that nothing happens. And anyone knows that if anything were to ever happen, we would know who did it; we think that is the strongest form of protection. You deserve that.

But I wanted—if you could briefly describe—have you had any incidents recently where you feel, not just the phone call, but individuals have followed you or you felt suspicious that you have been in any way the target of harassment potentially by those working on behalf of the Chinese Government?

Ms. TURSUN. Since I came to America, other than that kind of pressure that I have received from my family members like my father and my brother's text messages and also two suspicious phone calls, about two weeks ago in one of the markets in Virginia, I was catching an Uber and traveling and some person who was wearing black glasses, and also a black hat, came up to the car and was trying to talk to me through the windows of the car. And the car that dropped him off drove off in a different direction. And I was scared when he tried to talk to me through the window. And then the driver asked me, Do you know him? I said, No, I do not know. But I see he is Chinese. I understand.

And I let the driver go fast, help me to run away and we went the other way and this driver brought me to my house. But I am always worried all the time. I do not feel I am safe here.

The TRANSLATOR. For example, Ms. Tursun is just thinking about this article she brought—it's from the Global Times—they mentioned her by name in that article, saying that what she said in the interview she had given to Radio Free Asia—that everything she said was a lie.

And that reporter says that the Global Times recently reported from one of the reeducation camps of Xinjiang that the situation—

the reporter described it completely different and says that what Tursun portrayed or described about the camps is even—that that kind of situation doesn't exist in Chinese prisons.

So this is another threat that she felt directly from the Chinese Government which specifically mentions her name in the article.

Chairman RUBIO. The second question I have is, in your time in camp, were you ever forced to perform work or labor, any forced labor?

Ms. TURSUN. No, they don't allow us to go out from the room. They just lock us in the room. They don't allow us to be out.

Chairman RUBIO. So in her detainment, she was not even allowed to go out and even—they were basically detained in a sort of confinement with a handful of other people, some of whom died?

Ms. TURSUN. It is a cell. We have been locked up with many other people and we—if we recite, read something, we do it here. If we go to the bathroom, the toilet, we do it in the same place. If we stay, we just stay together. I mean if people die, they die among us. And I have witnessed nine people die in front of me.

Chairman RUBIO. There have been reports in the press about the forced collection of DNA from people throughout China, but particularly in the Xinjiang Region, some of it under the guise of a physical exam, others forced to provide blood samples and so forth as part of getting passports.

In your time there, whether it was getting the passport—are you aware of these forced efforts to make people undergo physical exams, give blood samples and other—was that something you were subjected to either in confinement or when you applied with the authorities on entry or on exit?

Ms. TURSUN. Yes, I have witnessed that kind of practice, taking the blood sample and doing DNA tests. Before 2015, when you applied for a passport, that was one of the requirements, that you do have to have a blood test. And after 2015, doing blood tests and DNA tests, everything became compulsory. That compulsory practice—they applied it to from a one-month-old baby up until whatever age. So everybody was required to do blood tests as well as DNA sampling.

Chairman RUBIO. And you may or may not have any reason to know this, but the authorities who have compelled the turning over of DNA of everyone, a few months ago, put out a contract for DNA sequencers to be able to account for all of this and creating this massive database.

And I regret to—it is a great shame that one of the companies who has provided those DNA sequencers and frankly takes great pride in the work they do, is an American company, Thermo Fisher Scientific, who just recently appeared in an article discussing what a great leader Xi Jinping is, which I imagine from their perspective is driven by the money they are making in that marketplace.

And it gets to the broader issue of calling out these American companies who are participating in assisting them in the compulsory collection of DNA for purposes of collecting this massive database against the consent, or absent the consent, or even the knowledge of the people it is being collected from.

And I apologize because I do have a vote, and the cochairman is here and is going to handle—he's got questions.

I only wanted, Drs. Hoffman and Farr, I wanted to just basically say that it seems to me that at the core of all this is an obsessive desire on the part of the Chinese Government—which is not new—to create a sort of unified national identity which must be stripped of anything that competes with it: ethnicity, religion, ethnic cultural tradition. There can be nothing that competes with it.

And they appear, as they have been in the past, to be extremely ruthless in their willingness to stamp that out at any cost, whether it's in Tibet, or Xinjiang, or any other part of their country. And I would add to that, that in addition to that willingness to stamp out anything that competes with the Party for people's loyalties or this national identity, that when they use terms like "extremism" and they use terms like "dangerous," what they mean by those terms is not violence or advocacy of violence. What they mean by "extremist" is you don't agree with them, or you have loyalties to God or loyalties to a culture and identity that is not the one they want you to have. Is that an accurate assessment of what their goal is? Is that an accurate assessment of how they define "extremism" and "dangerous"?

Ms. HOFFMAN. Fairly accurate—the Chinese Communist Party, its concept of what we would call national security, I think is better translated as Party state security, and Party state security is fundamentally about protecting the Chinese Communist Party. And that means that there are dimensions that are dealing with the internal struggle for power within the Party and then dealing with everything outside of the Party, controlling the narrative, controlling the ideological space to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party can stay in power.

And that means that these state security methods extend far beyond China's borders. And that's why you see the harassment of overseas Chinese, things like the social credit system, to try to essentially ensure that people can manage themselves to adhere to the Party's will.

It's a long-term process that's not new under Xi Jinping. It's something that the Party has been doing forever. The changes at the beginning of the Reform Era were that the Chinese Communist Party can no longer rely on ideological mobilization alone. And then it had to come up with new ways for enabling Mao's mass line, essentially the idea that the Party shapes and manages how people behave. So it's using things like the surveillance state to attach political control to economic and social development.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. FARR. I think you're exactly right, Senator. I think the Chinese are no different than the other totalitarian regimes of the 20th century—Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. They want to label as extreme anything that challenges them.

And just two things that I would cite as evidence—one is bringing the State Administration for Religious Affairs, which has been there in one guise or another for a long time, closer to the Politburo by placing it officially under the United Front Work Department. But also the fact that parents can be given criminal sanctions if they allow their children to be exposed to religious education.

That just tells you everything you need to know. They are afraid that their citizens are going to be infected with the virus of reli-

gion. So this is why Mao tried to destroy it. His successors know they can't destroy it, but they are going to try to manage and control, and I think Xi is simply the harshest of all the post-Mao presidents of China in doing this.

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me, Ms. Tursun, if I could just ask you first. Again, in reading your testimony—it is very compelling. It shows tremendous courage. And again, all of us on this commission are deeply grateful that you have decided to come here and to bear witness so courageously.

You did talk about 68 women in that small cell block, 430 square feet. You mentioned that there were people there who had not taken a shower for a year, suggesting that they were in that terrible cell block for a year or more.

You also spoke about the torture. And you did mention that nine women had died while you were there during those three months. And I am wondering if you could explain to us how those women died. Was it sickness? Was it depression? Was it beatings? And the torture, what was it that they were interrogating you about when they tortured you?

And again, to underscore the barbarity of the Chinese dictatorship—in this case how they have grossly mistreated Uyghur Muslims—could you to some extent explain that torture? You talked about the tiger chair. In this Commission we've had hearings in the past where that hideous chair has been described in terrible detail. Were other women subjected to that same mistreatment? If you could . . .?

Ms. TURSUN. Thank you.

First of all, I would like to tell you about 62-year-old Gulnisa. When I was detained in that cell, she had been held in that room for one year. That woman had high blood pressure as well as problems with her digestive system. She used to take blood pressure medicine when she wasn't detained, before. But since she was detained, she didn't take her medicine. Her whole body was swollen, and also she had some kind of red spots on her body. Many of us did not come close to her because we thought that we might catch her sickness. She wasn't able to stand sometimes but still was able to manage by sitting.

During the three months that I stayed with her in that cell, she wasn't treated at all. Nobody took her to see a doctor or for treatment. And we raised the issue and we demanded that if it's possible for her to see a doctor, but they did not listen to us.

One day before she passed away, the cell officials really kind of abused her, used very bad language to abuse her, and she was crying from that abuse. And she cried and that's how she passed away next day.

And some of the women, they have died because of torture. For example, in 2017 they shaved my hair. And also they shaved my hair as well as electrocuted me. And they beat me. That's why I do not really hear properly from my right ear. I can't hear.

And also sometimes the cell officers beat women. Especially, they beat on the stomach of the women and some women would die because of the bleeding. And I even heard that they use dogs to beat,

and use dogs to torture as well. I heard it, but I did not witness that.

Cochairman SMITH. While you are speaking, are the torturers men, or women, or both? And is there sexual abuse?

Ms. TURSUN. All is men. All is men—the men torture women. Not women. Man tortures woman. I didn't witness sexual abuse, but I witnessed torture. But another abusive thing is they asked us to strip, take off all our clothes. They pass naked. The men do that. And also they beat you. When you are unconscious, they pour water over you and then make you come back again. And then they beat. All done by men. And they give a kind of medicine, and when you take that medicine, you feel like you are hallucinating. You don't feel yourself. And after that, after you take that medicine and they beat you, you don't feel that—you don't feel hurt or you don't feel anything.

Cochairman SMITH. Do they insult the prophet Muhammad and your faith?

Ms. TURSUN. Yes, because last time they beat me so hard, and then I tell him, please kill me and then God will help you. Please kill me. So he said, Where is your God? Tell him come here. Listen to me. They speak like this.

Cochairman SMITH. Right.

I have some additional questions for you and for the other witnesses, but Senator Daines does have an appointment that he has to be at. So I would like to yield such time as he may——

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Chairman Smith, as well as Chairman Rubio. Thanks for holding this hearing.

I want to thank the witnesses for coming today. I want to thank Ms. Tursun for her bravery, her courage for being here today, especially.

I spent more than half a decade in China working in the private sector back in the 1990s. In fact, our two youngest children were born in Hong Kong. I've led Congressional Delegation visits to China the last three years. I have traveled to places beyond the regular places you go. Of course, we visit Beijing and places like Shanghai, Shenzhen, Hangzhou. But also we have gone to some of the places somewhat farther away, to Ürümqi where we saw the prominent Uyghur Muslim population, to Tibet where we saw their Buddhist population and the monks, to Dandong on the North Korean border.

So we've seen the Muslim people there in China. We've seen the Buddhist monks in China. We've seen the Christians there in China. And it has allowed me to see firsthand some of the human rights abuses, the censorship and the challenges the Chinese people face, as well as the efforts that are being made to extend influence beyond the borders of China.

As your testimonies—this Commission, the State Department, Human Rights Report and numerous others indicate, the state of religious freedom in much of China is in dire straits. It is critically important that we as a nation founded on freedom, the rule of law, the basic foundation rights of religious liberty, that we bring our influence to bear to advance human rights in China and around the world.

Dr. Hoffman, I have a question for you. Are there particular tools or technologies that might be helpful for the U.S. Government or NGOs to support, to assist the persecuted populations in places like Xinjiang Province or elsewhere in China?

Ms. HOFFMAN. On the technologies question, I haven't even thought about it from that perspective. So I'll have to maybe add that to my written testimony later and think about the answer to that.

But I think the number one thing is to really think about the problem at its source. Religious persecution is a symptom. It's not the cause. The cause is the Chinese Communist Party. And I'm not quite sure that—and I said this in my testimony and I'll just repeat it—I am not quite sure that we're thinking long-term enough. And what happens the day that maybe the Chinese Communist Party isn't in power. We aren't prepared for that day.

And I think in order to help the Chinese people we need to think about those kinds of questions. But it's a hard question to answer, so I'm not sure that I can give you a good answer today. But I think that there needs to be some kind of taskforce to think about these questions.

And in terms of protection of certain groups, I'd like to point out—one thing I have come across in my research is something like the social credit system, for instance, how that extends overseas. That's not new. You have heard it in the testimonies today, but it is also something that the CCP has done for decades—that they extend their control beyond China's borders going back to—I know particular stories going back to the 1950s and 1960s.

I've heard stories from people which I will not repeat today because they are confidential, but stories where people are harassed. They've got citizenship in a democratic country, but they still have family back in China or they have family in a democratic country without citizenship and those members are harassed. And there are things that we can be doing to protect them.

There are Chinese Embassy officials going into businesses and telling people to install surveillance technology and then give them that information, to feed that back to them, the embassy. And it's not that the U.S. Government can help everybody; we need to know that the problems exist in the first place, but we need to create the conditions to allow people to report and feel comfortable reporting these problems.

And going back to, I think I started to mention the social credit system, one thing I have come across is that the Ministry of Public Security is developing unified social credit codes for overseas Chinese as well. And that means the existing methods for control, what's been described—the harassment of overseas Chinese, the existing methods of control—will just be augmented for a system like this.

So we need to be thinking about how to, for instance, sanction tech companies that are involved in the development of the surveillance state, including things like smart cities, because a smart city in China isn't what a smart city is in the West. The same technologies that are used to, say, address problems like traffic management or food and health safety are the same technologies that are used to exert the Party's control. And so I think part of the

problem is that dual use has a new meaning and we really need to think about those problems, and in the longer term, solutions.

Senator DAINES. So Dr. Hoffman, we think about the influences extended beyond the borders to Chinese who are here in the United States, Uyghurs here in the U.S. What are you seeing in terms of that long reach, whether through technology or other means here, to gather intelligence, surveillance capabilities, on those who might be living abroad?

Ms. HOFFMAN. Again, that's not a new technique. I know of a story of somebody in India in the 1960s who was harassed and beaten up so severely that they were permanently crippled, and I think partly blinded for the rest of their life, because they were running a Chinese language newspaper that the CCP had problems with. And I know of cases, like I mentioned, of students overseas who have written on their WeChat, "Xi Jinping is not my president" and have had embassy visits either to them, or local officials to their families back home.

