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CCP TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION: THE PARTY'S EFFORT
TO SILENCE AND COERCE CRITICS OVERSEAS

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

House of Representatives,

Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between
the United States and the Chinese Communist Party,

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 7:00 p.m., in Room 390, Cannon House
Office Building, Hon. Mike Gallagher [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Chairman Gallagher. The Select Committee will come to order.

Welcome to our witnesses. We've seen American citizens hunted down by foreign agents on the streets of American cities, secret foreign police stations in New York, college students harassed on American campuses. The FBI calls this transnational repression. That is a jargony, complicated word that belies a simple and world-shaping question which is: Who is subject to the rule of the Chinese Communist Party?

You might think the answer is obvious: Chinese citizens. But transnational repression shows that that's not the CCP's desire to answer. The CCP actually seeks to surveil, influence, punish, and coerce people all over the world. They want to silence their critics, control politics, and police thought far beyond China's borders.

And one of their coveted targets is U.S. universities. At Columbia University in February, Representative Torres and I heard horrifying stories of how CCP collaborators harassed over a dozen students.

We're in the middle of a debate in this country about free speech at universities occasioned by rampant and shocking anti-Semitism, but I want to make sure we draw attention to the CCP's threat to academic freedom on our campus quads.

In my experience, university administrators do not want to talk about this publicly, but in that respect they're not unusual. In every aspect of our work on this committee, we've heard this refrain. CCP-maligned behavior is a huge problem, but I'm afraid to speak out about it.

We've heard that from Hollywood producers who admitted sensoring themselves to appease Beijing. We've heard it from tech executives who told us they were loathe to talk about the CCP's ongoing genocide of the Uighur people publicly. We've heard

from bank executives who insisted on a condition of anonymity in New York because they feared PRC retaliation.

These are some of the most powerful people in the world, and each and every one of them feared the CCP's wrath and would not speak out. Their cowardice throws in stark relief the courage of our witnesses tonight.

We're going to hear stories from people who have experienced the CCP's transnational repression firsthand. And unlike those titans of industry, these witnesses do not run multinational companies. They do not command vast wealth or have the governments of the world on speed dial. They have harnessed a different kind of power. They have had the courage to speak out. They are joining us at great risk to themselves and their families.

So thank you. Your bravery inspires us all.

I now recognize the ranking member, Raja Krishnamoorthi, for his opening statement.

[The statement of Chairman Gallagher follows:]

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Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We all know the plot of "The Terminator" movie series. Take a look at this visual here. An AI system called Skynet sees humanity as a threat to its existence and creates machines to repress humans.

Sadly, the fictional Skynet has parallels to a real-world program the CCP has created to repress its own people. Oddly enough, the CCP's program is also called Skynet. Skynet and a related operation called Fox Hunt are part of the CCP's efforts to track down, repress, and capture, among others, its fiercest critics around the world. This is called transnational repression, or TNR for short.

In fact, to carry out this TNR, the CCP has established 102 overseas police stations in 53 countries, including America. But these police stations are just what grab the headlines. The biggest problem is actually the impact of the CCP's TNR efforts against countless individuals in our country.

Ms. Kwok, one of our witnesses, actually has a bounty on her head because she chose to stand up for freedom. Look at the Wanted poster behind me. Apparently, her crime was quote, unquote, meeting with foreign politicians and government officials to request sanctions. That's right. In the eyes of the CCP, testifying before this committee could also constitute a crime.

Mr. Zhang, another witness here today, is a student from China. Because he decided to speak up for human rights and the PRC, his family in China has been targeted and even pulled in for questioning by authorities.

But Ms. Kwok and Mr. Zhang are hardly alone. Imagine being a defender of Uighur or Tibetan rights, facing endless threats from mysterious accounts on WeChat or facing literal violence because of your free speech. That's the CCP, I think.

Just to name one examples, protestors outside the Chinese consulate in Manchester, England, recently had to be rescued after literally being dragged onto the consulate grounds.

At the APEC Summit in San Francisco, activists like Ms. Kwok also faced violence as they protested Xi Jinping's visit. That's why the chairman and I sent a letter to the DOJ, requesting information about how we can do even more to ensure that critics of the CCP in America have the protection they need.

