

UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

HEARING ON CHINA'S RELIGIOUS FREEDOM  
VIOLATIONS: DOMESTIC REPRESSION AND  
MALIGN INFLUENCE ABROAD

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Virtual Hearing

P A R T I C I P A N T S

USCIRF COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIR TURKEL: Good morning, and thank you for attending the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's hearing today on China's Religious Freedom Violations: Domestic Repression and Malign Influence Abroad.

I would also like to thank our distinguished witnesses for joining us and offering their expertise today.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, or commonly known as USCIRF, is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body, created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, or IRFA.

The Commission uses international standards to monitor freedom of religion or belief abroad and makes policy recommendations to the United States government.

Today, USCIRF exercises its statutory authority under IRFA to convene this important hearing.

China is unambiguously one of the most

repressive countries and the worst religious freedom violators and human rights abusers in the world.

The most recent example is its repressive tactics, on display for the world to see, in responding to protestors throughout China and the world regarding its zero-COVID policy.

The protestors are in part sparked by the tragic deaths caused by a fire in Urumqi and its strict zero-COVID lockdown since fall of this year.

Chinese officials are stopping individuals randomly on the street and searching and deleting any social media content and communications related to the protests from their phones.

Officials also have called and threatened overseas Chinese citizens, coercing them to delete such content.

USCIRF has repeatedly recommended China's designation as a country of particular concern, or CPC, a designation that the State Department has consistently applied since 1999, soon after the passage of IRFA.

The State Department announced its most recent CPC designation, including China, on December 2.

In the past decade, religious freedom conditions in the country have rapidly deteriorated under the brutal rule of the Chinese Communist Party, CCP, under the leader, Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

The CCP's techno-authoritarianism, transnational repression and other forms of malign influence abroad represent some of the most troubling aspects of its religious tyranny, impacting Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Catholics, Protestant Christians, and many other religious groups.

Uyghur Muslims, for example, have long fallen victim of China's techno-authoritarianism and transnational repression.

The Chinese government has used advanced surveillance technology as an integral part of its repression in the Uyghur homeland.

Chinese tech companies, both state-owned

enterprises and private companies, such as Huawei and others, play a vital role in facilitating and implementing the CCP's oppressive policies in the Uyghur region.

Moreover, the Uyghurs continue to experience terror and intimidation even after they have escaped to other countries. Many of them fear for their safety and the safety of their family members who remain in Xinjiang, as well as the threat of forcible deportation by some countries that are under Chinese government's pressure.

The United States must continue to vigorously enforce policies to ensure that our nation's trade policies do not contribute to CCP's religious persecution.

We must also actively counter its malign foreign influences and transnational repression, including here in the United States.

With that, I will turn it over to my colleague, Vice Chair Abraham Cooper, for his remarks and introduce our witnesses.

VICE CHAIR COOPER: Thank you, Chair

Turkel, and good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us today.

Few countries in the world can match China's technology, technologically sophisticated religious repression and its unique ability to assert malign influences over, and to extend repression into, other countries.

I personally experienced this at a rally, a human rights rally, held in Los Angeles two weeks ago when dozens of Chinese students felt the need to wear masks or to cover their faces with a white piece of paper in order to deflect and avoid detection, facial recognition detection from China.

The long-range implications on that will affect every citizen in the United States and beyond.

More specifically, though, in this regard, China presents a unique challenge to the U.S. foreign policy and our national security interests.

That harsh reality makes today's hearing especially timely and important, as it will address both China's technology-enabled domestic religious



repression and its malign influence on the streets of the United States of America and its malign influences in almost every country in the world.

As Chair Turkel mentioned, the U.S. government must do its part to ensure that our business community trade policies do not contribute to religious freedom violations in China, which remain systematic, ongoing, and egregious.

We must make sure that United States companies do not export critical technologies that China could use in its techno-authoritarian repression of religious minorities.

We must also make sure that products tainted by Uyghur forced labor are not imported into the U.S. market.

Furthermore, the United States government should use all legal and policy tools at its disposal to counter the Chinese government's malign foreign influence through its lobbying efforts and transnational repression activities in the U.S., which harass and intimidate religious minorities from China—a fact that I personally experienced

just a few days ago—witnessed.

The U.S. government must also continue to work with like-minded international partners to hold the Chinese government accountable, including imposing coordinated sanctions on Chinese officials and entities responsible for severe religious violations and related human rights abuses.

With that, I look forward to a robust and fruitful discussion today with our distinguished witnesses, and it is my honor to turn it over to Commissioner Frank Wolf, the inspiration for all the other commissioners here at USCIRF, for his timely remarks.

Commissioner Wolf.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Thank you, Vice Chair Cooper. I appreciate it.

China is indeed one of the worst religious freedom violators in the world today. Its religious repression has severely impacted many religious groups inside China, as well as those that are overseas.

This precious freedom is also under attack

in Hong Kong, a city that was once free and prosperous, an international financial center with a high degree of autonomy, and civil liberties were guaranteed under the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Today, the Chinese government has broken its promises and is eviscerating the rule of law and civil liberties in Hong Kong.

Religious freedom is a fundamental right that will inevitably suffer as well. In fact, the Chinese government's latest victim is the 90-year-old Cardinal Joseph Zen. Cardinal Zen is a tireless religious freedom advocate for underground Catholics in China and is almost the face of the Catholic Church, and to see what they're doing to a 90-year-old man is unbelievable.

I am gravely concerned that the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities will use the infamous National Security Law to target Cardinal Zen and other religious leaders and communities that are participating in democracy protests in Hong Kong.

We must speak out against this injustice.

I'm also greatly concerned about China's malign foreign influence here in the United States—most insidiously through its lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill.

I am very disappointed that some former members of Congress, both political parties, have decided to work as agents to lobby for the Chinese government and its state-owned enterprises, such as Hikvision, and is under suspicion—which is under suspicion for complicity in the government's persecution of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Their involvement in such efforts is just outrageous, and I thought I would never ever see something like this. There should be a law prohibiting lobbying for China.

Another important subject regards 64 members of the Mayflower Church who are seeking asylum here in the United States. I appreciate the State Department and Ambassador Rashad Hussain's close attention—he's been very good on this—on the freedom of the Mayflower Church people.

Given the continuing realistic danger of

them being forcibly repatriated to China from Thailand, the Chinese come in and arrest two or three, take them away, they're never seen again, I urge the State Department to send U.S. Embassy diplomats to make regular visits to the 64 members of the Mayflower Church.

The relevant parties will then know that we in the United States, and the United States government, and the Biden administration, do care about the religious freedom and safety of this group.

I pray they can safely come to the United States very soon.

In closing, we must address the rapidly deteriorating religious freedom situation in China, and we must counter the Chinese Communist Party government's increasing malign influence and transnational repression overseas.

And with that, I'll turn it back to Chairman Turkel.

CHAIR TURKEL: Commissioner Wolf, thank you so much.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Wolf for his exemplary leadership protecting, advancing human rights and religious freedom, not only in China but around the world.

I have had the fortune to meet then Congressman Wolf while I was a law student. The Uyghur community, in particular, know four names very well—late Congressman Tom Lantos, Congressman Wolf, then Representative Nancy Pelosi, Chris Smith.

If you look at those four giant leaders in advancing human rights, we can see the human rights and religious freedom issues have been a bipartisan concern for the United States Congress.

With that, I'm going to introduce another leader, Senator Marco Rubio, Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and Senior Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, who has provided prerecorded remarks for this hearing,

Not only this, but he has been supporting our work and literally attending and supporting,

providing similar type of remarks in the past hearings and briefings that we have organized.

Thank you very much. If you could go ahead to play the prerecorded remarks.

SENATOR RUBIO: [Prerecorded remarks as follows:] Hello. I'm Senator Marco Rubio, and I want to thank the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for having today's hearing.

The Chinese Communist Party has been attacking religious freedom since its founding a century ago. Oppression is frankly in its DNA.

Today, Beijing's assault is more violent and systematic than ever. In Xinjiang, it has even amounted to genocide. Party agents are also targeting ethnic Chinese believers here in the United States because they believe faith undermines the legitimacy of the Communist Party.

This is a threat to American national security and basic human rights. We must do everything we can to counter this.

So I hope today's hearing sheds further light on Beijing's abuses and inspires meaningful

action against them.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much,  
Senator Rubio.