But it's not just those things. You know, that's a relatively small number of cases. Sometimes it's just something as simple as overseas student groups knowing that the CCP is present.

A lot of my research focuses on this concept called social management. And social management is a combination of a cooperative and coercive control which means that it's not just the CCP using coercive tactics. It's also the CCP providing services. So something like a Chinese Student and Scholar Association is mostly a service for students. But it's also the CCP just quietly sitting there and saying, Hi, we are present, and every once in a while, they make that presence more known. But for the most part, it is just the CCP kind of expending or just allowing overseas Chinese to know that the same rules apply to them abroad as they do at home.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Dr. Hoffman.

I wanted to finish up my questions with Ms. Tursun. Could you provide any insight into how the Han residents of Xinjiang regard the treatment of the Uyghur population?

Ms. TURSUN. They do not respect us like they even respect an animal. We don't receive any respect from them. They can speak bad to us. We cannot. They can beat us. We cannot. The treatment is very different because like, for example, I can say that if we are lining up for getting something, if 10 Uyghurs are standing in line in front, if one Chinese comes, the service person will serve the one Chinese who came last first. The 10 Uyghurs will be left out.

For example from my house, I go out from my house. I go to the supermarket normal to me—about two or three miles away. In those three miles, the Chinese police must check me three or four times.

Senator DAINES. So if it were a non-Uyghur—right, if it is a Han Chinese——

The TRANSLATOR. For Han Chinese, they don't do that. They are not required to go through the checks. They are free.

Ms. TURSUN. We always go through the scan, the scanning system. Always, that's the requirement for the Uyghurs, but not for the Chinese.

Senator DAINES. Because of your faith and ethnicity?

Ms. TURSUN. It's not only Uyghurs. Because my Chinese ID says Xinjiang/Turkestan. Because I am from East Turkestan. We have Uyghurs, Kazakhs, we have many groups—but for Chinese, no. No need to check. Just because we are Uyghur, that's why we face this discrimination. For Chinese, there is no such thing. Just because we are Uyghur and from East Turkestan. That's why.

Senator DAINES. Thank you.

Ms. TURSUN. Thank you so much.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

I'll start with Dr. Farr on this question. As you know, a little over two years ago the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act was signed into law and it provided a whole-of-government approach; it built on some of the early gains that were made by the original law authored by Frank Wolf. But some of the things we were not able to get into that law and—lessons learned over the years—and you as head of that office did a remarkable job—and I want that clearly stated on the record—for the IRFA office, International Religious Freedom office.

But I'm wondering two years later—Ambassador Sam Brownback is obviously walking point as Ambassador for Religious Freedom. Secretary Pompeo is, I think, all-in when it comes to religious freedom—Vice President Pence and of course the President—but it always seems that China does not get the kind of focused scrutiny and call-out that it ought to. And certainly it does not get the linkage to policies. Even the IRFA sanctions—because they are a CPC country since the law was enacted—they're double-headed with the Tiananmen Square sanctions.

And it seems to me there needs to be a significant breakout of penalty imposed upon—not just Magnitsky Act penalties, but other penalties. I think, Dr. Hoffman, you alluded to, more needs to be done on the Chinese Government. And I would say this for the record, and I've done it in this Commission before—I believe on human rights we were sold out by President Clinton.

It's not a partisan dig, but he de-linked most-favored-nation status from human rights, of which human religious freedom was an integral part. He did it on May 26th of 1994. I remember it. It was a Friday afternoon. Most Members of Congress had left. A couple of people did instantaneous press conferences, including Nancy Pelosi and me, harshly criticizing that de-linkage—and the Chinese Government ever since has felt that human rights in general, religious freedom in particular, are ancillary issues and not at the core of our policy.

So my first question would be, to you, is there any evidence that the new law, and the new emphasis, the new focus, is having an impact? Second, if I could—and this would be to maybe Dr. Hoffman and maybe to you as well—obviously this brutal, genocidal crackdown on the Uyghurs should rise to the level of the United Nations as never before. Another genocide, another place people being targeted in whole or in part—this seems as if it is in whole—to try to change, to replace, even the celebrations that occur are stopped. The melodies that are sung are barred and of course, people like our distinguished witness suffer brutal, brutal torture as do other women and men and children.

What have the Muslim-majority countries done, including the OIC and others, to say, Stop this, China? It seems as if Beijing gets away literally with murder and, in this case, genocide.

What are the other Muslim countries doing? There is a very strong network. They are very effective and very domineering in many ways at the United Nations. Have they raised their voices in unison, or as individuals? Are there countries that rise to the fore, Muslim-dominant countries that have spoken to the Chinese abuse of the Uyghurs?

You, in your comments, make a very good, Ms. Tursun, a very, very strong statement that you hope the United States will lead the world community to end China's gross violations of universally recognized human rights, pressure China to close these concentration camps, and release millions of innocent Uyghurs and other minorities. You point out—I still remember the words of the Chinese authorities when you asked what your crime was. They said that you being a Uyghur is a crime. You say please take action against the Chinese officials responsible for my torture and the death of my little boy and the deaths of so many innocent Uyghurs in the camps. And you go on.

Obviously, this weekend our President, President Trump, will be meeting with Xi Jinping face-to-face. If he were sitting right here, what would you say to him, all of you, as to what he should do? I get concerned with all presidents, that they raise it, but not in the way that gets results. It has to be linked to policy. It has to be very public, I believe, because private diplomacy certainly has not had any impact here. So what would you say to President Trump if he were here?

Dr. Farr, you spoke of the whole issue of the Vatican. And I couldn't agree with you more that I think it was a colossal—I believe it's a colossal blunder. And I think Cardinal Zen in his oped in the New York Times—"The Pope Does Not Understand China,"—that was a very incisive commentary about the malevolence of China.

You know it was Solzhenitsyn in his book "The Gulag Archipelago"—and I remember reading it back in the early 1980s, 1981, when the Soviet Union was very much in focus for its persecution of faith. And he said what people in the West don't understand is that it's not a disbelief in God. It is a hatred of God. It is militant atheism. And as you all have pointed out, it's also a threat to their power structure. So if you could speak to Cardinal Zen. I think he is a courageous man. He understands exactly as did Pope John Paul II what Communism is all about. It is not to be flattered or enabled and I do think—and I personally have met with the head of the Three-Self Movement and remember having a very discouraging conversation with her, the Protestant Communist front group, when she was telling me how important it was to implement the one-child-per-couple policy with its heavy reliance on forced abortion, which is a crime against humanity and a crime of gender against women.

And I remember meeting with Joseph Kung, Cardinal Kung's nephew in Beijing, along with Bishop Fu, who is the head of the Patriotic Association. And Joseph Kung took him to the cleaners—to use an American expression—in his lack of understanding of

Catholic dogma of the Bible. And it was like, Here's the man that is running the Church for the Communist Party, and now unfortunately there is a de facto, de jure collaboration with the Vatican for people just like him who are enabling repression and religious persecution.

So on those few questions, if you could? Whoever would like to start first. Dr. Hoffman?

Ms. HOFFMAN. On the question about what countries or other——

Cochairman SMITH. The Muslim countries, especially.

Ms. HOFFMAN. The Muslim in particular—I think the best answer I can give to your question based on my research is that what we are seeing play out right now shouldn't be entirely surprising. The Chinese Communist Party's perception of threat—if you really read Party documents, it's written in the People's Daily, for instance going back—my research covers all the way to the 1940s, but even if you just go back to 1989 and Tiananmen, one of the big things that the Party is saying after that, for instance, is that, It's a good thing that the PLA stepped up this time and supported the Party, but what about next time?

If you read, for instance, the PLA Daily in the years following the protests, one of the biggest threat perceptions the Party perceives is that actually the Party can't manage itself. And that carries over into 1999 with the Falun Gong Movement because again, many senior members of the Party are involved in that, senior members of the PLA, of the PAP, and reportedly the Ministry of State Security as well, using resources from the nascent surveillance state to coordinate and organize the sit-in protest.

They're the same people who are supposed to defend the Party, and their job is to defend the Party, not the state, in a time of crisis. And then you have the CCP talking about threat perceptions in relation to the Color Revolutions in the early 2000s. And you can see that this threat perception was something that the CCP was willing to act on at any cost to preserve its power. And preserving its power doesn't mean that it's just protecting its power, it means that it's expanding its power. And that expands into places like trying to change the way that we talk about concepts like sovereignty or human rights.

I was in China in August and in one of my meetings I said to somebody—I was with an American delegation—and the word sovereignty kept coming up, and I said to the person across the table from me, I'm pretty sure that we have different definitions of sovereignty. It's a difficult term to define anyway. But how would you define sovereignty? And he explained to me that sovereignty starts with political security and political security is the Party security and that if a person or a company says something like, Taiwan is not a part of China, for instance—this is the example that this person used—then they're violating our sovereignty.

And so over time, the CCP tries to address its threat perceptions not only by what it's doing in Xinjiang but also changing the way that we're willing to talk about China in order to support the Party's project to stay in power. And so it's been acting on these long-term threat perceptions forever. And for a long time, these are dis-

missed. The threat perceptions are seen as somewhat—the Party is paranoid. And they are, but that matters.

And so I think it's not a direct answer to your question, but it's the best answer I can give—that the writing's been on the wall for a very long time. We're just now seeing the worst consequences of the Party being exactly what it is.

Cochairman SMITH. That was a great insight.

If you could, any countries that come to mind, Saudi Arabia, Iran, that might be speaking out against what's happening to co-religionists, other Muslims?

Ms. HOFFMAN. To be honest——

Cochairman SMITH. Malaysia, the largest——

Ms. HOFFMAN. This isn't something that I've paid particular attention to, so I don't want to give a bad answer to your question on the record.

Cochairman SMITH. Dr. Farr?

Mr. FARR. You asked a bunch of good questions, Mr. Smith. I'm going to pick two, if I could.

One is, what would I have the President say to Mr. Xi Jinping. I would have the President say to him, Stop persecuting your own people. It's bad for China's international reputation, and it's bad for China's economy. I think this is something this President, a point he could make that would be very, very powerful coming from him. And it also happens to be true. This is something that I wish our own religious freedom diplomacy would be involved in, and that is making the argument that religious freedom is good for the economy—or the reverse; i.e., that the absence of religious freedom harms the economy. For a Communist system you don't have to have full religious freedom. Just back off. Stop your crackdowns.

This is not rocket science—although people don't seem to get it. Where you are brutalizing people, the economy is not going to grow. And whether it's in Xinjiang Province, or Tibet, or throughout China, if you can learn to allow people to be religious—Chinese citizens, these are not foreigners—they will be more economically productive.

There's plenty of evidence. We can present the evidence, but I think it's also common sense. And coming from President Trump, I think this would be very, very powerful.

And by the way, let's incorporate this into our International Religious Freedom policy with China. This is something I believe Ambassador Brownback believes and understands. Let's see it in China.

The second question I would like to answer is—you didn't quite ask it this way, but I would say to the Vatican, If you're going to keep this agreement, this provisional agreement, demand more from the Chinese. For example, propose a way for underground bishops to be involved in the nomination process that goes to Rome. Rome should demand this.

Second, provide a written guarantee in this agreement that you will criminalize any Chinese official, you will prosecute any Chinese official or Chinese citizen who effaces or destroys Catholic or other religious monuments, Marian shrines, or any other kind of shrine, church, synagogue, or temple—and here I would get into

the problem of the Uyghur Muslims and the Tibetan Buddhists. Demand this for them as well. This is a very Catholic thing to do.

The Catholic Church stands for the religious freedom of all Chinese religious groups and citizens. Incorporate this into this provisional agreement. Now, the Holy Father has spoken out on the persecution of non-Christians and non-Catholics. Why not put this into this agreement? Demand something other than this Esau's bargain that they seem to have gotten for a procedure which leads nowhere but the Pope vetoing bishop candidates put forward by Beijing. If he vetoes candidates, then the bishoprics simply stay vacant. The Chinese Communists don't care, but the Chinese Catholics do. A major risk is that one of the Communist apparatchiks nominated as bishop ultimately is accepted by the Vatican. I think the Vatican can do much better and they have the moral authority to do that.

Cochairman SMITH. What would you say to President Trump if he were here?

Ms. TURSUN. If President Trump were here right now with us, first, I would say, Please help us to close down all the concentration, reeducation camps and release all innocent Uyghurs.

And also, if America as well as other Western countries could help the Uyghurs like myself who need help, who luckily came out from the country but are unable to go back. And there are many helpless Uyghurs like me who need the help of the United States and other countries.

And then number three, I hope to tell him, please, please, America, if you can, help us. Turkestan is independent. Get China out from our country. Help my father and mother. Thank you.

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you. Dr. Hoffman, maybe you could answer. Has the United Nations, particularly the Human Rights Council, been effective in raising the issue of the Muslim Uyghurs in China?

Ms. HOFFMAN. Although the issue's come up, I don't think it is effective enough. I don't think——

Cochairman SMITH. It certainly has not been a focus.

Ms. HOFFMAN. No, I think the problem is that it seems that—well, you said it yourself. I think it seems that China gets a free pass so often. And I think that this issue should've never escalated to this point because, as I said before, this is something that we've seen happening.

I was looking back when I was preparing for this testimony, reading some documents from this Committee back in 2005, where you could see the direction that things were headed in Xinjiang. So I don't think—no, I don't think that the UN, or the United States, or any government has done enough. But hearings like this help. And one thing I would add is that if the camps were closed tomorrow, that would obviously be a positive step, but that's not solving the problem because the problem is the Chinese Communist Party.