Now, some may ask what more needs to be done. Step one is vigorously enforcing our laws and raising awareness about the CCP's TNR so pre, pro-CCP attacks don't fall through the cracks.

Step two is increasing outreach to impacted communities so they know where to turn. On that note, if you're ever a victim of the CCP, please dial 1-800-CALL-FBI. That's 1-800 C-A-L-L FBI.

And, of course, step three is holding our Nation's legacy of welcoming those facing persecution from around the world. Defenders of human rights in the PRC should have a home in America. Full stop. The stakes could not be higher. Since speaking truth to power in the PRC is nearly impossible, if critics of the CCP cannot speak freely in America, the CCP will have succeeded in eliminating voices of criticism everywhere. That means censorship on a global scale, meted out through violence and harassment.

As it stands, many people in America do not speak up against the CCP because they fear for themselves or their families. We've seen the headlines about activists being harassed, but a story is not written every time an activist stays silent out of fear. And every time that happens, the CCP wins and the Chinese people lose.

So I have a message for the CCP. Stop. Stop subjecting people exercising their rights to fear and repression. Stop targeting their families, and stop the harassed and

flagrant violations of human rights because on this committee we will not stop. We will do everything in our power to hold the CCP accountable when it violates human rights and silences speech here in America. And, most importantly, we will ensure that the communities that need our support get it.

I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Krishnamoorthi follows:]

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Chairman Gallagher. I thank the ranking member for his comments.

If any other member wishes to submit a statement for the record, without objection, those statements will be added to the record.

We are privileged tonight to have a great lineup of witnesses.

I would like to first introduce Ms. Anna Kwok who is the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Democracy Council and has worked with our committee from the start.

Thank you, Ms. Kwok.

Our second witness is Mr. Jinrui Zhang, an international student from the PRC, studying law at Georgetown University, Hoya Saxa, and has suffered personal retaliation at the hands of the PRC government for his courageous views.

And then, finally, we have Dr. Sophie Richardson, an expert on human rights in China.

Thank you to all of you for being here.

Could you please rise and raise your right hand? And I will now swear you in.

Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury that the testimony you're about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief, so help you God?

You may be seated.

Let the record show that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative.

Thank you all.

Ms. Kwok, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening remarks.

TESTIMONY OF ANNA KWOK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HONG KONG DEMOCRACY COUNCIL; JINRUI ZHANG, LAW STUDENT, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER; AND DR. SOPHIE RICHARDSON, EXPERT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

TESTIMONY OF ANNA KWOK

Ms. Kwok, Chairman Gallagher, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, and distinguished members of the select committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.

I was born and raised in Hong Kong. Like many other Hongkongers, I had to decide to not return home in exchange for my safety from the Hong Kong Government's political retaliation or so I thought.

Five months ago, I woke up to news that I, along with seven other overseas Hongkongers, were issued a 1-million Hong Kong-dollar bounty on my head and an arrest warrant for, quote, including with foreign forces. My assets in Hong Kong were frozen. The charge for my life sentence and crime consisted purely of my Capitol Hill and D.C. advocacy that were done outside of Hong Kong and like what I'm doing right now.

Since then, I have been walking around the United States with a huge target on my back. Even though I'm in the land of the free, I am not free. I am trapped in this constant fear of being hunted, and this is the CCP's goal. They want to cripple me and cripple my ability to advocate for Hong Kong.

Soon, I started receiving life-threatening online comments. These comments intensified in November, shortly after I announced a protest I was planning for APEC when Xi Jinping was in town. Hundreds of trolls flooded my page on social media with

horrifying online threats.

One says, quote, Can somebody drop her unconscious body at the Chinese consulate and Embassy?

The other comments says, quote, Careful. This could be your last protest. A million can do wonders.

With these online threats around, people who planned to join the APEC protest alongside me began to hesitate. Even though the threats started directed at me and myself only, the impact rippled through the entire Hong Kong community.