With that, I'd like to introduce our witnesses. More detailed biographies of our witnesses will be shown in the chat box, and their bios also can be found on our website, [uscirf.gov](http://uscirf.gov).

We have a group of outstanding witnesses whom I have had the opportunity to learn from and follow over the years.

Starting with our first witness, Wang Yaqui, who is a senior researcher at the Human Rights Watch. Her team has been extraordinarily powerful, persistent in the efforts to shine a spotlight early on on the Uyghur atrocities. This goes way back in 2016 when the Egyptian government refouled, forcibly removed Uyghur students.

And then we will have, we will hear from my good friend Bhuchung Tsering, the interim president of ICT, who has been a colleague and friend over the years and taught me so much about



the Tibetan struggle.

And then we will hear from Louisa Greve, a former vice president of the National Endowment for Democracy, who is currently serving as the director of Global Advocacy at the Human Rights Project.

Then, we will have Reverend Bob Fu, who has been an incredible leader advocating religious freedom for the Christian community and others in China, who is the founder of ChinaAid Association.

And, lastly, we will hear from Zack Smith, a legal fellow at the Heritage Foundation, where he is part of the Meese Center for Legal and Judicial Studies.

If I could, I'd like to give the floor to Wang Yaqiu.

MS. WANG: Thank you, Chairman Turkel, Vice Chairman Cooper and honorable commissioners.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Since I am the first speaker, I will give a quick recap of some of the recent developments on Chinese government's repression of religion, and

then I will offer some key recommendations.

Since 2016, when President Xi Jinping called for "Sinicization" of religions, state control over religion in China has obviously strengthened.

Authorities now seek to comprehensively reshape religions such that they are consistent with the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party and to promote allegiance to the party and to President Xi.

Technology-based censorship and surveillance are central to religious repression in China.

Some American technology companies also contributed to the Chinese government's repression of religion.

With regard to Christians in China, one of the most notable developments is regarding an agreement between the Vatican and the Chinese government.

The agreement was first signed in 2018 on the appointment of a Catholic bishop. The

agreement was renewed in 2020, and now again renewed in October this year, despite the Chinese government's arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen in Hong Kong as, you know, Congressman Wolf mentioned, and just a month after the renewal. In November, the Vatican in an official statement expressed "surprise and regret." I quote. "Surprise and regret" that the Chinese authorities violated agreement by installing a bishop that is not recognized by the Holy See.

Well, I don't think the Vatican should be surprised because many, including HRW, had warned the Holy See at the time. I hope, you know, the Pope learned a lesson from this and change his mind after this, and he can speak up publicly about the persecutions of the Catholics, Christians and others in China.

In 2021, Apple took down a popular Quran app and a Bible app in China's App Store at the request of Chinese officials.

Apple has over the years taken down hundreds of VPNs, fiercely impeding the ability for

users in China to access free information, including information about religious issues.

In Xinjiang, as is now widely known, that the Chinese authorities have detained one million or more Uyghur and other Turkic Muslims for political reeducation, so-called political "reeducation," and subject those who are not confined in camps and prisons to omnipresent surveillance.

In 2017, Human Rights Watch uncovered the U.S. medical company, Thermo Fisher Scientific, had sold DNA sequencers to the Xinjiang police, and after we publicized this, after the media reporting on this, in 2019, Thermo Fisher finally announced that it would stop selling human identification technology in Xinjiang.

Sadly, it was later found that Thermo Fisher had also sold DNA kits to police in Tibet.

Human Rights Watch recent research shows Chinese authorities are significantly increasing policing, including the arbitrary collection of DNA from residents, including children, throughout

Tibet, despite the wide condemnation around the world in its DNA collection in Xinjiang.

And Falun Gong practitioners in China continue to face severe repression. In January, a practitioner, Xu Na, was sentenced to eight years, merely for sending information about COVID-19 restrictions to an overseas Falun Gong affiliated website.

And the Chinese government's religious repression stretches beyond its borders, as, you know, Commissioner Cooper mentioned earlier.

You know, an effective way of doing that is to leverage the Chinese economic power. The Chinese government has compelled other governments around the world to repatriate many Uyghurs, Christians and Tibetans who have fled China.

A powerful tool by the Chinese government to censor and surveil overseas people is the app WeChat. It's a super-app that has many functions, as a messaging, social media, financial services, that nearly everybody who has a smartphone in China has to use this because the Chinese government has

banned so many international social media apps, messaging apps.

So anyone outside of China who wants to connect with anybody in China has to use the WeChat app and then gets sucked into the Chinese government's machinery of censorship and surveillance.

I know other panelists will speak more in detail of some of the issues I mentioned about so I will end with some Human Rights Watch recommendations.

One thing that the U.S. can do and is very much in control is to ensure that religious communities in this country with ties to China are free from threats, harassment or persecution by the Chinese government.

And the U.S. government needs to further impose visa bans, travel bans, and targeted sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for religious repression under the Global Magnitsky Act.

The U.S. government needs to encourage

other governments to enforce or adopt similar legislations in the EU, in Canada, in the UK, and other countries. Sanctions will be more effective when pursued collectively.

The U.S. government should also encourage prosecutions on the basis of universal jurisdiction laws against Chinese officials implicated in religious persecution.

I know the Uyghur Human Rights Project has filed such a case in Argentina.

I know the U.S. government is looking into Chinese apps, TikTok and WeChat, censorship and surveillance issues. You know, yesterday, Senator Marco Rubio has introduced a bill to ban TikTok.

I believe we need more scrutiny towards these companies, forcing them to at least be transparent about what they are doing with Americans' data, what kind of things they are censoring, what kind of communication they're having with the Chinese government, whether the Chinese government, you know, has demanded them to do anything regarding, you know, their operations

in the U.S., and we need those companies to conduct human rights due diligence, at least for the portion of their U.S. operations, and those are, you know, very much the U.S. government has in control in terms of, you know, what the Chinese government can do and cannot do in the U.S.

And the U.S. government also needs to escalate actions against companies that are complicit in Chinese government's repression of religion, whether those are American companies or Chinese companies.

Lastly, speaking as someone from China who grew up under censorship, the U.S. government needs to invest in technologies that help people in China to circumvent censorship.

People want to practice their religion freely. People want to fight for their religious freedom in China. So, but first the people in China need free information, and I think the U.S. government needs to lend a hand to help people to circumvent the censorship and get the information they want.



Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

If I can go to Bhuchung Tsering.

MR. TSERING: Thank you, Chairman Nury  
Turkel.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

MR. TSERING: I want to thank USCIRF for providing us with this opportunity. I would like to touch on the issue of today's hearing through a policy perspective and would like to submit the full text of my testimony for the record and will give a gist here, with your permission, chairman.

CHAIR TURKEL: Yes. Thank you.

MR. TSERING: In recent years, particularly following the assumption of office by President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government's policy on Tibetan religion has moved from total destruction of Tibetan religious institutions and systems to one of insidious control in an attempt to serve its own political objectives, which includes Sinicizing Tibetan Buddhism and co-opting the right to determine Tibetan Buddhists' own

leaders and modes of practice.

Over the years, they have attempted to do this through promulgation of various regulations to bring Tibetan monasteries and monastics under tighter control, literally under their total supervision.

One aspect of the issue is on the reincarnation of Tibetan Buddhist leaders. Since China has not been able to place the present Dalai Lama under its control, its transparent plan is to ensure the next Dalai Lama will be subservient to the Chinese Communist Party.

Not only do the Chinese government's claims completely disregard centuries-old Tibetan religious tradition, they also violate the universal principle of religious freedom.

The Dalai Lama has categorically maintained that only he can make a decision regarding his reincarnation.

In 2011, he released a formal statement explaining his position on the reincarnation system and how he intends to handle the issue of his

succession.

With your permission, I would like to submit the full text of the Dalai Lama's statement for the record.

By attempting to select the next Dalai Lama, the Chinese government also aims to extend its control over Tibetan Buddhism with clear geopolitical implications, even on many Tibetan Buddhist institutions in the Indian subcontinent, Mongolia, and other parts of the world where there are followers of Tibetan Buddhism.

If not challenged vigorously by free countries, this decision would affect the religious freedom, not only of Tibetans, but also of millions of followers of Tibetan Buddhism, including here in the United States.