Cochairman SMITH. Okay.

Yes, Dr. Farr.

Mr. FARR. I was just going to say that the Special Rep, UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom, Ahmed Shaheed, is really quite good. And I have not looked. I should have. I would hope that he is speaking out against this and has attempted to visit China to do a report on what is happening to the Uyghurs in Xinjiang

Province. If he hasn't, then perhaps the Commission might write him a letter and suggest he do it.

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you.

I would just, unless you have anything else you'd like to add, would conclude with just a couple of points.

One—Rebiya Kadeer is here again with us today. And I remember when she gained her own freedom. She was warned, but she spoke out boldly and courageously on behalf of Uyghur Muslims and all people who are captive and harshly treated. I have always had a great admiration for her. And in keeping with this horrific crackdown by Xi Jinping, 40 members of her family now are either disappeared or incarcerated by China. There are six journalists with Radio Free Asia, Uyghur Division. They too have had their families rounded up and incarcerated or disappeared. All the more reason why this Government, and our President, and this Commission, and every one of us needs to quadruple our efforts to stop this horrific crackdown that has been initiated by Xi Jinping, in this case under the false guise of terrorism and other pretexts.

I remember when 9/11 occurred. Obviously, there were many people of my own district who were killed in the Twin Towers and I worked on that issue with a lot of issues that followed with the families, including the Jersey Girls, four women who lost their husbands. They call themselves that. They were probably the main reason why we got the 9/11 Commission, but that said, as that was happening, the Chinese Government—and I immediately spoke to the Bush administration and people in it and said—the Chinese Government is using 9/11 as a way of focusing on the Uyghurs.

Right away they were in solidarity with us, which was a false solidarity about their concern, but they were using it as a pretext to crack down on Muslims. So it's here we go again, and now it's on steroids under the dictatorship of Xi Jinping.

But to Rebiya Kadeer, and all of those who are suffering so horribly, I just want to say how our hearts and our prayers are with you. But we have to add to that our effective actions and hopefully, under Senator Marco Rubio, who has been a great chairman of this Commission for the last two years—it has been my honor to serve as his cochairman.

Paul Protic, who has been our deputy chief of staff and when I was chair, chief of staff, I want to thank him for his tremendous leadership as well.

This Commission is needed now more than ever, as is the Government's response. And so my hope is that this will be a further catalyst to effective action.

Again, I want to thank our distinguished witnesses. You have been remarkable, and you provide us with a great road map for the future.

The record will remain open for 48 hours to receive any additional information, comments by members, and any additional material our distinguished witnesses would like to add.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:56 p.m. the hearing was concluded.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MIHRIGUL TURSUN

Chairman Rubio, Cochairman Smith, and members of the Commission, I would like to thank the United States Government and the American people for saving my life and bringing me to the United States of America, the land of the free.

Over the last three years, I was taken to Chinese government detention centers three times. I spent 10 months in the camps in total, and experienced physical and psychological torture at the hands of government officials.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify about my personal experience in China's so-called "vocational schools" or "re-education centers."

My name is Mihrigul Tursun and I am 29 years old. I am of Uyghur ethnicity and I was born in Cherchen County in the southern region of East Turkestan, the Uyghur people's homeland, officially called the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. When I was 12 years old, I was taken to Guangzhou for middle school, under the Chinese government's program to move Uyghur children to inner China at a young age. This "Xinjiang Classrooms" policy takes thousands of Uyghur children away from their families and immerses them in Han Chinese institutions, far from their native language and cultural environment. In effect, it forces Uyghurs to deny our cultural identity and religious beliefs, and to embrace the Chinese way of life.

However, my experience in this state program actually made me more conscious of my ethnic identity. The constant discrimination and humiliation I experienced as a young Uyghur at a Chinese school in a Chinese city made me realize that I was different from the majority Han population.

I went on to study Economics at Guangzhou University and then worked for a private company that does business with Arab countries. I always dreamed of studying English abroad and I finally had the opportunity to study at the British University in Egypt. On December 10, 2010, I left my homeland to study in Egypt, where I met my husband. In March 2015, I gave birth to healthy triplets, two boys and a girl, who are Egyptian citizens. I had difficulty taking care of my three babies and on May 4, 2015, I took my mom up on her offer to help take care of my children and left for China with my three two-month-old triplets. My troubles began the moment I set foot in China.

As soon as I came to the border control counter at the airport in Ürümchi, I was taken to a separate room for hours of interrogation. My babies were taken away from me right at the airport. The authorities repeatedly asked me whom I met and talked to in Egypt. Then they handcuffed me, put a dark sack over my head, and took me to a detention center. I was not able to see or breastfeed my triplets.

After three months, the Chinese authorities told me that I had been "paroled" because my children were sick. They told me I could be with them until their health improved, but they warned me that I was still under investigation. They held onto my passport, identification cards, and cellphone.

I went directly to the hospital to see my children. My oldest son was in an emergency care facility and I could only see him through a glass window from far away, so I could not touch him to see if he was breathing. The next day, they gave me his dead body, saying he had been unable to breathe and they could not save him.

While burying my four-month-old baby, I was tormented and filled with the guilt of not being able to save my son. All three babies had been operated on, on their neck area, when I was in prison. I was told they were fed through a tube on their necks since they could not eat. I did not understand why, because they were breastfeeding without any issues before we left Egypt.

My other two children had developed health complications and I spent the next few months seeking medical treatment for them, including an eye surgery for my daughter. They have been suffering from health issues ever since.

I was unable to return to Egypt because all of my documents were confiscated by the authorities and I had been blacklisted. There was a black dot in my identity card, which beeped wherever I went—a hospital, pharmacy, and even a bus, so police would check my card and had to approve every step I took.

In April 2017, I was living at home in Cherchen County when the police took me to a detention center for the second time and interrogated me for about four days and nights without sleep. I was incarcerated for about three months and then released to a mental hospital because I kept having seizures and losing consciousness. My father was later able to take me home to treat me at home and I gradually recovered.

In January 2018, I was detained for the third time for no reason. The authorities handcuffed me on my wrists and ankles, put a black sack over my head, and took me to a hospital. I was stripped naked and put under a big computerized machine. One female and two male officials examined my body while I was still naked and then dressed me in a prison uniform which was blue with a yellow vest. It had the number 54 on it. A Chinese official reminded me that this outfit is usually worn by serious criminals who face capital punishment or lifetime in prison and that "54" in Chinese also meant "I am dead."

Now, I would like to tell you about what I experienced in these camps during my incarceration. I was taken to a cell, which was built underground with no windows. There was an iron gate and the door opened through a computerized lock system. There was a small hole in the ceiling for ventilation and we were never taken outside for fresh air. There was a toilet bowl in the corner out in the open without toilet paper. There were cameras on all four sides so the officials could see every corner of the room, including the toilet area, and they could hear every noise we made. There was one light that was always on.

When I first entered the cell, which was cell number 210, there were 40 other women between the ages of 17 and 62. The cell was getting more and more crowded every day. When I left the cell after about three months, there were 68 women.

I knew most of the women in my cell. They were my neighbors, young daughters of my former teachers, and doctors, including a doctor who had been educated in the UK and treated me in the past. They were mostly well-educated professionals such as teachers and doctors.

There were around 60 people kept in a 430-square-foot cell, so at night, 10 to 15 women would stand up while the rest of us would sleep sideways so we could fit, and then we would rotate every 2 hours. There were people who had not taken a shower in over a year.

As I was crammed with other women on the floor with chains on my wrists and ankles also connected with a longer chain, I remember thinking about what I did wrong. Why am I here without any charge or explanation? What was my crime and why do I deserve such inhumane treatment? Why can't I use the bathroom in private and have toilet paper? Why can't I have water to take a shower or simply wash my face? Why don't I get enough bread to eat or water to drink?

We were woken up around 5 a.m. each morning with loud alarms. We had to fold the six blankets we shared in the same way. If the blankets were not folded neatly and did not look symmetrical, the whole cell would be punished. They would take away the blankets so we would have to sleep on the cement floor.

Before we ate breakfast, which was water with very little rice, we had to sing songs hailing the Communist Chinese Party and repeat these lines in Chinese: "Long live Xi Jinping" and "Leniency for those who repent and punishment for those who resist."

We had 7 days to memorize the rules of the concentration camp and 14 days to memorize all the lines in a book that hails the Communist ideology. Those women whose voices were weak or couldn't sing the songs in Chinese, or remember the specific rules of the camp, were denied food or beaten up. In theory, there were supposed to be three meals but sometimes there was no food all day and when there was food, it was mostly a steamed bun. I must note that the steamed buns we were eating got smaller and smaller even as the number of people in the camp kept increasing in number. We were never given any fruit or vegetables.

They forced us to take some unknown pills and drink some kind of white liquid. The pill caused us to lose consciousness and reduced our cognition level. The white liquid caused loss of menstruation in some women and extreme bleeding in others and even death. I was also forced to take some unknown drugs. They checked my mouth with their fingers to make sure I swallowed them. I felt lethargic and less conscious, and lost appetite after taking these drugs.

During many days and nights of interrogation, they asked the same questions: "Who do you know overseas? Who are you close to? Which organization do you work for?" I think because I lived overseas and speak a few foreign languages, they tried to label me as a spy.

I clearly remember the torture I experienced in the tiger chair the second time I was incarcerated. I was taken to a special room with an electrical chair. It was the interrogation room that had one light and one chair. There were belts and whips hanging on the wall. I was placed in a high chair that clicked to lock my arms and legs in place and tightened when they pressed a button. My head was shaved beforehand for the maximum impact. The authorities put a helmet-like thing on my head. Each time I was electrocuted, my whole body would shake violently and I could feel the pain in my veins.

I thought I would rather die than go through this torture and begged them to kill me. They insulted me with humiliating words and pressured me to admit my guilt. In fact, I had not been involved in any political activity when I was abroad. Then they attacked me psychologically and said, "Your mom died the other day and your dad will serve a lifetime in prison. Your son was in the hospital and he also died. Your daughter's eyes will remain crossed permanently, and she will be thrown into the streets because you cannot take care of her. Your family is torn apart because of you."

This was very hard for a daughter and a mom to take. I felt a huge sense of guilt and worthlessness. I cried and begged them to kill me. I don't remember the rest. White foam came out of my mouth, I began losing consciousness, and I fainted.

The most horrific days for me were when I witnessed the suffering and death of my cellmates. The nights were the busiest time in the camps; a lot of activity such as transferring people between cells or removing the dead bodies would happen at night. In the silence of the night, we would hear men from other cells groaning in agony. We could hear the beatings, the men screaming, and people being dragged in the hallways because the chains on their wrists and ankles would make terrible noise when they touched the floor. The thought that these men could be our fathers or brothers was unbearable.

Unfortunately, I witnessed nine deaths in my cell of 68 people in three months alone. If my small cell, cell number 210, in a small county, experienced 9 deaths in 3 months, I cannot imagine how many deaths there must be all over my country.

One victim was a 62-year-old woman named Gulnisa. Her hands would tremble, she had red rashes all over her body, and she could not eat anything. She was really sick, but the doctors in the camp determined that she was fine. The doctors at the camp were supposed to say the patients were fine because if they said the inmates were sick, they would be perceived as sympathetic or supportive of the patients. One night, Gulnisa was humiliated for not having memorized her lines in Chinese and she was crying when she went to sleep. She did not snore that night and her body was very cold when we tried to wake her up. She had died in her sleep.

There was another 23-year-old woman named Patemhan. Her mom had died and her husband, father, and brother were all taken to the camps. Her crime was attending a wedding in 2014 that was held according to Islamic traditions, where people did not dance, sing, or drink alcohol at the wedding. She said all of the 400 people who attended that wedding were arrested and taken to the camps. When she was taken to the camp, she had left her two kids in the field. She had been in the camp for one year and three months and she agonized every day over the whereabouts of her kids. She had heavy menstrual bleeding for over a month and was denied any medical treatment. One night while she was standing with other women, she suddenly dropped to the floor and stopped breathing. Several people with masks came, dragged her by her feet, and took her away.

I never thought I would come out of cell 210 alive. I still cannot believe it, but miracles do happen. Two hours before I was told I would be released, the Chinese authorities gave me an unknown injection. I thought the shot would slowly kill me and began to count the minutes waiting for my death. I was surprised to still be alive when the authorities gave me a statement to read and sign. I read it and swore to it, and they filmed me doing so. The statement said: "I am a citizen of China and I love China. I will never do anything to harm China. China has raised me. The police never interrogated me or tortured me, or even detained me." The police warned me that I must return to China after taking my kids to Egypt and I must remember that my parents, siblings, and other relatives were at their mercy.

On April 5, 2018, after more than three months, I came out of that cell and was able to finally see my kids. I did not find my parents at home, however, and was not allowed to ask about their whereabouts. I left my hometown three days later with my two children and stayed in Beijing for about 20 days because I was prevented from boarding the plane three times for allegedly missing documents. On my fourth attempt, I was able to board the plane and landed in Cairo on April 28.

I was lost and in deep pain. I did not know what to do. My parents and siblings could be in those camps and the Chinese authorities could kill them if I did not return to China, but if I did return, I would go back to die in the camp and the true nature of those camps would go back to that dark cell with me. The Chinese government could still keep my parents and siblings in the camps or kill them.

I gathered my courage and decided to tell the world about China's hidden concentration camps so those people who tortured me and others would be punished for what they did and the voice of those innocent people in the camps could be heard.