Infinite what-if scenarios started sprouting in people's mind. What if they got beaten in the protest? What if their family back home got harassed for their participation of the protest here on American soil?

These are common tactics of both direct and relational transnational repression employed by the CCP. These horrific -- these horrific tactics have already been done to Hongkongers, and they will only continue to happen. In the end, some Hongkongers actually decided to censor themselves, while others decided to drop out. And this is exactly the second goal of transnational repression, to dismantle our community and, hence, to avoid any possibility for a successful prodemocracy movement.

So in the future, if you don't hear anymore from Hongkongers, it's not because we have won the fight but it is because of the far-reaching repression we are seeing here right now.

For the ones who refuse to back down, our coalition of Hongkongers, Tibetans, Uighurs and Chinese protesters were met with harassment, with intimidation, with stalking, and even assault from pro-Beijing protestors out of these event venues. Even members of the press was not safe. A journalist's phone was thrown into the river when he was doing an interview.

According to human rights in China, more than ten people were bloodied and three were hospitalized with severe injuries. Some of the victims, in fact, are also in the room today.

These acts of transnational repression were carefully coordinated on protest sites. Thugs and organizations seemingly from the United Front network worked to assault and to intimidate. These groups have been nurturing Beijing-friendly networks for decades on American soil, and they were mobilized at times like APAC.

In other words, the United Front network here in the United States enables transnational repression to happen. At the same time, we saw suspicious-looking men with Chinese military-style haircut and, curiously, earpieces, and they stalked us on the streets of San Francisco.

The U.S. should not allow the undermining of any fundamental rights of people. Our First Amendment rights to peacefully protest and to freely express ourselves should be respected.

I urge Congress to combat transnational repression with effective policy tools. Train law enforcement to recognize the threats we're facing. Grant victims legal statuses for protection and support. Vet diplomats and government personnel traveling to the United States. And, most importantly, provide the resources that is needed for all the above implementation. These ae necessary steps that are required to fight and stop further repression.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Kwok follows:]

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Chairman Gallagher. Thank you, Ms. Kwok.

Mr. Zhang, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF JINRUI ZHANG

Mr. Zhang. Chairman Gallagher and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, thank you. I'm very happy to be here today to discuss these important issues, and I appreciate you for your time.

I was born in the year 2000 in the city of Benxi in Manchuria -- the Chinese northeast. I came to the U.S. in 2018 to work on my undergrad degree, graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 2021. I then began my studies at Georgetown Law, and I'm set to graduate with a J.D. in May 2024.

I've long held political opinions against the CCP's authoritarianism and its many past atrocities. However, fear of retaliation had kept me from speaking out publicly against their regime, even after I came to the U.S.

And this is the shared experience of many Chinese citizens outside of China. No matter where in the world you are, even in the most mature democracies, with the longest traditions of civil liberties, you are never free as long as anyone or anything you care about is under the control of the CCP.

My attitude changed after the CCP began the zero-COVID policy. What was an initially commonplace pandemic responses gradually morphed into a dysfunctional, high-controlled political movement by the CCP.

In November of 2022, a fire broke out in a Uighur neighborhood in Urumqi, resulting in the tragic deaths of more than 40 people. This event happened not because

the fire was extraordinarily powerful but because the complex was under lockdown and the gate was locked, preventing the fire truck from entering the building.

Prodemocracy Chinese citizens outside of China, alongside with their allies, began to mobilize and organized demonstrations against the CCP's policies.

In D.C. the conversation revolved around commemorating the victims and finding solutions to China's authoritarianism. I also got involved by handing out fliers, making posters, and giving speeches. Soon after, transnational repression came.

Transnational repression, I would divide it into two categories: Formal and informal. Formal repression is carried out under the orders of the Chinese state by government workers, while informal repression is carried out organically by CCP supporters who are emboldened by the CCP.

Harassment from CCP supporters, the informal ones, began 40 minutes after I made my first public political statement. On Georgetown's main campus, a student who supported the CCP saw me handing out fliers about the demonstrations and rebuked me, attempting to report me to the Chinese police via a video function on his phone.

