



U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing

A Religious Minority Enslaved: Addressing the Complicity of U.S. Companies in Uyghur Forced Labor

Opening Remarks as prepared for delivery

Commissioner Bauer

Thank you very much, Vice Chair Perkins. I would like to join in welcoming you all to today's hearing.

Communist China's barbarous treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, should rightly be called the "stain of the century." Its persecution of Uyghurs is indicative of a long and egregious history of religious persecution of many other religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, and Tibetan Buddhists.

I would like to know how American corporations can morally justify investing in Communist China at all. By doing so they contribute to making more powerful a nation controlled by a repressive regime that has declared war on all people of faith.

What is happening to the Uyghurs is particularly disgusting. As Chair Manchin mentioned, the government has detained millions of Uyghurs in concentration camps, which - Chinese communist propagandists call “reeducation camps” or “vocational training centers.”

But the reality of these camps is simply evil, and the truth is much more sinister. Horrific abuses are taking place there, torture, rape, forced abortions and sterilizations, political indoctrination, and forced labor. Moreover, Chinese authorities separated more than half a million Uyghur Muslim children from their detained parents and placed them in state-run orphanages and boarding schools. There they are forced to praise the CCP and its leaders as if they were gods.

As Vice Chair Perkins stated, the U.S Department of State has already determined that these atrocities against the Uyghur people amount to genocide and crimes

against humanity. As such, no government or company should ever condone or enable such crimes—much less U.S. companies, whose supply chains in China very likely are tainted by Uyghur forced labor that the CCP approves and encourages. Credible reports also indicate that the CCP is now expanding forced labor to Tibet. Not only are these practices morally objectionable, but importing goods made by forced labor is illegal according to U.S. law. U.S. companies operating in China must therefore not sit idly by intentionally ignoring the evidence and pretend that they can continue to conduct business as usual.

The U.S. Congress has already introduced legislation to combat the problem of Uyghur forced labor, such as H.R. 6270, the “Uyghur Forced Labor Disclosure Act of 2020,” and H.R. 6210, the “Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act.” I am sorely disappointed to learn that our very own U.S. Chamber of Commerce has openly opposed these bills calling them “ineffective” without providing any concrete suggestions as to what U.S. companies should do to address their potential complicity in China’s anti-Uyghur atrocities.

Given the magnitude and scope of Communist China’s persecution against religious and ethnic minority groups, all U.S. companies must take extraordinary

precaution to make sure their operations in China are not aiding and abetting the government's religious freedom violations. We have seen this, in particular, with some companies that have provided surveillance technology and equipment used to perpetrate abuses against religious minorities.

Moreover, Communist China has been exercising its economic and broad geopolitical leverages, as well as engaging in nefarious influence operations overseas—including here in the United States—to silence opposition and dissent to this brutal regime. This trend should outrage all of us. We must tell the truth; the crimes must be exposed, and U.S. companies should explain why they would want to invest in a nation at war with faith.

I look forward to hearing from this distinguished panel of experts on what the U.S. government and American companies can and should do to address these pressing problems. With that, I will now turn it over to my colleague Commissioner Nury Turkel for his remarks and to introduce our witnesses.