On the issue of techno-authoritarianism, and before I do that, I also want to say that the issue of the reincarnation process clearly needed Chinese usage of the technology in Tibet to make the Tibetan people completely forget the Dalai Lama and to be subservient to the religious leader the

Chinese authorities themselves are appointing.

The U.S. and international bodies must recognize and investigate the continuity between past forms of oppression and present-day forms of persecution as fueling the same agenda to dismantle Tibetan unity through use of techno-authoritarianism.

New, dangerously potent techno-surveillance and oppression are now being perpetrated behind a digital iron curtain in an attempt to hide the reality on the ground and further extend the CCP's long arm of authoritarianism.

We almost take seriously the pervasiveness of the surveillance in and outside of Tibet and the harm it's doing psychologically.

During our annual advocacy day for Tibet in Washington, D.C., we learned that one of our participants, a young student, had received a series of derogatory comments within hours of posting a video of herself in Tibetan clothes on TikTok, which was mentioned earlier.

The posts ranged from standardized CCP propaganda to slurs and more. In a heartbreaking moment, she relayed that she had started to even doubt who she was, what she was. That's not surveillance. That's digital harassment of a young American, and it reflects the lengths to which the CCP will go in its agenda to uproot identity as a whole.

In the wake of the recent protests in Chinese cities against COVID restrictions, we saw reports of Chinese officials threatening the public through search of their mobile phones.

For Tibetans, this search of their personal phones, belongings and monasteries is the norm and has been the norm. Even today the very possession of a portrait of the Dalai Lama even on a mobile phone is regarded as a crime and subjected to punishment.

We have also heard of reports of Chinese authorities banning Tibetans from circulating Buddhist texts over the social media or messaging platforms.

In this connection, we commend the Biden Administration for including Wu Yingjie and Zhang Hongbo, two senior Chinese officials, in its recent list of Treasury Department sanctions for their abuses of Tibetan human rights.

The Chinese government should be held accountable for violating international laws and China's own laws when it comes to the rights of the Tibetan people.

I would like to end with some recommendations from ICT.

One, USCIRF should urge Biden Administration to implement fully the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, which says the Chinese government should be held accountable for interfering in Tibetan reincarnation processes including the Dalai Lama.

Secondly, it should urge the Biden Administration to work multilaterally with like-minded countries and international bodies, including the EU, to take coordinated initiatives.

Third, we urge USCIRF to endorse H.R.

8365, Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Conflict Act, which challenges abuse of Tibetan rights.

Fourthly, USCIRF should call on the U.S. Senate to introduce a similar legislation to H.R. 8365.

Fifthly, USCIRF should urge Congress to pursue appropriate legislation to put in place meaningful barriers for the spread of techno-authoritarianism by China to other nations, including the United States.

Sixth, China should be urged to release all prisoners, political prisoners, and particularly the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama, who has not been seen since 1995.

Seventh, we urge USCIRF to organize a delegation to Tibet to understand the situation there, and also to urge Congress to do likewise. We know Congressman Frank Wolf went to Tibet many years back.

Eighthly, USCIRF should urge the State Department to make greater use of the Reciprocal

Access to Tibet Act by announcing the names of Chinese officials censored under the act.

Ninthly, USCIRF should urge United Nations to conduct an analysis of forced separation of children from families to boarding schools, including the use of DNA in which the data base that was mentioned earlier.

And lastly, USCIRF should urge the United States Congress, the European Union, the U.N. and other international bodies to mount forceful opposition to the CCP's imposition of modern-day slavery in Tibet, including forced displacement of nomadic peoples to enclaves divorced from their centuries-old culture, which provides little or no meaningful employment opportunities.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

I'm hearing a static noise in the back.

Is it only me or anyone else? Okay. Bhuchung, you may want to check your audio. We have towards the end of your testimony, when you start sharing some policy recommendations, I heard some noise in the



background. You may have a connection issue.

Louisa Greve, if I could go to you next.  
You may begin your testimony.

MS. GREVE: Thank you so much. I'd like to thank the USCIRF staff and commissioners for your very strong leadership on this issue, not only in your advisory capacity on U.S. policy but also in setting the agenda globally.

I'd like to start with a positive message regarding the U.S. response to the Uyghur genocide.

The U.S. has, to date, imposed a total of 107 punitive sanctions, targeting perpetrators of the repression against Uyghurs.

This is, unfortunately, 102 more than any other government--Magnitsky sanctions, other visa bans, import bans, export bans, and investment bans. These target 33 PRC officials and agencies, and 57 Chinese companies, private sector, nominally private sector.

And, of course, some are subject to two or more. And the vigor of this effort, along with congressional enactments, is still not enough. We

are certainly calling for more Magnitsky sanctions and many other actions, but this is effective enough to stimulate the counter-sanctions by the Chinese government that have targeted USCIRF commissioners, Chairman Turkel among them, and the intensive lobbying we are hearing today, hearing more about today.

So there's an unprecedented human rights crisis in the Uyghur region but also a crisis outside China's borders.

The latter includes subverting the functioning of the U.N. human rights system. It includes the influence operations that are an attempt to prevent our government, our Congress, from protecting democratic rights.

And it includes a refugee crisis that has received almost no international attention or policy response despite the very welcome USCIRF hearing, now two years ago, on refugees fleeing religious persecution.

In regard to the refugee crisis, UHRP has been urging the Congress to pass the Uyghur Human

Rights Protection Act, S. 1080 and H.R. 1630.

Today, I'd like to highlight just two aspects of the genocide before returning to transnational repression.

UHRP has just published a new report on forced and incentivized inter-ethnic, inter-faith marriage. We found extensive documentation that officials in the Uyghur region have been directed to promote inter-ethnic, quote, "contact, exchange and mingling," just like in Tibet.

And I hope you've all seen the wedding photo from Aksu, which is promoted by the government, where the bride and the groom are posing with local village officials. They're holding signs showing the 10,000 yen reward that the couple is receiving as an incentive for inter-ethnic marriages.

The budget for these payments appears in government, county level government documents.

There's one video where a Han Chinese-Uyghur couple is thanking the CCP for the, quote, "beautiful life" that the government has given

them, and the voiceover says there is a, quote, "urgent need" for 100 brides to, quote, "actively respond to the call from the government to promote marriage between Uyghurs and Han."

There's even an informal marriage guide for male Han cadres from 2019 called "How to Win the Heart of a Uyghur Girl."

We've concluded there's a systematic effort going on, and these forced marriages are forms of gender-based crimes. They further the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity being committed in East Turkistan, along with the forced abortions, forced sterilizations, forced birth control, sexual abuse, and institutional rape that have been documented by Nury Turkel in his book, for example, No Escape, and, of course, by USCIRF more generally.

So this was a very rare case, and possibly the only case anywhere in the world, where a member state of the United Nations is engaged in promoting forced inter-faith, inter-state, inter-ethnic marriage by state action. And so we are asking

that USCIRF highlight this crime in your reporting.

The other issue is the detention of religious figures. The UHRP has compiled an extensive database published in a report two years ago. We have more than a thousand confirmed cases of detention and imprisonment of imams and other religious leaders.

We have names of 428 sent to formal prisons. We're documenting prison sentences of 15 to 20 years for, quote, "teaching others to pray" and, quote, "refusing to hand in a Quran to be burned," along with a life sentence for, quote, "spreading the faith."

So given extreme secrecy, this is certainly a small fraction of the total.

Now, turning to abuses abroad, and given the scale of lobbying, both by PRC actors, specifically, on these tech issues, and their American friends, I would like to suggest that USCIRF work to develop or endorse a "surveillance technology bill of rights for religious freedom."

And such a charter would provide normative

standards. This would apply to the private sector for government procurement and for national policies in terms of restricting exports and research partnerships between U.S. and Chinese entities.

And this should not only apply to the U.S.; it should apply to judging the CPCs, the Special Watch List countries that USCIRF is focused on, and all state actors.

Why is this so important? Well, we've already talked about the tremendous suppression, using of tech tools used for suppression in China, of course for Tibetans abroad, for Uyghurs, and others from East Turkistan.

The UHRP has published nine reports just in the last five years. Just as an example, we have over 1,500 serious cases of human rights abuses suffered by Uyghurs outside China at China's behest, 292 known cases of Uyghurs deported to China from Arab states alone, and even in the democratic countries. We conducted a survey in 2021. 74 percent reported digital threats and

harassment, and unfortunately only 21 percent felt that their host governments would fix these issues.