Thanks to the help of many wonderful people, I was able to come to the United States. I cannot describe in words how I felt when I landed in Virginia on Sep-

tember 21, 2018. I was overwhelmed with the sheer joy of freedom and a deep sense of confusion that day. Did I already die in the camp and was now in heaven? Or was I really in this free and great country that I have always dreamed of coming to? It was too good to be true.

I currently live in the United States with my two kids. Even though I am no longer in a concentration camp, I have not been completely free from the traumatic experience and the Chinese government's harassment. My life is still haunted by sudden episodes of fear and anxiety as a reminder of the horrific days I went through in the camps.

My kids have physical and psychological health issues. They are scared when someone knocks on the door and afraid of being separated from me. I still have scars on my body from the constant beatings and pain in my wrists and ankles from the chains. I cannot hear in my right ear, caused by heavy beatings. I am scared of the dark but also scared of too much light or noise. Police sirens give me anxiety and increase my heartbeat. Sometimes I get shortness of breath, my whole body goes numb, and my heart hurts. I still have nightmares at night. Even though I was told I am safe here, I am still afraid at night that the Chinese police will knock on my door and take me away and kill me.

I also fear that Chinese government officials are still monitoring me. Several weeks ago, a group of Chinese men were following me outside and continued to follow after I got into a car.

The Chinese Government must have also forced my brother to reach out to me. He left a voicemail on the cellphone I brought from China. My brother said: "How could you do this to your parents, to us? What kind of daughter are you? You should go to the Chinese Embassy right away and denounce all the things you said about the Chinese government in the interviews you gave to Radio Free Asia and tell them you love China. Tell them you were pressured by the Uyghur organizations in the U.S. to lie about your detention and torture in the camps, and take back everything you said. Otherwise China can get you wherever you hide."

I was terrified that the Chinese government could still threaten me from so far away. As I am trying to start a new life in America, go to school, work, and take care of my son and daughter, I am still scared that the Chinese government will try to hurt me.

I will take this opportunity to kindly request that the U.S. Government take steps to provide assurance for my safety. Exposing the real nature of China's concentration camps puts my life and my kids' lives in danger even in the United States, so please do what is necessary to ensure that we remain safe in this country. Additionally, I was forced to swallow many unknown pills and given injections in the camp and I do not know what kind of drugs my kids were forced to take while I was in the camp. I would really appreciate the opportunity to go through a thorough medical examination and treatment.

This is my story. But I am only one of the millions of Uyghurs and other ethnic groups targeted for punishment or death in concentration camps. I am blessed to have miraculously escaped the camps and I have the freedom to speak out on behalf of those being tortured in the concentration camps as we speak.

The Chinese Government made it clear that the cost of my speaking out would be the lives of my parents and siblings. I feel unbelievably guilty for that, and it is a form of ongoing mental torture I suffer every day. But I believe I also have a moral obligation to tell the truth to the world so that someone can take action to stop this atrocity.

My people look to the United States as the beacon of hope for the oppressed people around the world. While every other country in the world is turning a blind eye to this brutality to avoid falling from China's good graces, I want to tell the truth to the government of the United States, the most powerful country in the world and the only country that has the courage and the ability to tell China to stop its ethnic cleansing of Uyghur people.

I hope that the United States will lead the world community and condemn China's gross violation of universally recognized human rights, and pressure China to close these concentration camps and release millions of innocent Uyghurs and other minorities. The Chinese government's systematic abuse of Uyghurs inside and outside the camps demonstrates that it thinks it is too powerful to be held accountable for its attempt to eliminate the Uyghurs as a people. I still remember the words of the Chinese authorities when I asked what my crime was. They said, "you being an Uyghur is a crime."

Please take action against the Chinese officials responsible for my torture and the death of my little boy, and the deaths of so many innocent Uyghurs in the camps.

Please help stateless Uyghur refugees around the world (who will certainly be taken to the camps if they return) seek refuge in this great country.

And finally, if any Member of Congress goes to China, please ask where my mother, father, and siblings are.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SAMANTHA HOFFMAN

THE UNITED FRONT AND THE CCP'S "PEOPLE'S WAR" AGAINST RELIGION

Overall Assessment

Chairman Rubio, Chairman Smith, distinguished members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to discuss this topic of critical importance. I will begin with four observations about the nature of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) crackdown on religion:

[1] The CCP's crimes against scapegoated religious groups are directed from the highest echelons of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The clearest central-level authority directing these actions is the United Front Work Department of the CCP Central Committee.

[2] The CCP's actions are linked to a state security strategy that prioritizes the protection and expansion of the CCP's power—not the protection of China with or without the CCP. The crackdown on religion is a visible manifestation of a much larger effort to defend the CCP's version of the truth.

[3] The CCP's choice to employ language such as "a People's War against religious extremism" to describe its actions suggests the CCP is acting on a broader threat perception. This threat perception has always been present in the CCP's thinking, but the clearest sources of the present-day crackdown are the Falun Gong sit-in demonstration near the Zhongnanhai government compound in 1999, and the Color Revolutions in Eastern Europe and Central Asia during the early 2000s.

[4] The root cause of CCP's actions are not the victims of its aggression. The victims are scapegoats used to mask the CCP's core weaknesses and justify the expansion of the CCP's unchecked power. The core weaknesses are the unending contestation for power within the Party and the Party's struggle to maintain control over China's narrative. These weaknesses do not make the CCP's failure inevitable. In fact, as the CCP's victims in Xinjiang have learned, this combination of the CCP's strength and weakness can be catastrophic.

The United Front Work Department and Religion

The United Front Work Department is responsible for carrying out the Chinese Communist Party's United Front strategy. A declassified 1957 Central Intelligence Agency document succinctly and accurately described United Front as a "technique for controlling, mobilizing and utilizing non-Communist masses".[1]

Above all else, the purpose of the United Front strategy is to protect and expand the Chinese Communist Party's power. The CCP argues that United Front work in the present day is "unprecedentedly expansive, not only communicating inside and outside the Party, but also liaising inside and outside the established institutions, and reaching home and overseas."[2]

The United Front Work Department oversees ethnic affairs and by definition this role is ultimately responsible for the concentration, internment and "re-education" of predominately Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The United Front Work Department oversees religious affairs, and the effort Xi Jinping described at the 2015 Central United Front Work Conference as "persisting in the direction of Sinization" of religion in China.[3] It is by definition not only responsible for the mass internment of Muslims in Xinjiang, but also the growing persecution of Christians.[4]

It has been argued that United Front Work has experienced a "resurgence" under Xi Jinping. While it is true that the visibility of United Front Work has increased significantly under Xi Jinping, the central importance of the United Front in the CCP's overall strategy for ensuring Party state security has remained consistent throughout the Party's entire history.

Xi Jinping has emphasized the importance of upholding the Party's leadership over the United Front. In order for the United Front to succeed on the Party's terms, it must ensure that the persons and entities responsible for carrying out United Front work remain absolutely loyal to the CCP, or at least the current winning side of its unending internal power struggle.

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[1] "The United Front in Communist China: A technique for controlling, mobilizing, and utillizing non-Communist masses." 1957.

[2] Weimin Yang, "学习习近平关于坚持党对统一战线领导的论述 Studying Xi Jinping's Expositions on Upholding the Party's Leadership over the United Front," 30 March 2016. http://www.qstheory.cn/laigao/2016-03/30/c_1118483581.htm

[3] Chenyan Kong, "【学习】如何解读"我国宗教中国化 ([Study] How to Interpret "The Sinization of Our Country's Religions")," 14 June 2016.
http://www.zytzb.gov.cn/tzb2010/wxwb/201606/004b224588914f478cdddb54a538d18b.shtml.

[4] Ian Burrows and Bang Xiao, "China Cracks Down on Religion, Crosses Burned at Christian Churches, Xi Jinping Photos Installed," 25 September 2018. https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-09-25/crosses-burned-in-china-religion-crackdown/10301956.

Structural changes have clearly placed the UFWD clearly in charge of religious and ethnic affairs. On 21 March 2018, in accordance with the "Plan for Deepening Institutional Reform of the Party and State", the State Ethnic Affairs Commission was reorganized under the "competent leadership"[5], of the United Front Work Department, but also remained as a constituent department of the State Council.[6]

The primary responsibility of the Central United Front Work Department in terms of ethnic work is to implement and carry out the Party's ethnic work guiding principles, study and formulate policy and major measures on ethnic work, coordinating and resolving major issues regarding ethnic work.[7] The State Ethnic Affairs Commission has long been associated with the CCP's efforts to tighten control over China's Muslim ethnic groups, particularly the Uyghurs.[8] After November 2012, the Central Xinjiang Work Coordination Leading Small Group Office was moved under the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. The office handles the leading group's daily affairs.

Also in March 2018, the United Front Work Department absorbed the State Administration for Religious Affairs. The administration previously shared responsibility for religious affairs management with the United Front Work Department.[9]

Cultural (In)security

This definition of United Front work is closely related to China's version of "national security", which is better named "(Party-)state security". Party-state security is not simply about managing foreign and domestic threats. It is also about managing the Party itself – both its relationship with society and its internal power dynamics.

Embedded in the explanation for the "Sinization" of religion is the closely related CCP concept of "cultural security". "Cultural security" does not protect *Chinese* civilization. Instead, it aims to eliminate ideological threats that political opponents could use as vehicles to challenge *the Party*.

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[5] "Competent leadership" (归口领导) means the leading agency that supervises the relevant work of its subordinate.

[6] "中共中央印发《深化党和国家机构改革方案》(The CCP Central Committee Published a Plan on Deepening the Institutional Reform of the Party and State)," 21 March 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-03/21/c_1122570517.htm.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Congressional-Executive Commission on China, "State Ethnic Affairs Commission Involved in Regulation of Halal Foods," 29 November 2005. https://www.cecc.gov/publications/commission-analysis/state-ethnic-affairs-commission-involved-in-regulation-of-halal.

[9] Julie Bowie and David Gitter, "The CCP's Plan to 'Sinicize' Religions: Bureaucratic Changes are Intended to Aid the CCP in Further Pressuring Religious Groups," 14 June 2018. https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/the-ccps-plan-to-sinicize-religions/.

One article published through the United Front Work Department in 2016 summarized the "Sinizication of religion" as having three parts[10]:

> *Political Identity: as in love the motherland, endorse the socialist institution, endorse the leadership of Chinese Communist Party, obey the country's laws, regulations and policy directives.*
>
> *Social Adaption: as in adjustments to the conceptual, institutional, and organizational aspects of religion, [religion must] absorb fresh nutrients from the present reality of society, breath and share the same fate with the times. [So that religion can] transmit more positive energy for advancing social harmony, and promoting social progress.*
>
> *Cultural Integration: as in guiding religion with socialist core values, interpreting religious doctrines in a way that is consistent with outstanding Chinese traditional culture and the developmental progress requirements of contemporary China.*

The emergencies China prepares for range from isolated but large-scale unrest events, to massively destabilizing unrest events, like a Color Revolution or Jasmine Revolution. They also include wars, not just over disputed territory like the South and East China Seas, but also an attack on the Chinese mainland by a foreign military, particularly in a scenario like the Kosovo War where a domestic conflict could be a justification. It is part of why multiple defense white papers point to "signs of increasing hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionism."[11] Others have claimed: "[China] faces strategic manoeuvres and containment from the outside while having to face disruption and sabotage by separatist and hostile forces from the inside."[12]

What is happening in Xinjiang shows the strength of the Party's unchecked power, but also puts on full display its core weaknesses. Key among these weaknesses is the Party's unending internal power struggles. Xi Jinping has repeatedly called to: "Resolutely fight against *two-faced cliques* and *two faced-persons*." One article elaborated that a "large number of cases have shown that some people within the Party have a serious problem in this regard."[13] Of course, the problem is not a

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[10] Kong, "【学习】如何解读"我国宗教中国化 ([Study] How to Interpret "The Sinizication of Our Country's Religions")".

[11] "中国武装力量的多样化运用 (The Diversified Employment of China's Armed Forces)," (Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, 2013); Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. "2000 年中国的国防 (China's National Defence in 2000)," October 2000.

[12] Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. "中国的军事战略《2008》 (China's National Defence in 2008)," January 2009.

[13] "【給"两面人"画个像】之一：台上一套台下一套，当面一套背后一套 ("Illustration of a Two-Faced Person" Part One: One Practice On the Stage and another Off Stage, One Practice in Front of You and Another In Your Back)," 21 November 2018.

new one for the CCP, the contestation for power within the Party is partly to blame for the Cultural Revolution.

The idea that the Party has a loyalty problem also extends to Xinjiang. In fact, in November 2018 a local-level official penned an article in the Xinjiang Daily entitled "Mobilize the Masses to Win the Anti-Terrorism and Stability Maintenance People's War". It warned: "we must soberly be aware that the anti-terrorism and stability maintenance situation remains grim; the "two-faced people" have not been rooted out, the "three forces" still wait for opportunities for a counterattack, and unstable factors still exist.

This type of threat is found in the corruption cases against Zhou Yongkang, Bo Xilai, Guo Boxiong, Xu Caihou, and Ling Jihua, who Xi Jinping reportedly directly accused of being "engaged in political conspiracy activities."[14] (It is nearly impossible to know from the outside whether or not the charge was genuine). Often times, too, corruption allegations are coupled with allegations along the lines of the much older concept of the "six evils" (六害), i.e.: prostitution, pornography, the sale of women and children, narcotics, gambling, and *profiteering from superstition*.[15] They have been described as: "the vicious ways in which subversives and saboteurs will corrupt our party, our cadres, and our socialist system."[16]

The clearest event linked to religious persecution and the perception of threat from within the Party is the crackdown on Falun Gong. On 25 April 1999, around 10,000 members of the Falun Gong spiritual sect organized a one-day peaceful sit-in demonstration near Zhongnanhai, the government leadership residential compound in Beijing. The subsequent crackdown Jiang Zemin initiated against the organization has continued to the present day.