In terms of the U.S., we published an extensive report in 2019; we briefed international law enforcement about the reports. Our conclusion is that this intimidation campaign is not just a matter of violation of norms; this is against the law.

It is illegal under federal law to issue threats that interfere with free speech rights. And so for Uyghur Americans, this menacing presence of the Chinese government in their daily lives deprives them of their constitutional rights.

So the Uyghur Human Rights Project would like to ask USCIRF if you can do something that may be unprecedented, but on behalf of the Tibetans, the Christians, the others who are, the dissidents who are suffering this kind of almost untrammelled international repression, we'd like USCIRF to maybe take the step of following up with our national law enforcement.

The FBI issued a counterintelligence

bulletin. Would it be appropriate? We hope that USCIRF will contact, be in touch, to press for an update on the strategy to deter and punish these crimes.

I have additional policy recommendations in my written testimony, and I'd be happy to discuss them later.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you so much, Louisa. Thank you. I wanted to use this—to take this opportunity to thank your team at the UHRP that has been incredibly effective documenting and reporting on those issues that we have been discussing today.

With that, I'd like to go to Pastor Bob Fu for his testimony.

DR. FU: Thank you, Chairman Turkel and Vice Chairman Cooper, and the whole honorable commissioners who are here today, and I also want to really show my gratitude for the hard-working staff at USCIRF, and certainly also over the past few years during this hard time, thank you for paying attention on the individual cases, the



policy issues, and I also want to thank your counterpart at the State Department, Ambassador Rashad, and his team at the DRL for helping free many of those who are stuck even while fleeing the persecution for their religious freedom.

So in recent years, the CCP has steadily increased the oppression and control of Christians, particularly through the use of technology. The techno-authoritarianism in China has begun to reach a new extreme under Xi Jinping in his third term as general secretary of the Communist Party.

According to the new regulations, just passed this year, no organization or individual may post any religious information or service on the Internet unless permission is obtained from a provincial level government department.

Content posted by individuals, groups or organizations must conform to the CCP government political agendas and must encourage others to quote "love the country and abide by the law." End of quote.

So due to these new restrictions,

Christian WeChat accounts and other groups have become a main area of suppression, as other fellow witnesses have already said. In some respects, this is especially cruel, of course, limitation amid the long, strict lockdowns for China's zero-COVID policy.

The Chinese authorities also sought to track their movements through the required COVID QR code, facial recognition technology, and the CCTV cameras in and around churches and homes.

However, this technology is not just contained within China's border. It is being weaponized in the growing transnational repression of Chinese Christians around the world, as Louisa even mentioned, extended into the U.S. border.

While the CCP has a broad and extensive history of this, the case of the Mayflower Church is one that will continue to develop.

In an unprecedented move, a church made up of 28 adults, 32 children from Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church, led by Pastor Pan Yongguang, left China and arrived on Jeju Island, South Korea, in

November 2019, after enduring just tremendous religious persecution. Asylum seekers have been nicknamed the "Mayflower Church" for their commitment to seeking the freedom to practice their faith with their community.

And as detailed in the CSW report, the church has faced harassment by the CCP since its founding in 2012 with refusal to install facial recognition cameras in the church, frequent interrogation of leaders, and pressure them to join the government-sanctioned Three Self Church Movement.

And CCP threats against these church members continued in South Korea by utilizing technology to manipulate their return to China. The PRC Consulate in Jeju called members of the church repeatedly and accusing them of "treason" and "subversion of state power," a charge often used to silence and imprison Chinese pastors and other religious believers.

Authorities demanded their immediate return to face the so-called consequence of their

actions for exile and to recant their accusation of religious persecution.

And families of the church who remained in China, all of them have seen a dramatic increase in harassment and secret interrogation by the Chinese State Security and the Public Security, and authorities even sought to locate Pastor Pan and others by forcing their family members in China to urge the asylum seekers to reactivate their WeChat accounts.

So having exhausted the ROK asylum system, facing the loss of their legal status, and fearing refoulment, the group voted to leave Jeju Island to seek UNHRC refugee status in Bangkok, Thailand.

However, one family of four remained in Jeju as the PRC Consulate refused to issue a passport to their newborn baby claiming their asylum application was "illegal."

And later on they were able to get to Thailand and united with other church members. So most of the group submitted their refugee applications to the UNHCR Bangkok office on

September 5<sup>th</sup>, and now the Thai government has refused to renew their tourist visas for the church members which began to expire on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

According to the travel agent, basically who helped their visa extension process, the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok demanded the Thai government to send each passport of those Mayflower Church to be "examined" inside the Chinese Embassy.

So both human rights groups and the U.S. Embassy officials view this as transnational repression by China.

I echo Commissioner and Congressman Frank Wolf's sentiment. So the danger of them being forcing, forced repatriation is very real. Actually, just before this hearing started, I just learned and verified a Chinese family from China, a mother and father with two children, eight-years-old and ten-years-old, after, they were just being arrested by the Thai authorities, and after the travel to Thailand, all of the four family members have visas issued by the U.S. on their way to come to the U.S.

So the parents were both, ended up now in the Thailand immigration prison, and the horrible things that both the eight and ten-year-old children. They are being like confiscated by the Thailand government, sending to a Thailand government managed orphanages in Tumay [ph], Thailand. So they are in the transition to be sent to the Bangkok immigration prison as we are talking.

So these 64 now asylum seekers with multiple births since they left China three years ago from the Mayflower Church, they are facing everyday this danger of a forcible repatriation back to China.

Despite of the difficulty of the situation, there are a few recommendations here. I want to recommend the USCIRF, the Commission, and for the U.S. government to counter the CCP's transnational repression and to protect those like the Mayflower Church.

First, I think the U.S. should immediately consider the 60 credible asylum seekers and other

especially religious persecuted for at least a Priority I refugee resettlement for their status designation.

The U.S. must intervene to ensure the safety of the group and offer asylum with their right of the religious freedom to be protected as appropriate during this time.

And, second, I recommend the creation of a joint database between USCIRF and the CECC to better track cases of the CCP's transnational repression toward religious freedom and human rights expatriates and advocates.

We have Chinese churches in Los Angeles I mean were coerced to sing the Chinese national anthem, raising flags on the Chinese National Day in the U.S. soil in Los Angeles. And the FBI has set up a task force on transnational repression so I think both USCIRF and CECC can work together to make sure we receive accurate cases and help verify them by working with other NGOs.

Finally, China has harnessed technology to control the voices of dissidents and persecution

survivors, even when they are seemingly safe outside of China. We must also ensure their safety.

The harassment and intimidation by the long arms of the CCP, especially in some Arab countries, the Gulf Coast countries, who are setting black jails and intercepting those who are fleeing from East Turkistan, from Tibet, and put them in black jails.

We've documented at least with witnesses in Dubai, UAE, so I think with multilateral approach, I would urge the USCIRF working with the administration to help stop this trend.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Pastor Fu, thank you so much for your testimony.

Now I would like to go to our final witness, Zack Smith. Mr. Smith, if you could begin your testimony.

MR. SMITH: Thank you so much.

Let's be blunt. China is an international bad actor. The list of its human rights abuses, as



we've heard today, particularly its suppression of religious minorities, is long and growing longer.

It's undisputed that China has sought to influence U.S. policy, not only at the federal level, but at the state and local levels in the United States, too.

In fact, a recent Heritage Foundation report makes clear that China's attempts to influence state and local governments have been ongoing for decades and are widespread.

Never before in our nation's history has a foreign adversary had such deep inroads in the U.S. state and local politics. The range and persistence of China's operations far surpass those of any previous geopolitical rivals.

So what can be done about these lobbying efforts? Can Congress prohibit lobbying by the CCP or those working on its behalf? And if so, what are the limitations that Congress would face?

The answer to these questions is yes, but it can become tricky fast. So that's why it's important to understand the current statutory

framework surrounding registration of foreign agents and lobbying disclosure, as well as some of the relevant constitutional concerns that will likely arise if Congress legislates in this area.

Congress first implemented our current disclosure-based system in the 1930s when faced with the crisis of an ascendant Nazi Germany and its dangerous ideology.

In 1938, Congress passed, and President Franklin Roosevelt signed, the Foreign Agents Registration Act. Since that time, FARA, as this act is commonly known, has undergone three major amendments with the last one occurring in 1995.

Today, there is bipartisan consensus that FARA is not working as well as it should. Uncertainty and concerns about selective, and potentially partisan, enforcement abound. There can be uncertainty around who qualifies as a "foreign principal" under the statute, who qualifies as a foreign "agent," and whether any registration exemptions apply to those who would otherwise qualify and have to register.

These uncertainties undermine FARA's disclosure-based goals.

Another relevant statute is the Lobbying Disclosure Act. Congress passed this law in 1995, which requires certain individuals to disclose their lobbying activities.

Unlike FARA, which the Justice Department administers, the clerks of the House and the Senate administer the LDA.

When Congress passed the LDA, it also passed key amendments to FARA making clear that certain individuals did not have to register under FARA, but had to register, if at all, under the less onerous, and less stigmatizing, LDA.

This has widely been called the Lobbying Disclosure Act loophole. As a result of this loophole, those who lobby on behalf of foreign companies or foreign individuals, but not directly on behalf of foreign governments or foreign political parties, must register under the LDA but not FARA.

The Supreme Court has twice upheld FARA

over constitutional challenges, but the relevant constitutional question is slightly different if Congress considers going beyond requiring identification and disclosure by agents of foreign governments and seeks to regulate or limit those agents' activities.

Congress can constitutionally take these actions because foreign nations and foreign political parties are not in the same legal position as U.S. citizens when it comes to their rights to influence governments within the United States.

In fact, Congress has already exercised that power in an important respect: foreign citizens, and foreign governments, are banned from contributing to the political campaigns of those running for federal, state or local office.

All of this is to say that there is no constitutional prohibition against banning the lobbying by foreign governments, or even foreign nationals.

Even U.S. citizens can be prohibited from

lobbying on behalf of a foreign government. Certain restrictions on lobbying by American citizens on behalf of American citizens are already codified and enforced.

If some restrictions on that type of lobbying are permissible, then restrictions or even prohibition of lobbying on behalf of foreign governments is also permissible, especially because lobbying on behalf of a foreign government is materially different from lobbying on behalf of an American citizen.

The former poses risks to the nation's security that are not present when someone lobbies on behalf of a state, a municipality, or even a private business.

Now some might argue that such a prohibition would violate the First Amendment. If they argued that, they would be wrong. To be sure, citizens, unlike foreign governments or officials, have a First Amendment right to petition the government for redress of grievances, and they can do this no matter the grievance and no matter who

benefits from the government's ultimate action.

This type of petitioning is fine and encouraged so long as that American citizen is not legally acting on behalf of a foreign government as a lobbyist.

Congress can prohibit this latter action. The Constitution does not stand in the way, and there is a good case to be made that it should take this step. Such a step likely will not and cannot solve every avenue that foreign governments may use in their attempts to influence our governmental actors here in the United States, but it's a concrete first step that deserves further debate and discussion.

I welcome your questions. Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much. Thank you.

Now we will move to our questioning part of the questions and answers part of the hearing.

If I could begin by asking a question to all of you, actually two-part question. One, if you could help to explain or help us to better

understand the Chinese authorities, the CCP's view with respect to religion in particular?

Because to me in the United States, especially in the policy circle, people don't really appreciate the hostility, the CCP's hostility to religion, in particular.

The Chinese, as you know, have elevated religion or integrated any type of religious practices to national security, which has not been the case in the United States and other Western liberal democracies.

To me, this is something very important and needs to be addressed.

And then on the technology question, I invite you, all of you, to comment. How do we stop the U.S. government, United States--American tech firms continue to make all of us complicit through sharing technology and also through investment, that--specifically to Chinese tech firms that have been facilitating, intensifying the persecution of ethno-religious groups in China?

MS. WANG: Maybe I can start since I was

the first speaker.

CHAIR TURKEL: Yes, please.

MS. WANG: I think on the first question, the key is control. The Chinese government can't stand anybody who has independent ideas because religion, you know, if you're a real believer, you believe in God. Your first allegiance is to God. It's to the Dalai Lama or any other deity.

And the Chinese just can't stand that. So if you have independent thoughts, if you have independent thinking, if you don't want to be controlled by the government, it just cannot tolerate that.

I think that's the key to understand what the Chinese government wants to do with religion.

You know that's why, it's not that the Chinese government is only harsh on religious believers, it's harsh on dissidents, even if you're atheist, if you don't believe in the Communist Party, if you want to have your independent thoughts, it's intolerable.

On the second question, how to deal with



the tech companies, you know, I want to say something about U.S. tech companies. You know, the white paper protests, you know, Commissioner Cooper and others mentioned, really I was, right now I'm looking at who has been detained and disappeared because they went out to protest.

And a lot of people who told me, you know, I went there, I thought nobody knew, but then the next day, the police came to me and questioned me.

And I would say, you know, how could this gigantic U.S. company has become an integral part of the Chinese government censorship and the surveillance apparatus?

You know, over the years, Apple has censored so many apps the Chinese government doesn't like, VPNs, you know, The New York Times, and other, you know, religious apps, even the Quran and Bible apps that are popular, and Apple also has set a data center in China that is co-owned by the Chinese government.

So it's very easy for the Chinese government to have access to the data of Apple

users in China. So I mean these are just two examples.

Over the years, Apple just made so many compromises in China. So it became part of the, you know, the surveillance and censorship apparatus the Chinese government has been, you know, imposing on its people.

That's why, you know, it's so risky for the Chinese people to go out and to protest, to practice their religious freedom. And, you know, what can we do about this company? It's a U.S. company.

You know, we, at Human Rights Watch, we have written letters to Apple, have written emails, you know, at least tell us what's your communication with the government, with the Chinese government.

What kind of demand the Chinese government has made to you? But, you know, there was no real, you know, answer from Apple. Apple has been telling us, you know, decline to comment, we cannot say anything publicly, things like that.

I mean this is something the U.S. government can do, you know, make public, be transparent about what's going on, and, you know, compel Apple to do human rights due diligence, you know, like what have you, you know, Apple has been telling the public, you know, we have done, you know, audits in terms of our supply chain, Foxconn company, Foxconn, which is a major supplier of, manufacturer of Apple products.

So at least this is something that we can agree on, you know, tell us what's going on, and the U.S. government has the power to force Apple to tell us what's going on.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you. Thank you.

Anyone else wanted to comment?

DR. FU: I just had—sorry. Go on.

MR. TSERING: Just a quick one.

First, on religion, I think the Chinese government understands the power of religion, but now they want to use that power to help the Communist Party rather than the believers. So that's the underlying part, you know.

Secondly, on technological firms, I think that USCIRF can work with Congress to see that U.S. corporations who work on technological matters with China really understand the issues.

Congress has brought Yahoo and Google to task in the past, and you can continue to do that by shining a light on their behavior and getting them to understand why this is imperative that their attitude needs to change.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

Pastor Fu.

DR. FU: Yes. For the first question, I think the Chinese Communist Party has never changed its original concept understanding of religion as the opium of the people. So basically they took, over the years, the only difference is, you know, between the Cultural Revolution time of ten years to declare basically all religion are illegal.

Also, basically, even sending their government sanctions church or other clergymen into reeducation, versus after that to allow some

existence is whether this opium can be utilized, can be useful for their ideological control, as Yaqiu just mentioned, and also for the so-called national security. So we have to understand, I mean the Communist Party treats religion as a national security issue.

I mean I can give you a reference if you're interested back to, I think it's 2001, I co-published with UCLA two volumes on religious freedom and national security in China by basically translating and combining of volumes of multiple Communist Party issued secret and some top-secret documents regarding their treatment of religion and Falun Gong, you know, of religious freedom.

So, to them, it's a national security issue. They actually treat a cross on the church, rooftop of the church, as a national security threat. So that's I think, unfortunately, is not being understood by the broad, the free world.

To answer your second question is, I think, I mean really to address the Western technology, I mean tech company as accomplices, we

just really, first step, just to enforce what, the law. I mean, number one is, well, religious freedom is in the Article 18 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the several U.N. mandates, I mean norms, and which for Apple to remove the app of the Bible, Quran and religious materials from the Chinese Apple store, basically that is a violation of the international law by basically denying the access to the fundamental literature of the religious believers.

And, of course, many religious believers were sent to the concentration camp, reeducation through labor camp. I mean many Western companies are complicit in still ordering products, like the Wisconsin, Milwaukee Tools.

I mean they are found basically in the Xinjiang prison in Hulan, are still manufacturing millions of gloves by the political prisoners, as we know.