Falun Gong's followers included up to millions of Party members, and of those up to thousands of members of the security services, including in high-ranking positions.[17] The most threatening aspect of the movement was, as Joseph Fewsmith observed in 2001, its "obvious ability to mobilize the people quickly, and its deep penetration into the military and security ranks, which potentially diluted the Party's ability to control those important pillars of rule."[18] They used modern communications technology to organize the event.[19] The issue is not simply that a hierarchical

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[14] Shan Gao. "China's President Xi Jinping Hits Out at 'Political Conspiracies' in Keynote Speech." *Radio Free Asia*, 3 January 2017. http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/speech-01032017123112.html.

[15] "要重视总结经验 (Must Attach Great Importance to the Summary of Experience)," *The People's Daily*, 24 February 1990.

[16] Nicholas D. Kristof. "Notes on China; Beijing Hopes To Stamp Out The '6 Evils'." *The New York Times*, 26 November 1989. http://www.nytimes.com/1989/11/26/world/notes-on-china-beijing-hopes-to-stamp-out-the-6-evils.html?mcubz=3.

[17] John Pomfret. "China Sect Penetrated Military and Police." *The Washington Post*, 7 August 1999.

[18] Joseph Fewsmith, *Elite politics in contemporary China* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 145.

[19] Nigel Inkster, *China's Cyber Power*, Adelphi (London: Routledge for the Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2016), 24.

group, could enter and win support from the highest ranks of the Party. It is that they did so with a large support base from the security apparatus designed solely to defend the Party. [20] The same group the Party expects to rapidly mobilize in order to *counter* such a movement, were direct supporters of the same movement. [21]

Making scapegoats of groups like the Uyghurs, the CCP points to examples like the Color Revolutions or Jasmine Revolutions, to justify the tightening and expanding of its power.[22] The CCP warns that internal and external "hostile forces" seek to infiltrate political parties, religious, and ethnic groups, and incite divisions in Chinese society.[23] The anxiety is aimed at shoring up loyalty within the Party and convincing Chinese society of their need for the Party's paternalism.

When the Party describes religion as a vehicle for western "hostile forces" to infiltrate China, it is targeting religion because of obvious connections to the west. As one 2016 article (also about network/cyber security) described: "Underground religion instills ideological and cultural ideas of Western capitalists into believers through the internet, vilifies our own outstanding national moral and cultural traditions, dilutes the national consciousness of the people, and sways people's thoughts and beliefs."[24] Several of the persecuted human rights lawyers under Xi Jinping have defended persecuted Christians, and themselves practice, or practiced before their untimely and questionable death in custody, Christianity.[25]

In reality, the CCP's claims to hold the truth may be more strongly contested by everyday social demands that, intentionally or not, expose the falsehoods in the CCP's narrative. It is one likely reason why the Party sees the women's rights movement in China as a threat.[26] Beyond the mobilization power, it exposes the CCP's false narrative that Chinese culture and the Chinese people are somehow different in regard to universal human rights.

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[20] "警惕"法轮功"险恶政治用心　维护国家安全与社会稳定 (Be on Alert Against "Falun Gong's" Vicious Political Intentions in Order to Safeguard State Security and Social Stability)," *The People's Liberation Army Daily*, 15 January 2001.

[21] Sarah Cook and Leeshai Lemish, "The 610 Office: Policing the Chinese Spirit," *China Brief* 11, no. 17 (2011).

[22] Liqiang Wang, "甘肃版权"天山工程"形成机制显现效果 (Gansu "Tianshan Project" Copyright Mechanism Taking Shape and Demonstrating Effectiveness)," Xinhua, 11 May 2010. http://www.xinhuanet.com/zgjx/2010-05/11/content_13479282.htm.

[23] "充分认识统一战线的重要地位和作用 (Fully Understanding the Important Place and Function of the United Front)," 8 January 2009. http://www.zytzb.gov.cn/tzb2010/s1503/200911/576044.shtml.

[24] Bing Zhou, "警惕敌对势力对我国"颜色革命"的互联网布局 (Be Wary of Online Deployment by Hostile Forces Arranging Our "Color Revolution")," Chinese Soul, 20 March 2016. http://www.qstheory.cn/llqikan/2016-03/20/c_1118383789.htm.

[25] Stoyan Zaimov, "Christian Human Rights Lawyer Disappears After Being Recaptured by Chinese Officials; Friends Beaten," 9 November 2017. https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-human-rights-lawyer-disappears-after-being-recaptured-by-chinese-officials-friends-beaten-206031/; Christian Shepherd, "Death of Chinese Rights Lawyer Raises Suspicions," 26 February 2018. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights/death-of-chinese-rights-lawyer-raises-suspicions-idUSKCN1GA0TP.

[26] Leta Hong Fincher, *Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening In China* (Verso, 2018).

Mobilizing the People

> *"We must launch an anti-terrorism and stability maintenance People's War, encourage the masses to offer and report evidence of terrorism, and support the people and the masses, in conjunction with the armed forces to subdue and arrest thugs."*[27]

The CCP has called People's War the, "Magic Weapon for our victory over the enemy at home and abroad and the victory of the revolutionary war."[28] Party leaders from Deng to Xi have successively drawn attention to the centrality of the 'scientific' concept. For instance, in April 1998, President Jiang said, "We have relied [on the methods of] the People's War to fight in the past, and we have to fight the People's War in the future. The People's War is where our real power lies."[29] More recently, at the 90th Anniversary of the PLA's founding, Xi Jinping said: "To promote the cause of a strong military, we must wholeheartedly adhere to the fundamental objective 'Serve the People', and always be the sons and daughters' army that have the people's trust, the people's support, and the people's love…The mighty force of the People's War originates with the great power of the people."[30]

Perhaps the greatest indicator of Xi's intended message was the inclusion of the Maoist slogan, "Serve the People". At its origin, the slogan's key points were: "destroying self-interest", living and dying for the people, "doing what is right and correcting what is wrong" [i.e. engaging in criticism and self-criticism], and, in Mao's words, "the unification of our country, unity of our people, and the unity of our various nationalities."[31]

Like the concept of state security, national defense is not the defense of the Chinese nation outside of the CCP, it is the defense of the *People's Republic* of China, with the CCP at the helm. The People's War is a theoretical concept guiding the PRC's construction of a mobilization mechanism that ensures the Party can both mitigate and respond to crisis of all types. This is what strategies and concepts ranging from the United Front, Military-Civil Integration (or Military-Civil Fusion), and building a socialist "spiritual civilization" have in common.

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[27] "发动群众打赢反恐维稳人民战争 (Mobilize the Masses to Win the Anti-Terrorism and Stability Maintenance People's War)," 16 November 2018. http://wap.xjdaily.com/xjrb/20181116/118967.html.

[28] Zhenjiang Fan, "我国国防活动的指导原则 (Guiding Principles of China's National Defence Activities)," *The People's Liberation Army Daily*, 20 April 1995.

[29] Guoying Lü, "国防后备力量走向强大 (National Defence Reserve Capacity Marches Toward Greatness)," *The People's Liberation Army Daily*, 20 October 2002.

[30] "习近平在庆祝中国人民解放军建军 90 周年大会上的讲话 (Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Chinese People's Liberation Army's 90th Anniversary Assembly)," The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 1 August 2017. http://www.scio.gov.cn/zxbd/tt/xjp/Document/1560172/1560172.htm.

[31] "Study "Serve the People"." *Peking Review*, 1967. http://massline.org/PekingReview/PR1967/PR1967-02e.htm.

The focus on "unity", both military-government and military-civilian, is not only about a military-civil integration in terms of technical capacity but one in terms of political capacity. For instance, writing in 2002, Chi Haotian, a CMC vice-chairman from 1995-2002, said:

> It is necessary to further strengthen unity of nationalities, and military-government and military-civilian unity, and lay the political foundation for security and stability in the northwest (Xinjiang). We should extensively publicise the Marxist nationalities theory and the Party's nationality policy, increase military-civilian concept of defending national unity, and consciously fight against nationality splittism. We should look at and deal with the problems of military-government and military-civilian relations from the political point of view, and create a strong atmosphere for the armed forces to love the people, and for the people to support the armed forces. Strengthening cooperation between the armed forces and the local government, promoting economic and social development and army building. Party committees and government offices at all levels should, as always, be concerned about supporting the armed forces construction, preparing the stationed military forces for military struggle, and improving capacity for creating the conditions to "win" (wars).[32]

The United Front is also closely connected to the CCP's concept of a "spiritual civilization". The idea of "spiritual civilization construction" refers to efforts to construct a morality and ethics system that upholds the CCP's power, and builds the CCP's trust in society, not the reverse. It is linked to a propaganda effort that began in the 1980s in response to popular disillusionment with the CCP and attraction to foreign ideas.[33] In fact, United Front work and "spiritual civilization construction" are described as being "in the same realm of the superstructure, both are closely connected, and are also mutually promoted."[34]

The process of creating a Spiritual Civilization is another area where religion is scapegoated to justify the Party's means. The CCP acts on the idea that preventing crisis requires preventing political opponents from taking over the narrative—in other words, it requires the CCP to strengthen its 'discourse power'.

For the Party, improving Spiritual Culture involves re-inserting the Party into society, attaching the CCP's political control to China's economic and social development such that they become

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[32] Hui Cai, "深入贯彻"5· 31"重要讲话精神积极推进国防和军队建设 (Thoroughly Implement the Spirit of the Important Talk of 5· 31 [Jiang Zemin's 31 May 2002 Speech] and Actively Promote National Defence and Army Construction) " *The People's Liberation Army Daily,* 25 June 2002.

[33] Anne-Marie Brady, *Marketing dictatorship : propaganda and thought work in contemporary China,* Asia/Pacific/perspectives (Lanham, Md. ; Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 25; Xueliang Ding, *The Decline of Communism in China: Legitimacy Crisis, 1977-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 123.

[34] Zhaoguo Wang, "充分发挥统一战线优势,努力为社会主义精神文明建设服务," 23 December 1996. http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66703/4495530.html.

always inseparable, and not completely reliant on the ideological mobilization of the Mao era. Discourse power is directly embedded in the trust and morality that systems like "social credit" are supposed to create.

Recommendations for U.S. Policy

(1) A strong response to the CCP's persecution of religious groups must address the problem at its core. Individuals, namely Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) Party Secretary Chen Quanguo are directly implementing the CCP's securitization policies in Xinjiang and should immediately be sanctioned.[35] Sanctions should not, however, end at the local and regional levels of government, because the actual source of the problem is a broader state security strategy that is clearly centrally directed.

The U.S. Government should start by targeting all officials connected to the control of religion. This includes known members of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Central Xinjiang Work Coordination Leading Small Group Office, and high-level officials at the UFWD. This includes, but should not be limited to, CCP Central Committee member and head of the United Front Work Department You Quan; Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs and Deputy Director of the United Front Work Department Wang Zuoan; and Central Xinjiang Work Coordination Leading Small Group director and deputy director, the LSG's Office Director Shi Dakang and its deputy directors.

(2) Sanctions should also extend to both Chinese and international (including American) companies involved in the construction of China's surveillance state, which support the CCP's human rights violations. It is not a complete solution, but could stall the CCP's progress and buy time while policymakers research more effective long-term responses.

(3) Overseas Chinese communities must be protected. Western governments must take steps to protect overseas Chinese from the kinds of CCP encroachment that have taken place for decades but that are now increasingly augmented.

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[35] Andrian Zenz and James Leibold, "Chen Quanguo: The Strongman Behind Beijing's Securitization Strategy in Tibet and Xinjiang," *China Brief* 17, no. 12 (21 September 2017).https://jamestown.org/program/chen-quanguo-the-strongman-behind-beijings-securitization-strategy-in-tibet-and-xinjiang/.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS F. FARR*

THE VATICAN ACCORD WITH CHINA: RIDING THE DRAGON

Chairman Rubio, Cochairman Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you for holding this important hearing and inviting me to give my views on the Vatican's September Provisional Agreement with China and its effects on the ground.

INTRODUCTION

The Sino-Vatican Agreement was negotiated and is being implemented in the midst of the most systematic and brutal attempt to control Chinese religious communities since the Cultural Revolution. President Xi Jinping's policies should be seen as a particularly troubling aspect of the global crisis in religious freedom, one in which over three-quarters of the world's people live in nations where religion is highly, or very highly, restricted.

China is one of those nations. For years it has been on the State Department's list of the most severe violators of religious freedom. President Xi's policies are now putting it in contention for the worst of the worst, along with North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Iran.

Xi's actions are intensifying—making even more brutal—a decades-long government strategy of undermining a major threat to the authority of the Communist state: religion is a source of authority, and an object of fidelity, that is greater than the state. This characteristic of religion has always been anathema to history's totalitarian despots, such as Stalin, Hitler, and Mao, and to brutal authoritarian states such as early 20th century Mexico or Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The problem for these regimes is that most religions, unless they are co-opted by the state, by their nature limit the power of the state. This of course is a major reason why the American Founders put religious freedom at the beginning of our Bill of Rights—to contribute to the checks and balances designed to limit the power of the national government.

President Xi's strategy includes a renewed effort to alter by persecution the fundamental nature of certain religions. One is Islam as practiced by the Uighurs in Xinjiang Province, which the Chinese have recently targeted for genocide-like transformation or elimination. Another is Tibetan Buddhism, the object for decades of a brutal Chinese strategy of persecution and cultural destruction. A third is Roman Catholicism, whose distinctive teachings on human rights and religious freedom pose a particular obstacle to the Chinese state, especially to the impoverished Marxist-Leninist understanding of religion, human nature, and human dignity.

Today I will focus on the Chinese Catholic minority, and in particular the September 2018 Sino-Vatican Provisional Agreement. I will explore the possible effects of the Agreement, including whether it is likely to achieve its stated ends; that is, to allow the Catholic faithful to have bishops who are in communion with Rome but at the same time recognized by Chinese authorities. This, it is hoped, will help unify the divided Catholic Church in China.

I also want to examine whether a second, implicit goal of the Agreement is likely to be achieved, namely to improve the lot of China's persecuted Catholic minority, and to make Catholicism more attractive to the Chinese population.

TO SET THE STAGE: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CATHOLICISM IN CHINA

Let me begin with a brief historical overview of Catholicism in China. The earliest Christians appeared in China during the 7th century, but the church was not permanently established. A semi-permanent Catholic presence began in the 13th century with the arrival of the first of several Franciscan priests, the building of the first Roman Catholic church, and the installation of the first Catholic bishop.

After three centuries of Catholic growth and retrenchment in China, the Protestant Reformation in Europe led to the creation of the Society of Jesus—the Jesuits. This new Catholic order evangelized worldwide, and reached China by the late 16th century. In 1601 Matteo Ricci installed a Jesuit mission, which established Catholicism in China for good, notwithstanding periodic fierce resistance by Chinese emperors and Communist rulers.

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In 1724 Christianity was banned by the Qing dynasty, but by the dawn of the 19th century an estimated 200,000 Chinese Catholics remained. With the entry of the Western powers into China, their numbers increased, as did the number of Protestant missionaries and conversions to Christianity. During the 19th and 20th centuries Christianity became associated with Western imperialism, a perception that endures to this day, and although the vast majority of Christian clergy and lay adherents are indigenous Chinese citizens, continues to fuel persecution.

Throughout these centuries, Catholics in China encountered versions of what we are seeing today from the Chinese Communist government, that is, the assertion that Catholicism is incompatible with Chinese culture and must either be rooted out or adapted in ways that would change its fundamental nature.

The triumph of Mao and the Communist Revolution in 1949 led to an attempt either to absorb all religion into Communist ideology or to destroy it. The new People's Republic expelled the papal representative and in 1951 broke relations with the Holy See. The next decade witnessed brutal treatment of Catholics, Protestants, and other religious groups.

But by the 1960s, China's policy of taming religion was, like its economic policy, clearly failing. In 1966, Mao proclaimed that Chinese Communism had become too "revisionist," and he initiated the Cultural Revolution. The new revolution would, in his words, "sweep away all the monsters and demons" that opposed his brand of Communism. For the next ten years the Red Guards mounted a sustained and brutal attack on anyone or any group seen as a threat, and that included the Chinese Catholic Church.

While most of the official records of those devastating years were destroyed by Mao's successors, we know from survivors the terrible contours of what happened to Catholics and other religious groups. Churches were desecrated, looted and turned into factories and storerooms. Priests and nuns were tortured, murdered (some were burned alive), and imprisoned in "re-education" labor camps. Lay Christians were paraded in their towns and villages with cylindrical hats detailing their "crimes." Millions of Chinese citizens died terrible deaths during the Cultural Revolution, including by starvation. Tens of millions were brutalized, their lives and families destroyed. The clergy and faithful of the Catholic Church were among them.

In the end, the Cultural Revolution merely confirmed what Stalin and Hitler had already proven—religion cannot be destroyed, even by totalitarianism. The powerful need for religion is in the DNA of men, women, and children. Grudgingly acknowledging this reality, Mao's successors condemned the excesses of the Cultural Revolution and adopted a new strategy on religion—one that continues to this day.

The religion policies of Chinese leaders from Deng Xiaoping, who succeeded Mao in the 1970s, to President Xi Jinping today have been variations on a theme: religion is by its nature a threat to the Communist Party and the rule of the Politburo. While Mao proved that a policy of eliminating religion is unrealistic, his successors have constantly experimented in finding the "correct" way to control, co-opt, and absorb religion into the Communist state.

THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY CHINESE RELIGION POLICY

Ten years ago I wrote a book on U.S. international religious freedom policy that contained a chapter on China.[1] Re-reading that chapter confirmed for me that not much has changed in the pattern adopted by the Chinese to control religion. If you were to graph China's religion policies since the 1970s, you would see ups and downs as new Chinese leaders adjusted policies to achieve the prime objective of control.

Not all Chinese policy, it is true, involves overt repression of all religions. Since the Cultural Revolution China's leaders have periodically supported religious groups perceived to be capable of consolidating Beijing's power. Former Chinese leaders Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, for example, praised Chinese (non-Tibetan) Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism as "traditional cultures" of China. Xi Jinping has exhorted adherents of those religions to help reverse China's moral decline.

Clearly those three groups pose a lesser threat to Communist rule than do the Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Christians. For the moment at least, it is the latter three religious communities that are the objects of continuing repression, especially the Uighurs. The Muslims of Xinjiang province are being subjected to a massive anti-Uighur and anti-Muslim campaign that is staggering in its sweep and totalitarian sophistication, in effect a 21st century version of the Cultural Revolution. Its goal is to destroy a minority religion associated with a particular ethnic group. But this time the policy is not being carried out by the open savagery of Red

[1] Farr, "World of Faith and Freedom," pp 273–307.

Guards. Rather, the agent is Stalinist-era informers, periodic crackdowns to warn the population, and "re-education" of Muslims to change their beliefs. In recent years hundreds of "re-education" camps have been established, run by Chinese officials trained in "transformation" of inmates from adherents of Islam to devotees of Chinese communism. Hundreds of thousands of Uighur Muslims are incarcerated in these camps.

The lesson of China's anti-Uighur campaign is this: when it discerns a threat to the absolute control of its citizens, as it does with Uighur or Tibetan separatism, Beijing remains capable of the kind of systematic brutal repression of religious and ethnic minorities exhibited by the 20th century totalitarians, repression that today is routine practice across China's eastern border in North Korea. We should not deceive ourselves about Beijing's capacity for reverting to Mao's policies on religion, nor the negative impact it would have on long-term American interests.

At present, however, Xi's Uighur policy is merely the most visible and inhumane aspect of his implementation of China's long-term strategy of manipulating and controlling religion. There are many elements of that strategy, but let me note three. First, Xi is tightening central government control over the national bureaucracy responsible for managing religion. Second, he is returning to and re-emphasizing a traditional Communist theme: prevent Chinese youth from being exposed to religion in ways that Beijing cannot monitor. Third, he is refining oppressive policies designed to control the other religions perceived as a threat, namely the Tibetan Buddhists, Protestants, and Catholics.

Making SARA More Accountable to the Politburo. The bureaucracy that has carried out China's religion policy since the 1950s is the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), and its predecessor, the Religious Affairs Bureau. This huge state agency, staffed in the early years by former members of the Red Army, has long been charged with controlling religion at the local and provincial level. National SARA officials are also given the responsibility of meeting with foreign officials. I met with former SARA director Ye Xiaowen in China and was present during some of his trips to the United States, where his job was to reassure Americans that religious freedom was protected in China.

President Xi Jinping has decided to bring SARA nearer the Politburo by incorporating it into the United Front Work Department, a Communist bureaucracy historically charged with controlling China's ethnic minorities. This move is more than an adjustment of the wiring diagram. It is part of an overall tightening of government authority over civil society, especially its growing religious elements. In its latest Report on International Religious Freedom (for 2017), the State Department estimates that there are between 70 and 90 million Christians in China, about 12 million of them Catholics. The growth of Chinese Christianity, especially through conversion to Protestant denominations, is of great concern to the Communist government. Purdue sociologist and China expert Fenggang Yang predicts that within a generation China will have the largest Christian population in the world. Other religions are growing as well. Moving SARA closer to the Politburo ensures increased monitoring and control over the perceived threat posed by religion's growth in China.

Fear of Religious Education. Like other elements of Xi's intensified policy, religious education has long been under the microscope of the Chinese bureaucracy. One of SARA's responsibilities has been to minimize the risk that religious education might lead to resistance among China's religious citizens. U.S. religious freedom diplomacy has made some attempt to address the resulting violations of parental rights. In 2002, Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom John Hanford reported to Congress an assurance by SARA Director Ye Xiaowen that parents were in fact free to teach religion to their children. There was a half-truth in Ye's assurance: parents could teach their children surreptitiously, but the consequences of being caught conveying, for example, core Catholic doctrine on issues such as religious freedom for all, the equal dignity of all persons created in the image and likeness of God, or the evil of abortion, were severe.

The threat posed by such teachings is one reason for Xi's crackdown on religious education in China, in particular his policy of the "Sinicization" of religious education. Under this policy, no child under 18 may attend religious services, or any kind of religious event. No one under 18 may receive religious education of any kind from anyone. Further, each Chinese religious community is responsible for ensuring its teachings—to the young and to everyone else—are compatible with "the socialist society," and are supportive of the leadership of the Communist party.

For Chinese Catholics, the body charged with carrying out such policies is the government-controlled "Catholic Patriotic Association." Following Xi's instructions, it has drafted a detailed implementation document, which contains the following passage: "The [Catholic] Church will regard promotion and education on core values of

socialism as a basic requirement for adhering to the Sinicization of Catholicism. It will guide clerics and Catholics to foster and maintain correct views on history and the nation and strengthen community awareness."

Of course, the "core values of socialism" as practiced in China are exceedingly difficult to square with the core values of Catholicism. The Jesuit magazine America has noted correctly that Xi's religious education policy "strikes at the very heart and future of the Catholic and other Christian churches, as well as that of other religions. It is an issue of utmost concern for Catholics in China who see it as an attempt by the Communist authorities to prevent young people from being educated or growing up in the faith." [2]

Precisely so. It is worth asking how the Vatican's diplomatic rapprochement with the Chinese government will avoid making this problem worse, in part by appearing to abandon those Chinese Catholics, including bishops and priests, who bravely speak out against religious persecution and on behalf of religious freedom and human dignity.

SYSTEMATIC GOVERNMENT OPPRESSION

Finally, let me catalogue briefly some of the outrages that have afflicted religious groups other than the Uighur Muslims as part of Xi's policy. We are seeing increased destruction of houses of worship, including the bulldozing of churches, mosques, and Tibetan Buddhist schools and temples. Chinese officials are increasing their monitoring of the internet, including, and especially, religious content. We are seeing close monitoring and control of contributions to religious groups, the outlawing of proselytism, and the unjust imprisonment of priests, pastors, monks, nuns, and lay religious people.

None of this is new, but it is now occurring as part of a broad and carefully planned national strategy with many moving parts. It is dangerous for the religious minorities of China, and dangerous for American interests.

VATICAN DIPLOMACY AND CHINESE CATHOLICISM

Against this stark background, let's turn to an assessment of the Provisional Agreement between the Vatican and China. The Vatican's stated goals are to unify Catholics in China by regularizing the appointment of bishops and ensuring their acceptance by the Holy Father. Allied objectives are to induce the Chinese government to stop persecuting Catholics, and—perhaps—to increase the number of converts to Catholicism.

These are worthy goals, but it is difficult to see how the agreement will achieve them. After its failed attempt to destroy all religion in China during the Cultural Revolution, China's Communist government has spent decades attempting to manipulate and control the Catholic Church. Beijing created the treacherous divide between an official "Catholic Patriotic Association" controlled by the government, and an "underground" Church, that is, those bishops, priests, religious and lay Catholics who remain loyal to the Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and fundamental Catholic teachings on human dignity and human rights. For decades the Chinese government has persecuted those Catholics who refuse to accept Communist control of their religion.

Unfortunately, although the agreement is only two months old, there are already signs that its provisions will exacerbate this divide rather than heal it. Indeed, there are ample reasons to fear that, notwithstanding the good intentions of the Vatican, the deal they have brokered could make things much worse for the Church in China.

The text of the agreement has not been made public, but its contours are generally known. Chinese Catholic bishops will now be chosen in a process that begins with local Communist-controlled Catholic Patriotic Associations. When a vacancy occurs in a bishopric, CPAs will present the names of candidates to fill the position. Diocesan priests and lay Catholics will then vote on the candidates for bishop. The winner's name will be sent to the government-controlled Council of Bishops, who will then provide it to the Vatican. There the nominee could either be accepted or rejected by the Pope.

The Vatican apparently hopes that the Pope's veto power will ensure the orthodoxy of new bishops, facilitate reconciliation among China's divided Catholics, and make the Church more attractive to converts.

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[2] Gerard O'Connell, "Pope Francis to Chinese Catholics: the Church is Praying for You in the Midst of Difficulties," America Magazine, May 23, 2018; accessed at *https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/05/23/pope-francis-chinese-catholics-church-praying-you-midst-difficulties*

It is certainly true that all Catholics need bishops, and that disagreements and confusion over who is and who is not a licit bishop are very harmful to the faithful and to the Church. But it is also true that the two-millennia-old doctrines of Petrine supremacy and apostolic succession nest the authority for consecrating bishops in one man, the successor of Peter—the Pope.