I mean like Tujan [ph], like the Taiwanese prisoner, yeah, Mr. Lee. So, we should, I mean there is U.S. law, as Louisa mentioned, to forbid

this.

So we need to have Congress and the Administration to compel those complicit companies, to point it out, to really even prosecute.

So I'm not a lawyer, but I'm sure, you know, when you are in violation of the law, this should be held accountable.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

I'd now like to give an opportunity to commissioners to ask questions. I'd like to begin with Vice Chair Cooper.

VICE CHAIR COOPER: Thank you, Chair Turkel.

It's incredibly powerful testimony from your witnesses, and actually what I really just want to do is to echo discussions that we've had internally, but I think that the situation, human rights and the religious, destruction of religious freedoms in China, in a very tough year for human rights and religious freedom all over the globe, China stands alone in a completely different category.

And I think, perhaps we can ask Senator Rubio and others if we can obtain additional subvention to put some expertise, additional expertise, and staff on this issue so that, first, we become better conversant, and, secondly, that we're able to serve as a more effective platform to sound the alarm.

Also, and just a general comment, because of my age, having grown up in a previous, primarily in a previous century, but I think it also emphasizes the tremendous need and potential clout, especially of USCIRF, to remind Americans that we need to act on these core issues in a bipartisan way in order to break through to people who have levers of power, on the one hand, and also to reach out to the TikTok generations.

Some of them have difficulty even identifying where Asia is, let alone a particular city with 20 million people in China.

We have a profound educational arc that I would just say based on the previous century, when we all worked together on human rights issues, that



can be, that arc can be shortened by consistently putting a human face on the suffering and on the issues.

When you do that, you're able to bring it down and essentially challenge each and every one of us who is holding our iPhone or whatever the technology may be, to say, hey, wait a second, at what cost?

You know, making these choices for us as consumers into informed moral choices, we are very far off from that. It's not the unique or lone responsibility of USCIRF, but I think we can and should try to cast a more powerful light on these issues, but without diminishing our monitoring and speaking out on 26 other disaster areas on the globe.

But clearly China demands an elevated focus and attention from all Americans, but including our Commission.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Davie.

COMMISSIONER DAVIE: Thank you, Commissioner Turkel, Turkel. [Laughter.] Much appreciated, Mr. Chair.

So just a quick comment and then a question. And my question is primarily for Mr. Tsering.

So I, maybe to the chagrin of all of you on this Zoom, about ten years ago went to China as a tourist and experienced firsthand the full, well, experienced firsthand the breadth and the reach of the Chinese government's ability to use technology to interfere not only with the lives of its citizens but with the people visiting there.

And the situation presented itself most starkly when we went up to Tibet. And there were two self-immolations of Tibetan monks while we were there.

We were watching CNN in our hotel, and the TV went off. Our phones stopped working. And for 18 hours, we were completely cut off from the outside world, no communication at all. No ability to communicate with anyone until the government

decided that we could.

So I want to appreciate, I want to in my limited way appreciate from a personal experience the depth and the reach, and that was ten years ago.

So I know from what we hear that reach and influence has only grown exponentially.

I also just want to say it was brave of a number of Tibetan monks there to pull us aside and to encourage us not to believe what we saw, that we were seeing "show Buddhism," as they called it, and really encouraged us to bring that message back to the U.S. and even as tourists.

But my question is—I have two, one related to this and then one related to lobbying. So the one related to Tibet has to do with what are the ways the agents of the Chinese government target, intimidate, or mistreat Tibetans living abroad, and which countries are Tibetan Buddhists particularly vulnerable to such harassment and intimidation?

And in what ways are emerging technologies playing a role in this repression of Tibetans

living abroad?

And, then, finally, what should we do, what should USCIRF do or what should be done to protect vulnerable Tibetans living abroad?

And then just a question about lobbying, maybe for Mr. Smith. As USCIRF, we can't—our mandate is not domestic. It is international. But I do think that some effort should be made to get, if not current legislators, Congress people, et cetera, maybe those who are running for office and those who are running for reelection, to take some kind of pledge against engaging in lobbying for repressive regimes around the world.

That's something maybe the Heritage Foundation can do that USCIRF cannot.

So, thank you, and I'd be interested in your responses to any of them. Thanks so much.

MR. TSERING: Chairman Turkel, if I may respond to commissioner.

CHAIR TURKEL: Please.

MR. TSERING: On the issue of harassment of Tibetans abroad, co-panelists who know that the

Chinese Communist Party has a specific, ominously named department called the United Front, which has agents in almost all of the Chinese embassies abroad.

And their main task is to create divisiveness in the communities with which the Chinese government is working, for example, in our case, with the Tibetan communities. There's always some United Front agent either directly or indirectly involved in Tibetan office.

We have seen in New York, for example, police officer of NYPD who was seen to have been in collusion with the United Front.

Similarly, the Chinese authorities use the leverage of visas for Tibetan Americans to visit their families or relatives as a way to make them tow the official line because even though Tibetan Americans have the same passport as a non-Tibetan American, when they go to the Chinese consulate, there is immediately racial profiling, and Tibetan Americans are sent through the United Front process, which doesn't actually have to, any,

doesn't have any particular reason.

So that's how they control Tibetan. They also use Tibetan lamas with whom they sort of create some sort of groups that are aimed at criticizing the Dalai Lama and the mainstream Tibetan community abroad, to create divisiveness within the community.

So these are some of the things that the Chinese are going to do. And USCIRF can sort of highlight the role of the United Front, including, for example, the United Front has Tibetan-speaking people in some of the embassies. They still have one in the consulate in New York.

And so these people should be targeted, spotlighted, and their sort of behavior should be monitored.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

Commissioner Curry.

MR. SMITH: If I could, Mr. Chairman, I think Commissioner Davie had a brief question about the lobbying piece. I was just going to quickly

respond to if that's okay.

And I appreciate the question, Commissioner Davie. I absolutely think an educational campaign for candidates and government officials is needed for the influence that China and other repressive regimes have on trying to influence our government.

Where China is unique in some ways is the level of influence and the pervasive actions they have taken to lobby, not only at the federal level, through various entities and companies, but also at the state and local levels as well.

And so you're seeing a really pervasive effort by the Chinese government to push their ideas and ideologies at all levels of government, and one of the other areas I think that we've also seen this in is the Chinese government has been very effective in getting American companies to lobby on their behalf.

We saw this with companies like Nike, Apple, Coca Cola, and others that came out opposing the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. Now I

don't think you could necessarily ban American companies from lobbying, you know, for their own views, but it's certainly very problematic, and these companies that take these positions certainly do, in my view, deserve to be named and shamed for taking many of these positions.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

Mr. Wolf and Mr. Curry.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Let Mr. Curry go first.

COMMISSIONER CURRY: Thank you very much to the chair, and thank you, Commissioner Wolf.

Any one of these issues would be horrifying. Put together, it's truly stunning to see forced labor, the issues of forced marriage, and on and on and on. So it's hard to know where to dive in with limited time.

But perhaps I could ask Louisa Greve, Greve—forgive me if I mispronounced that—about the issue of China harassing Uyghurs here in the United States, and abroad. What recommendations do you have to the U.S. government or to us as regards to



this kind of harassment because I've heard many personal stories on this, and it's greatly concerning that they're reaching citizens in this country and harassing them for their religious faith and ethnicity?

So perhaps you could comment on that.

MS. GREVE: Thank you so much for this question.

We have seen definitely national law enforcement efforts to track and prosecute, right, which might have been a hesitation in the past, but these have now happened, the New York City police officer. Two big cases in New York, in fact, have been announced publicly.

And we would urge more of that, but, of course, it's also a deterrence issue. Law enforcement can only reach perpetrators on U.S. soil.

You can indict someone in another country, as, for example, the U.S. has done on some hackers, some PLA hackers and some Russian hackers, but they're not going to come to trial.

So the deterrent effect of, all right, they can't come to the U.S. because they'll been arrested, they weren't going to come anyway.

So what we need is actually a national policy of deterrence. We need a more serious effort at the level of our foreign policy, our White House and our State Department, to send a clear message, have a policy conditionality, that as long as our own Constitution, constitutional rights of our own fellow citizens, visitors and residents are being routinely violated, you know, they're not going to, there's certain goodies that the Chinese government would want that should absolutely be denied.