The Vatican has in the past made practical concessions on the process by which bishops are approved by the Pope, in order to safeguard the existence of the Church. But this concession to a Communist government that by its nature seeks to control and, where possible, make fundamental alterations in Catholic doctrine, seems untimely and dangerous.

One contemporary comparison is instructive. If the reports about how new Chinese Catholic bishops are to be chosen are correct, the process resembles the way parliamentary candidates are approved in theocratic Iran. There, no one can run for parliament unless he has been vetted by a panel of theologians for fidelity to the regime and the Supreme Leader.

By the same token, it seems highly unlikely that a Chinese-controlled Council of Bishops will forward to the Vatican the name of a bishop candidate who is faithful to the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church. A man chosen in this process will doubtless not carry out one of the primary duties of a bishop—to be to his flock and to society at large a witness to the truths proclaimed by the Church concerning, for example, the sanctity of life, universal human dignity, and religious freedom. It seems far more likely that the names of candidates sent to Rome will be chosen at a minimum for their acquiescence to the Communist regime, if not for their fidelity to the regime's anti-Catholic purposes. Of course the Pope can veto such candidates ad infinitum, but the absence of a bishop does not harm the Chinese government. It hurts only the Catholics in China who need a faithful shepherd.

The insidious effects of this Esau's bargain may already have shown themselves. Two "official" Chinese bishops attended the recent Synod on Youth in Rome, apparently at the invitation of Pope Francis. But these bishops were, and are, Communist apparatchiks. They both are leaders of the aforementioned Council of Bishops controlled by the government. Unaccountably, the two left before the Synod was over. Whatever the cause of their abrupt departure, it was not the act of bishops faithful to the Holy Father or the Catholic Church.

Nor has the persecution of Chinese Catholics decreased. If anything, it has intensified since the signing of the agreement. Within a month of its signing, two Marian shrines had been destroyed by Communist officials in China. It is difficult to overstate the importance of these shrines to the Catholic faithful, and to their love of the Church. A government would destroy such structures only to threaten and oppress China's Catholics, to damage their faith and the Church itself. This, of course, is what Communist governments, including the Chinese government, do.

To summarize: The procedure for choosing new Catholic bishops established by the Provisional Agreement does not seem likely to yield bishops that are faithful Catholics, or to unify China's 12 million Catholics, most of whom yearn for faithful shepherds, not functionaries. Persecution of Catholics is increasing, as it is for other religious minorities in China. Although persecution has sometimes led to more converts, that is neither the logic nor the intent of the agreement. Rather, the hope seems to be that a more unified, accepted, orthodox Catholic Church will be more attractive to converts. Again, it is difficult to see how the agreement might lead to such an outcome.

In the face of such pathologies, what explains the Vatican's decision to negotiate and sign this deal? Allowing, again, for the hope that things will change—and I pray that they will—I would suggest that history provides a possible explanation. It could be that the Provisional Agreement reflects a return to the Vatican's failed Cold War "realpolitik" diplomacy of the 1960s, before it was changed by Pope John Paul II. That diplomacy failed from a want of realism about the evil of Communism, and deeply wounded the Church in parts of Eastern Europe. The lesson was then, and perhaps should be now, that the Vatican should not see itself as a power player on the world stage capable of changing the behavior of Communist governments by dint of its political diplomacy. We should recall that Vatican diplomacy was instrumental in facilitating America's 2015 restoration of diplomatic relations with the Communist regime in Cuba. Can anyone argue that the results have been good for the Church, or for religious freedom, in Cuba?

On the other hand, the Vatican is arguably the only moral authority in the world constituted precisely to counter the root causes of totalitarian evil, just as Pope John Paul II did in the 1980s in collaboration with President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In my view, the Holy See's role should be now, as it was then, to press for human rights and, especially, for religious freedom for all religious communities, in China and elsewhere.

Given the current vile assaults on the Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists, the Vatican should be standing with them by drawing the world's attention to what the Chinese government is doing in Xinjiang Province and in Tibet. As for China's Catholics, the Vatican should demand nothing less than libertas ecclesiae, the freedom of the Church to witness to its adherents, to the public, and to the regime, its teachings on human dignity and the common good (as those teachings are powerfully expressed in the Catholic document Dignitatis Humanae).

I sincerely hope that I am wrong about the Sino-Vatican Provisional Agreement. I hope there are parts of the agreement that will alleviate these concerns and others that have been expressed by faithful Catholics, in and out of China. But I do not believe the Agreement as I have described it will help the Roman Catholic Church, China's Catholic minority, or the cause of religious freedom in China. The Chinese know what they are doing. The Vatican's charism in China, on the other hand, is not diplomacy, but witness to the truth about God and man.

Thank you for inviting me to address this important topic.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO

Good afternoon.

This is a hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The title of this hearing is "The Communist Party's Crackdown on Religion in China." We will have one panel testifying today featuring:

Mihrigul Tursun, a Uyghur Muslim who was interned in and survived a Chinese "political reeducation" camp; translating for Ms. Tursun is Ms. Zubayra Shamseden. She is the Chinese Outreach Coordinator at the Uyghur Human Rights Project.

We will also hear from Tom Farr, President of the Religious Freedom Institute; and Samantha Hoffman, a Visiting Academic Fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies and Non-Resident Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Thank you all for being here.

The Chinese Government has long imposed harsh policies against unregistered Christian churches, Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and other religious adherents. The Commission maintains a Political Prisoner Database. Since the database's creation it has featured some 6,275 cases involving individuals detained because of their religion. Currently there are more than 750 active cases, and countless others whose names we may never know. The Commission consistently advocates for Members of Congress and the Administration to raise individual prisoner cases—and the Database is an invaluable tool in such efforts.

Religious freedom in China is a vast topic and we will only begin to scratch the surface today. Consider the following:

Uyghur Muslims are rounded up and interned in "political reeducation" camps. Tibetan monks and nuns are forced to undergo political re-education sessions. Falun Gong practitioners are reportedly sent to "Legal Education Centers" for indoctrination. Churches are shuttered, crosses removed, and Christian believers harassed and imprisoned.

These are daily realities in Xi Jinping's China, leading many observers to describe the current wave of repression as the most severe since the Cultural Revolution. Even as the government has carried out an extensive campaign to ensure ideological loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party, impacting various sectors of society—not least of which are religious communities—it has also targeted those who represent and advocate for them.

The "709 crackdown" saw scores of rights lawyers and advocates detained, arrested and tortured. Forced to ingest unknown medications and confess to crimes they did not commit, these brave men and women have been the tip of the spear in representing China's repressed and persecuted Christians, Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists and Falun Gong practitioners.

Of the rights lawyers who have courageously defended the rights of their fellow citizens in Chinese courts, several continue to serve sentences, including Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, and Gao Zhisheng. Those who have independently documented the truth of Chinese citizens persecuted for their beliefs became targets of persecution themselves. One fearless example is citizen journalist and human rights defender Huang Qi. We are extremely concerned that he is in danger of making the ultimate sacrifice for telling these stories because his government is currently deliberately denying him access to medical treatment while he is in prison.

However, set against this grim backdrop something remarkable has happened. The number of religious adherents in China has grown. This shows the utter failure of the government's policies in this regard.

Today's hearing provides an opportunity to better understand the scale and scope of the current crackdown, to identify cross-cutting trends across different religions, to examine the elevated role of the United Front Work Department and what this means for China's faithful, and to put forward policy recommendations to address this crisis.

The Commission has been particularly seized this year with the ongoing crackdown in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region targeting Uyghurs and other ethnic minority Muslim groups. Our Annual Report, released in October, described these grave abuses at length—abuses which I believe constitute crimes against humanity.

During a July hearing on Xinjiang we heard sobering testimony from Ms. Gulchehra Hoja, a Radio Free Asia Uyghur Service journalist and American citizen, who had been personally impacted by the crackdown. Dozens of her own family members have been detained or disappeared. As sobering as her story is, she is not alone. Not only have her fellow Uyghur Service journalists been similarly impacted, countless other Americans have as well. It seems that every week the Commission which we chair is contacted by Uyghurs living in the United States desperate for news about a loved one who has vanished into the growing labyrinth of camps.

Today we are honored to have with us Ms. Tursun. Her story is harrowing, and we are truly grateful for her courage in coming forward.

Also grabbing headlines in recent months is the growing repression facing Christians in China. Beijing authorities recently banned Zion Church, one of the largest unofficial Protestant churches in the city, which typically drew up to 1,600 worshipers on any given Sunday. Robbed of their worship space, members of Zion Church have reportedly taken to quietly meeting in parks and homes.

In September, reports emerged of authorities burning Bibles, and compelling Christians to sign papers renouncing their faith. Meanwhile the Holy See and the Chinese Government reached an agreement this fall, the precise details of which have not been made public. Media outlets reported that Beijing would recognize the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church in China; the Vatican would recognize seven excommunicated Chinese bishops appointed by PRC authorities; and Chinese authorities would appoint future bishops, while the Pope would have veto power over their nomination.

There is a growing concern that the agreement may put in greater peril those Catholic believers who maintain as part of their faith that they cannot worship under clergy that have been selected by the Chinese Government. There is also alarm that any deal betrays the memory of Catholics who refused to renounce papal supremacy and were persecuted for it, while demoralizing those who still stand faithful.

As the hearing title denotes, the Communist Party is at the center of this crackdown. The Party Central Committee issued a massive restructuring plan for Party and government agencies to be completed by the end of 2018. The United Front Work Department—which Xi Jinping, like Mao before him, calls the "magic weapon" of the Communist Party, was further empowered in the reorganization. This year its role in overseeing religious affairs was expanded, underscoring the Party's enduring fear that the growth of religious belief is a threat to its grip on power.

As the Party conducts United Front work to ensure that outside groups are in line with its agenda, the evidence is also clear that Chinese officials are only too willing to expand their repression overseas and to intimidate and harass Americans and legal permanent residents of the United States, including those in the Uyghur community.

Ms. Tursun's story reminds us that China's suppression of religious faith and religious communities is real. It is evil, and it is too horrendous to ignore. In the 21st century, we simply cannot accept the mass internment of individuals based on their religious faith or cultural identity; nor can we accept the stamping out of all "unofficial" religious communities in China that maintain as a matter of faith that they do not want to be beholden to the leadership of the Chinese Government.

Without objection, we'll keep the hearing record open for 48 hours to submit additional relevant materials.

Please join me in welcoming our witnesses. We will begin with Ms. Tursun. And I would stress at the outset, that the personal safety of Ms. Tursun and her family is paramount. It will be taken very seriously by the United States Government if she or members of her family experience any sort of retaliation from the Chinese Government because she has spoken out about her experience.

Before we adjourn, I'd like to thank Congressman Smith for his partnership on the Commission and in the cause of human rights in China. This is the final CECC hearing for this Congress. As such, it marks the end of our formal collaboration as chair and cochair. Throughout the course of the last 4 years I have greatly valued

his passion and commitment to these vital issues—something which is desperately needed today. Through hearings, legislation, advocacy, and meticulous research and reporting, the Commission has given voice to a cause which is ultimately about human dignity. Bipartisanship is part of the DNA of this Commission and I am confident that this work will continue in the next Congress; but as we mark the end of this chapter, I thank you.

The record will remain open for 48 hours. The hearing is adjourned.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH

The current assault on religion in China is the most comprehensive attempt to manipulate and control religious communities since the Cultural Revolution. What is happening under Xi Jinping's leadership is a systematic effort to transform the very nature of certain religious communities.

Regulations on religious affairs issued in February tightened existing restrictions, and new draft regulations will clamp down on religious expression online. Churches, mosques, and temples have been demolished, crosses destroyed, children under the age of 18 are prohibited from attending services, and the Communist Party is now commissioning new religious texts that remove content unwanted by the atheistic Communist Party.

Xi Jinping talks about realizing the "China Dream"—but when Bibles are burned, when a simple prayer over a meal in public is an illegal religious gathering, and when over a million Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims are interned in "re-education camps" and forced to renounce their faith—that dream is a nightmare.

Xi Jinping's war on religion is also a distinct challenge to U.S. religious freedom diplomacy and to international standards on the freedom of religion.

There is a dire need to shine a light on the stunning and outrageous detention of nearly a million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities. The Senator and I have tried to be a voice for those repressed. Ms. Tursun's powerful testimony today reminds us that we cannot be silent when the Chinese Government is constructing a high-tech police state in Xinjiang Province whose goal is the forced assimilation of an entire ethnic minority population and the "sinicization" of their religious beliefs and practices.

I commend the Administration—Secretary Pompeo and Vice President Pence—for speaking out forcefully. I would urge the Administration to support the bipartisan Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act that Senator Rubio and I introduced and to sanction Chinese officials and businesses complicit in likely "crimes against humanity."

In the past year, pressure has mounted on independent Protestant and Catholic churches. Clergy are in prison, churches closed, and the human rights lawyers who defend religious believers have been jailed, disappeared, or tortured into silence. Gao Zhisheng, Jiang Tianyong and so many others have been disappeared, detained, and tortured for standing up against persecution.

For anyone who wants to be inspired, I would recommend reading the open letter signed by over 500 Protestant leaders. In the midst of an intense campaign of repression, they have said that "For the sake of the Gospel, we are willing to suffer all external losses brought about by unfair law enforcement. Out of a love for our fellow citizens, we are willing to give up all of our earthly rights—for the sake of the Gospel, we are prepared to bear all losses—even the loss of our freedom and our lives."

Now this is the type of courageous conviction that requires not only our admiration but our action.

Let me turn now to the issue of Catholicism in China where a deal has been struck that will reportedly give the Pope veto power over Chinese Government-approved candidates for bishop. Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin admits "it is not a good deal" but believes it was important to unify the "underground" Catholic Church and the state-sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association. Cardinal Joseph Zen, bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, has questioned whether Vatican officials making these decisions "know what true suffering is."

The reports are that this deal is provisional and full details are secret. The devil will be in the details—including the fate of underground churches, the 30 underground bishops appointed previously over Beijing's objection, and Vatican relations with Taiwan. But with all the efforts under way to forcibly sinicize religion, it certainly seems an odd time to strike a deal with Xi Jinping's China.

I hope and pray this agreement will bring true religious freedom for Catholics in China—who have suffered so much to maintain their faith—but the wisdom of making this deal, at this time, is certainly in doubt. Since the agreement was reached, underground priests are detained, pilgrimage sites closed, crosses toppled from

churches, and United Front Works Department officials, in October, convened a "re-education" session for priests.

The President and Xi Jinping will meet in Argentina this week, seeking ways to defuse U.S.-China tensions. I think it should be conveyed to Xi Jinping that his war on religion is a counterproductive strategy—taking a hammer and sickle to the cross or jailing a million Uyghur Muslims will only ensure that a tougher China policy will have widespread, bipartisan and even global support.

I want to commend the Senator from Florida for his leadership as CECC chair this term. We have had a very productive and effective partnership and I enjoyed our four years together as cochairs. I believe the profile of the CECC has been raised significantly as a voice for the repressed and as a generator of new ideas, particularly as the U.S. is reconsidering its strategic posture for dealing with China.

We have raised alarms about threats posed to Uyghur Muslims, to human rights lawyers and religious communities, and to Hong Kong's autonomy. We have also effectively raised the issue of the Chinese Government's coercive political influence operations globally. I have enjoyed our partnership and look forward to working with Senator Rubio in Congress's next term.

Lastly, I want to commend the work of Paul Protic, my appointee to the CECC since 2011, who has worked as staff director. Paul was the campaign manager for my first reelection campaign in 1982, so we go back many years. Paul is a veteran of many legislative battles in Congress and was a particularly effective advocate as we fought to ensure that Chen Guangcheng and his family could come to the U.S. With the House majority returning to the Democratic Party next year, Paul will be leaving the CECC. He has been a patient and effective leader and I want to warmly thank him for his service.

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

REPRESENTATIVE CASES FROM THE CECC'S PRISONER DATABASE, SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RUBIO

Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Political Prisoner Database (ppdcecc.gov)

Representative Cases as of November 27, 2018

Prisoner Name, Human Rights Issues Associated With Imprisonment, Length of Sentence

To search for other political prisoners' records, visit the Commission's website



Salheti Haribek
Religion, Ethnic
Detained since 2017



Alimjan Yimit
Religion, Association
15 Years



Hebibulla Tohti
Religion, Speech
10 Years



Buzeynep Abdureshit
Religion, Ethnic
7 Years



Bonkho Kyi
Ethnic, Religion
7 Years



Thabkhe Gyatso
Religion, Ethnic
15 Years



Thardoe Gyaltsen
Religion, Ethnic
18 Years



Gedun Choekyi Nyima
Religion, Ethnic
Detained since 1995



Zhang Shaojie
Religion, Association
12 Years



Hu Shigen
Religion, Association
7 Years and 6 Months



Xing Wenxiang
Religion
12 Years



Liu Honggeng
Religion, Association
Detained since 2015



Su Zhimin
Religion, Speech
Detained since 1997



Deng Cuiping
Falun Gong
6 Years



Bian Lichao
Falun Gong
12 Years



Cheng Jinfeng
Religion
8 Years

LETTER REGARDING STATEMENT BY CONCERNED SCHOLARS ON CHINA'S MASS DETENTION OF TURKIC MINORITIES, SUBMITTED BY SEAN R. ROBERTS

November 20, 2018

The Honorable Marco Rubio, Chair
The Honorable Christopher Smith, Cochair
Congressional-Executive Commission on China
243 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: November 28 hearing on "The Communist Party's Crackdown on Religion in China"

Dear Senator Rubio and Representative Smith:

In connection with your November 28 hearing on "The Communist Party's Crackdown on Religion in China," I would like to submit for the Congressional Record a Statement prepared by concerned scholars on the crisis facing Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of China. This statement was drafted collectively by a group of scholars with long track records of working with Uyghurs and/or on this region. This group of scholars neither represents any specific organization nor the institutions where they are employed. Rather, they are acting together as concerned scholars out of a collective desire to raise awareness of the seriousness of the mass human rights abuses presently taking place in northwest China and to call on the international community to take action against these abuses.

This statement has been signed by a total of 496 scholars from 36 countries around the world as of 2:30 pm on November 30, 2018. While most of these scholars were not involved in drafting the statement, by signing it, they are affirming their agreement with its description of the situation in the XUAR today and its calls for international action to address that situation. It is our intention to keep the statement publicly available on the internet at www.concernedscholars.home.blog until the mass internment camps in the XUAR are closed and all those imprisoned are released.

The text of the statement is attached to this letter for the Commission's reference.

Sincerely yours,



Director, International Development Studies
Elliott School of International Affairs
The George Washington University

STATEMENT BY CONCERNED SCHOLARS ON CHINA'S MASS DETENTION OF TURKIC MINORITIES

November 26, 2018

As concerned scholars who study China, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Central Asia, and other related regions of the world, we issue this statement to highlight our concerns and to call the international community to action in relation to the mass human rights abuses and deliberate attacks on indigenous cultures presently taking place in China's XUAR. The signatories to this statement are united in viewing the present situation in this region of China as one of significant international concern. This situation must be addressed to prevent setting negative future precedents regarding the acceptability of any state's complete repression of a segment of its population, especially on the basis of ethnicity or religion.

BACKGROUND

The Chinese state is engaged in the mass detention of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and other Muslim minorities in their homelands in the Central Asian borderlands of Northwest China. Researchers estimate that around one million people have been detained without trial. In the camps, these detainees, most of whom are Uyghur, are subjected to deeply invasive forms of surveillance and psychological stress as

they are forced to abandon their native language, religious beliefs and cultural practices. Outside of the camps, more than 10 million Turkic Muslim minorities in the region are subjected to a dense network of surveillance systems, checkpoints, and interpersonal monitoring which severely limit all forms of personal freedom.

What is happening in the camps?

Until October 2018 the Chinese authorities officially denied the existence of the camps. They have since declared that the camps are "vocational training" schools which Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities attend voluntarily. In programing featured on state television on October 16, Uyghur detainees were shown learning Chinese, receiving training in industrial production, and discussing their regret concerning past religious and ethno-national beliefs while proclaiming a newfound love for the Chinese political system. Yet in many of the shots at the camp, it is clear that the detainees are being monitored by numerous cameras.

Reports from eyewitnesses have noted malnourishment and severe psychological distress among the detainees, and some report detainees being forcibly given psychiatric drugs. In some cases, shoelaces and belts are confiscated, due to the prevalence of self-harm and suicide. Those who do not fully participate in political reeducation are often subjected to beatings, solitary confinement, and forms of religious and psychological violation. There have been numerous reports of deaths in the centers, particularly among the elderly and infirm, but also of younger people who were in good health when they were taken. While there are frequent reports of more people entering the camps, there are very few reports of those being released.

Why is this happening now?

China's present signature foreign policy initiative is the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) that seeks to connect the PRC economically to the rest of the Eurasian continent through large infrastructure projects that will stimulate international trade. The western and south-western components of the BRI require the XUAR to serve as a transportation and commercial hub to trade routes and pipelines that will join China with Central and South Asia, the Middle East, and the entirety of Europe. As a result, the XUAR has become a very important strategic region for China, and the state views its indigenous populations as an obstacle to developing its vision for this future critical center of international commercial networks.

What are the implications of the mass detention system in the XUAR for the rest of China?

China's approach in the XUAR is consistent with the CCP's broader implementation of the concept of "social management" as a means of preserving its hold on power. For the Party, the goal of "social management" and the "social credit" system is to ensure that the population internalizes the Communist Party's ideology and supports the Party's hold on power. In the XUAR, this requires that key markers of Turkic Muslim identity such as religious observance and language be forcibly "cured" or "eradicated" through mass incarceration and "re-education." There are concerns that such extreme measures could be replicated to address other segments of the Chinese population who are perceived as threatening the Party's monolithic vision of the PRC.

What are the implications for the rest of the world?

China has defended its mass incarceration of Turkic Muslims on the basis of counter-terrorism. However, it is also apparent that China is both seeking to embed its Xinjiang-focused policies in counter-terrorism cooperation with international partners and to export the methods and technologies that have underpinned its "surveillance state" in Xinjiang. If what is happening today in the XUAR is not addressed by the international community, there is a likelihood that we could see its replication in other authoritarian states who have used the label of "terrorist" to describe those who peacefully resist state hegemony.

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

There is now significant discussion among US and European leaders regarding economic sanctions directed at key Chinese leaders and security companies. There is also discussion of new forms of assistance to Uyghur and Kazakh asylum seekers outside of China and the establishment of a Congressional Act in the US that would earmark resources to protect the human rights of Uyghurs inside China. The signatories support these initiatives and call for the following additional measures to be taken by the international community:

(1) We call on states and institutions to issue formal statements demanding that Xi Jinping and Chen Quanguo immediately abolish the "transformation through

education" detention system and release all Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and other detainees.

(2) We call on states and institutions to demand and impose economic sanctions on Chinese authorities and technology companies in- and outside of China, which are benefiting from this process. Such sanctions should go beyond lower-level officials and target Chen Quanguo, under whose leadership in the region this system of mass incarceration has been instituted. Likewise, they should include high-profile technology companies, whose concessions to the Chinese government on internet surveillance have implicated them in the repression presently taking place in the XUAR.

(3) We call on states and institutions to introduce legislation joining Germany and Sweden in granting expedited asylum to Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Turkic Muslim minorities from China and a blanket refusal to deport Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims to China.

(4) We call on Beijing to cease its extra-territorial campaign of harassment against members of the Uyghur diaspora community around the globe and urge relevant states and institutions where those communities reside to make the protection of Uyghurs a matter of priority in their diplomatic relations with Beijing.

(5) We call on the thirteen UN member states that expressed grave concern about the existence of this system of mass incarceration at the recent UN Universal Periodic Review of China's human rights record to spearhead a movement for UN action aimed at investigating this mass internment system and closing the camps. Additionally, we call on those states that have yet remained silent on this issue, including Muslim-majority states and those in Central Asia whose own citizens or citizens' relatives have been interned, to join in this action.

(6) We call upon countries presently engaged in negotiations regarding projects that are part of the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly those that are linking to the XUAR as a hub for trade and commerce, to make their involvement in these projects contingent on the closing of the mass internment camps and the ceasing of other means of mass repression to which the Turkic minorities in this region are currently subjected.

(7) We call upon academic institutions around the world with formal partnerships with state-run Chinese academic institutions to express their concern about the present situation in the XUAR with their colleagues and to consider suspending their partnerships until the camps have been closed and all detainees are released.

[This document has been signed by 690 scholars from 42 countries as of May 1, 2019.]

Witness Biographies

Mihrigul Tursun, survivor of Chinese "political reeducation" camp

Mihrigul Tursun is a 29-year-old Uyghur woman from China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region who gave birth to healthy triplets in Egypt while her husband was working there in 2015. Soon after her children were born, she returned to China seeking help from her parents to raise them but was detained by authorities upon her return and the triplets were taken from her. Authorities detained her in a prison for two months, and then released her because her children were suffering from a severe illness that required surgery. But one of her sons died under mysterious circumstances while being cared for in a local hospital. In the years following her son's death, authorities detained her two additional times, including in a "political reeducation" camp, and subjected her to torture, beatings, and interrogation in detention.

Dr. Thomas F. Farr, President, Religious Freedom Institute

Dr. Thomas Farr is President of the Religious Freedom Institute, a non-profit that works to advance religious freedom globally. A leading authority on international religious freedom, Dr. Farr served for 28 years in the U.S. Army and the U.S. Foreign Service. In 1999 he became the first director of the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF). He later directed the Witherspoon Institute's IRF Task Force, was a member of the Chicago World Affairs Council's Task Force on Religion and Foreign Policy, taught at the National Defense University, and served on the Secretary of State's IRF working group. From 2008–2018, Dr. Farr was Associate Professor of the Practice of Religion and World Affairs at Georgetown University. He also directed Georgetown's Religious Freedom Project. A Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina, Farr is senior fellow at Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion, and a consultant to the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference. His major works include "World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty Is Vital to American National Security" (Oxford University Press, 2008) and U.S. Foreign Policy and International Religious Freedom: Recommendations for the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress, with Dennis Hoover (Religious Freedom Institute, 2017).

Dr. Samantha Hoffman, Visiting Academic Fellow, Mercator Institute for China Studies and Non-Resident Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute's International Cyber Policy Centre

Dr. Samantha Hoffman is a Visiting Academic Fellow at the Mercator Institute for China Studies, and a Non-Resident Fellow at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's International Cyber Policy Centre. Her work explores the domestic and global implications of the Chinese Communist Party's "autonomic" approach to state security and social management. Her research offers new ways of thinking about how to understand and respond to China's pursuit of artificial intelligence and big data-enabled capabilities to augment political and social control. She holds a Ph.D. in Politics and International Relations from the University of Nottingham (2017), an M.Sc. in Modern Chinese Studies from the University of Oxford (2011), a B.A. in International Affairs from Florida State University (2010), and a B.A. in Chinese Language and Culture from Florida State University (2010).