So this has to be really at the level of deterrence and on a policy level, I'm sorry to say.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you, Louisa.

Mr. Wolf.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Well, thank you, chair.

I want to thank USCIRF and the Commission for having this hearing. This is one of the better

hearings I've ever attended, and I want to thank all of the witnesses. They really did an outstanding. I wish every member of Congress, House and Senate, could have really heard what was on, on today.

I have so many questions I'm not going to get into it, but I mean is it accurate to say that Hikvision cameras are in the camps that are persecuting Uyghurs? Is that accurate? Just yes or no.

MS. GREVE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Yes. So, secondly, do we agree that there is genocide against the Uyghurs?

DR. FU: Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: And I also believe there's cultural genocide against the Tibetans. I think all of the groups, all of you have to come to work together, and I'm really sort of disappointed in the Church in the West not speaking out.

I mean I mean during what took place in Nazi Germany, when the Church was very, very

reluctant, I've always admired Barnoff [ph] for being willing to speak out. We need people in the Church, here in the United States and in the West, to speak out.

The fact that is it accurate, whoever can say yes or no, that Hikvision has members, former members of Congress lobbying for them? Yes or no?

MR. SMITH: Yes, that's accurate.

DR. FU: Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: How can you have, be a congressman who have come to town to do well and do good, and to be doing that? To lobby for anyone who's been connected to genocide is, I think, and, Zack, I saw your comment. You just encouraged me. I have great respect for the Heritage Foundation.

I always care deeply what they say. You guys can really make a difference. I think there should be a bill passed in Congress, and I agree with what Commissioner Cooper said. This has to be bipartisan.

This is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue. This has to be bipartisan, but

we should prohibit any former member of Congress or former high-level official to then go out after they leave Congress to go and work.

Now does the Chinese Embassy, does the Chinese Embassy actually have a lobby firm here in town that represents them?

MR. SMITH: They have a variety of entities.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Well, here we have the Christian and Catholics. Cardinal Zen, God bless him, 90-years-old.

Bob, how many Protestant pastors are in jail today?

DR. FU: Oh, there should be hundreds.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Hundreds.

DR. FU: Perhaps thousands.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Do you agree that there is culture genocide taking place in Tibet?

DR. FU: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Yes. Do we, do we agree that there's actual genocide against the Uyghur Muslims?

DR. FU: Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Do we know there is organ harvesting where they're taking people's organs out? I saw Chairman Turkel did an event at Hudson a couple months ago. There are 60,000. Do we agree that organ harvesting is taking place?

DR. FU: Yes.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Well, then, Congress has to deal with this. The Administration has to deal with it, and you may have seen Director Wray and the FBI said they're a direct national security threat to our country.

We know they have Confucius Institutes on college campuses. We know that Xi has gone and met with the Iranians. We, does Xi support the Russians against what they're doing against the Ukrainian people?

Yes, they do. And so this is, this is, I tell you if you had a roll call vote in Congress, and the person got up and said we want to stop the genocide taking place against the Uyghur Muslims, and therefore we want to stop what's taking place

against the Catholic Church and the Protestant church, we want to stop what's taking place against the Tibetans where there is cultural genocide in Tibet, we want to stop organ harvesting, so therefore the vote today will be no American company should lobby for and also certainly no former member of the House or the Senate or no one who has ever had a high-ranking position in the government absolutely positively banned.

So I, I, one, I hope all the churches speak out after hearing what you said. I, Zack, I hope Heritage will move on this. Anything that I could do to help you, I'd be glad to come downtown and sit with you sometime.

Listen, a lot of these people that are representing them are good people. I mean I think they kind of join the representation world with the idea that maybe China will change; we can change China. I know that was the whole debate during the MFN. Well, we give them MFN, they'll change.

China hasn't changed. China hasn't changed at all. So I think you got to deal with

this issue, and I think those of us who are still around at this time need to speak out because we cannot let this thing go on. We need a law that bans, and I urge all of you on this panel to come together to get together, and all the groups. I know you have your individual ones, but come to work on something like this and work with Zack.

And, lastly, Bob, do you know, with regard to Mayflower Church, do you know, are there not cases, I have read, where the Chinese government, CCP police have come in and taken people from different countries and taken them back?

DR. FU: Absolutely. There is documented case from Pattaya, the Swedish citizen, the bookstore, Gui Minhai, was kidnapped from Pattaya, from Thailand back to China, went for trial, and he's still not released back to Sweden.

And we have State Department officials working with me. Even like within a day, we have seen as Kazakh dissident, who has evidence of organ harvesting, escape to Thailand, the Bangkok International Airport and became vanished in the



airport, kidnapped back to China. We have never heard. Perhaps he has already been killed.

So I think this is very well documented.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Well, since I was at one place where they said this one person was arrested and he's never been seen again. And so I think, I hope, I hope that the State Department is watching this, that they allow the Mayflower people to come in quickly because it will be a frightening event if we hear next week, tomorrow, later, that somebody has been kidnapped and taken, taken back.

And I also hope that the American Embassy in Thailand goes and visits the Mayflower people to sort of let them know we do care about these people, and they're willing to come in, and I know there's a group down in Texas that are paying for all these things.

Is it not true that there's a group waiting to take them to help them in Tyler, Texas?

DR. FU: Yeah. We have a group of churches in Tyler. They are already well prepared and pledge to support for their full year of all

the living expenses.

And the fact that, you know, they can afford just to fly to Mexico and just follow the crowd and use the illegal way to come, but they, with the full integrity, they want to do things legally.

So that's, you know, with the asylum process, with the humanitarian parole, or whatever the mechanism.

So that's something I think is unfortunate. I think we should really encourage them through the legal process.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: Well, I appreciate that they've been willing and doing it the right way, legally. They're not flying to Mexico and paying a bandito to take them across the border.

I'm grateful that they're doing it, and so I think it's important that they be able to come to the United States.

In closing, I want to thank the commissioners, and I want to thank the USCIRF staff. Again, this is one of the best hearings

I've ever had and heard. I would hope all the members of Congress could see something like this.

I hope the Church speaks out on some of these issues. I hope all of you will kind of work together, and, Zack, I hope Heritage with the great credibility and reputation you all have will take this issue on because the thought of someone representing a company that's involved with genocide against the Uyghurs in these detention camps, it officially makes me sick. And I think this cannot be permitted to continue.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

We are reaching to the end of our hearing, but before we close, I would like to give an opportunity to each witness to share some final thoughts, but if I could use my seat as the chair, I cannot miss this opportunity to ask Louisa before I pass the floor over to other commissioners.

If you could shed some light on something very important to me personally, and also you heard Mr. Wolf speaking his frustration about the, so

many wrong things happening in our country, in our attitude, our responses to the atrocity committed against people in China.

Can you tell us what is working, what is not working, and what should we be doing to stop this genocide that it is in its sixth year?

And also something very important, Forced Labor Prevention Act, has it been effectively fully enforced?

If not, what can we do to push that to be fully enforced?

MS. GREVE: Thank you so much, Nury.

In fact, my answer to your first question, was going to be the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.

You know the way it ultimately passed included a lot of procedural points, which some advocates were concerned that this was really a matter of slowing things down with the public hearing, with public comment submissions, with the publication of a strategy, and then requirement for consultation, and was this going to be an

opportunity for the lobbyists, for the companies, the importers that do not want to be bothered with more restrictions on their supply chains.

In fact, in our experience, it's been just the opposite. UHRP works and Human Rights Watch and this group are both members of a very broad coalition, the Coalition to End Forced Labor in the Uyghur Region, which is meeting very intensely.

I personally am in two or three meetings every single week monitoring the implementation and certainly monitoring the effect globally.

I will say that this kind of narrowly focused economic leverage dealing with imports from the Uyghur region, which is rich in minerals, in automobiles, in cotton, in critical supply parts of supply chains that reach really all over the globe, this is a way to avoid the question of am I outraged?

You know, have they heard from Mr. Wolf or any of you who are so impassioned, and rather looking at the technicalities of the law, and that puts the machinery of our government in motion. The

EU needs to do the same. Australia and UK needs to do the same.

This is the way to create the leverage required to, first, remove complicity, but, of course, that's not enough. We want to remove the enablers, and we want to impact the impact on what the Chinese government cares about.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you.

If I could go around to ask each of you to share some final thoughts. If I could begin with Wang Yaqiu, and then I will move to our commissioners.

MS. WANG: Thank you.

I just wanted to leave a hopeful note because, you know, the white paper protests happened. I didn't expect that to happen. I cried when I see people say Xi Jinping step down; CCP, step down. This was extraordinary—those young people.

You know, we all thought young people were pretty brainwashed. They only care about their, you know, social media stuff, but, you know, people

want their rights, and, you know, being in the United States, I saw Chinese people who went to protest.

And they were saying end the Uyghur camps, you know. You thought the young people didn't care. They cared. They are awakening to sufferings happen to the Uyghurs and the Tibetans; right? So, you know, those, I didn't expect it, and I do think there's a wider awakening happening very much because of the COVID situation, you know, because Xi Jinping assumed a third term.

So I mean fundamental changes to China will come from Chinese people, and I am seeing change, the change of heart among the Chinese people.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Bhuchung.

MR. TSERING: Thank you.

I want to emphasize the fact that relates the United States government on American corporations. They need to adopt a principled

stand in their relationship with China.

We are not against China as a nation. We are not against the Chinese as a people. What we are against is the Chinese Communist Party's brutal policy of suppression, that corporations and government potentially should uphold the American values of liberty, democracy, equality in their dealings with China.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

Louisa.

MS. GREVE: Thank you.

Thank you.

I would like to echo what Zack Smith said about the outdated nature of our lobbying disclosure laws.

I think even the USCIRF mandate may be a little bit outdated because your mandated to report on and make recommendations, you know, which was groundbreaking at the time. The Frank Wolf Religious Freedom Law to actually pay attention country by country. Look deeply in and document.



Now, we need to say who is looking at the international suppression, and who are the perpetrators of that affecting countries that might not be on the CPC list? They may not be subject to sanctions, but there ought to be policy responses, both in the U.S. and hopefully setting an example for other countries.

So looking at the issue of transnational repression of religious rights should be in the USCIRF mandate if it isn't already.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you. Great points. Bob.

DR. FU: Yeah. I'd like to see some like specific congressional hearings to summon those, the head of those Western companies like Apple, like the Milwaukee Tools. I mean I remembered when Congressman Smith and Congressman Wolf basically subpoenaed or summoned the Yahoo CEO to the committee basically facing the victims of those writers who were imprisoned eight years, ten years as a result of Yahoo's retrieval of their passports, and that really changed the dynamic.

I mean we, working with AOC and I mean EOC [?] and other organizations, we rescued a few, I mean families, I mean survivors of the concentration camp, you know, Kazakh, I mean we have Wazira, we have Kyrgyz, Anthony Kurbic, [ph] Kyrgyz Joseph [ph], I mean who survived in the concentration camp and saw the Hikvision cameras all over in the concentration camp, the cells.

I mean I think we need to have those petitioner, I mean have those like lobbyists also there to face, you know, the victims of the genocide and to let them answer from their conscience.

I mean I think it's not only just immoral, I think there is a legal aspect too. So that's what I want to see, and we'd be glad to support that effort.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

Zack.

MR. SMITH: Thank you.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here and talk about this issue today. I agree with

Commissioner Wolf, this is very important and will continue to be important because the Chinese Communist Party is going to continue its efforts to influence governmental action at both the federal and state levels, and so I think it's imperative that Congress and state legislators begin thinking about these issues and what appropriate actions they can take as soon as possible.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

If I could go to the commissioners, starting with Vice Chair Cooper.

VICE CHAIR COOPER: Thank you.

First of all, it's been an extremely humbling time personally for me to try to absorb everything that's coming in, the scope of what we're looking at.

I would just make two general comments. Number one, to the extent that USCIRF can, we should try to encourage bipartisan hearings in both the U.S. Senate and the House.

You know, there's plenty of blame to look backwards, but looking forward with all of the

issues that were raised today, including our specific and narrow focus of, quote-unquote, "religious freedom."

There's plenty there to make sure that the voices and those voices like we heard today will be heard directly on Capitol Hill. To the extent that we can influence that process, we should.

And, secondly, because we all know that there are all kinds of people listening to this webinar, I think that USCIRF in a more closed session should consider approaching the Chinese government to ask for a visit to China, but include in our request specific names, starting with the Cardinal and others, specific names, locations, and issues that we want to see addressed.

I think getting a yes will be a challenge. Getting a no will be useful for further exposing the Chinese Communist Party, and getting no answer is also a response.

So this is something that shouldn't be decided on a webinar, but I'm saying it publicly for a reason.

Thank you, chair.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

Mr. Wolf.

COMMISSIONER WOLF: I want to thank the witnesses. They really all did a great job, and I want to thank the commissioners, too, for their interest and their commitment, and I agree with Commissioner Cooper that this needs to be bipartisan, and lastly, I want to thank the staff of USCIRF for really putting on a great hearing.

I hope this is distributed, and people all over the United States can watch it, but thank everybody. I'm grateful.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Davie.

COMMISSIONER DAVIE: Thank you, chair. Much appreciated. Again, thanks to the witnesses.

Let me just say as a Presbyterian clergyman and an African American here in the United States, often when I go abroad, I hear don't you have enough issues to deal with of your own, such that you don't have time to be addressing

other people's issues?

Two clergymen's voices ring in my ears when I hear that. One is Pastor Niemoller when he said I didn't speak up, and when they came for me, there was no one to speak for me.

And the other, of course, is the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

It's in that spirit that I do the work that I do with my colleagues at USCIRF. I want to thank you, thank the staff, thank my colleagues.

And we've got a lot of work to do. You help to make it not be so overwhelming, and I appreciate what you do every day.

Thank you.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Curry.

COMMISSIONER CURRY: I just want to pass on my thanks to everybody who testified. Incredible, incredibly important issues, so thank you so much.

CHAIR TURKEL: Thank you very much.

I wanted to thank our professional staff team. For us commissioners to suggest a hearing or ask to organize a hearing, relatively easy. The actual heavy lifting, the actual work lies with the staff team contacting potential witnesses, working the logistics and doing that background research. It requires a lot of time and effort.

I wanted to thank our Executive Director and research team and our comms team, specifically Veronica and Danielle, and our policy expert, Mingzhi, for organizing, help us to organize this hearing.

I'd like to conclude by reminding that we are seeing IBM 2.0 when it comes to business complicity and atrocity crimes. Those of us who are students of history remember the business complicity in the Holocaust that includes some of the companies implicated in today's slave labor practices in China, namely Volkswagen, Hugo Boss.

I mention IBM because years ago, roughly about 20 years ago, when the Chinese were

developing technology to surveil its own population, Western businesses, including some businesses in Silicon Valley that have been also in today's, part of today's discussion, have been supporting, very subtly, the Chinese tech firms.

The surveillance techniques initially shared by Western firms that includes German Siemens, Sun Microsystems, and IBM, Intel, these are the companies that are still not getting the message.

Whatever these companies and others being mentioned lobbying against the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act act in contradiction to American values, and opposition to the value of humanity through their economic ties with the Uyghur region-based entities.

Religious freedom is the first human rights for the American people. We will continue to speak out, continue to call them out. We will continue to research and document wherever religious persecution occurs because this is the best way. This is one of the most effective ways



to prevent religious persecution or any type of atrocities turning into full swing genocide or war, as we've seen in Ukraine.

We have to be bold. We have to be clear in our approach when we're speaking out against religious persecution.

I wanted to also mention that the Uyghur people, they are grateful for the United States government and nine other governments and parliaments, entities, have given a proper name to the atrocities being committed against Uyghurs and others in China.

But not only genocide should never happen, but it should not take six years for governments to respond. There are more than 150 state parties to the Genocide Convention, and only nine of them plus European Union have done their dues.

But the rest of them are still not being able to even give a crime's proper name, which is very distressful. So the Uyghur people have paid the ultimate price to wake up the world to this brutal regime and its capabilities.

We've seen what they can be able to do in Tibet for years, and we have seen it in Hong Kong. We have seen it in the Uyghur homeland East Turkistan, and their posing daily threat against our democratic ally Taiwan.

So it's on us. It's on us to wake up, and it's on us to be bold and strategic to stop this regime from continuing to do these kind of abuses in the homeland. Not only that, exporting the same techniques.

With that, I wanted to thank you all, to our witnesses, in particular, and also those of you who are tuning in and listening to this insightful, informative conversation.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:22 p.m. ET, the hearing was adjourned.]