And then the formal repression came earlier this year. From June to November, my family members in China were harassed and threatened four times by the Chinese Government, and I am very certain that there will be a fifth time because of my presence here tonight.

And this started because they suspected me of being a member of a prodemocracy Chinese student group in D.C. It all began with my sister receiving a call from the local police station in late June, asking for current addresses of my family members. And several days later in late -- in early July, national security officers came knocking on my parents' door and hauled my father away in front of my terrified mother for interrogation.

They asked my father extensively about my political convictions and eventually let him go on the condition that he makes me love the country and love the party with the threat of "or else." And I decided to tell this story to the media, and then the repressions came again. And they were harassed twice more, the latest being about 2 weeks ago.

Once, an official pulled out a printed copy of my private text message with my mother and sister on WeChat to show my father that I harbored the thoughts of supporting democracy.

And the CCP carries this out systematically. About a dozen Chinese students in the D.C. area had their family harassed just this year. From oral accounts, we can see how the CCP has a sophisticated system to repress people who are outside of China.

There are social media teams to spot potential troublemakers, liaison teams that send orders to local police departments to get the addresses of the people's families. And there's teams that get sent out to do the interrogations and deliver the threats, a streamlined repression process.

And because of repressions like these, Chinese citizens face insurmountable barriers when they try to speak out against the CCP. These repressions, when they reach America, they limit the civil liberties of noncitizens in this country. They're also not compliant with international law with respect to the sovereignty of other nations.

Moreover, many dissidents like me are on visas like the student visa here, and we are faced with a lot of fear that in the event that we will have to return to China where custodial and judicial abuses are more than commonplace.

I hope one day people like me can think, deliberate, and practice their faith in peace. And I hope that my testimony will contribute to the realization of these hopes.

Thank you. I'm very happy to answer your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Zhang follows:]

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Chairman Gallagher. I very much think it will.

Thank you, Mr. Zhang.

Dr. Richardson, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF SOPHIE RICHARDSON

Ms. Richardson. Chairman Gallagher, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, distinguished members of the select committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Chinese Government 's Chinese Communist Party's, their proxy's efforts to silence peaceful criticism beyond China's borders.

I also want to express my sincere respect to my fellow witnesses, Ms. Kwok and Mr. Zhang, for their extraordinary courage. Defending human rights should not cost anyone connections to their families and their homes.

Because my fellow witnesses in our written testimony focus on more well-known and well-documented instances of transnational repression, I'd like to spend these few minutes considering subtler forms and implications of TNR in democracies.

For years, refugees and asylum seekers from China have privately shared their experiences of harassment but never reported those, fearing that doing so would further complicate their legal status and could risk their being returned to China.

Students and scholars of and from China and academic institutions have confided about their inability to engage in classroom discussions or other campus activities on particular topics, fearing reprisals for themselves and their family members.

We'll likely never know whether and how many people chose not to vote, attend public events, or debate ideas online or in person because they felt vulnerable to these

kinds of threats. And these threats aren't just to individuals and communities. They're threats to the integrity of democratic institutions.

The modest attention of recent years, investigations and prosecutions, outreach by different agencies, increasing awareness through hearings like these have helped. But in my view, no U.S. administration and no administration in any democracy has devoted sufficient resources to challenging the Chinese Government over its appalling human rights record, giving Beijing confidence that it can double down on repression at home and increasingly threaten human rights abroad in the international institutions and expect to get away with it.

So there's a great deal more work to do. Here are four areas of focus. First, Congress can help ensure that law enforcement and other agencies have the necessary resources to pursue investigations and prosecutions. These not only reassure people who are vulnerable to TNR, they also put Beijing on notice that impunity for such conduct is ending.

But it's also high time for Chinese, Cantonese, Tibetan, and Uighur language hotlines, community liaisons, and other social services. Legislation to expedite asylum cases to these communities would also help mitigate vulnerability to TNR.

Second, this committee and other Members of Congress with a longstanding interest in human rights in China could engage in community outreach across the U.S. to better understand and explore responses to less visible vulnerabilities to TNR. In my experience, sometimes simply demonstrating an interest in the threats is sufficient to encourage people to bring information forward. And having that experience with elected representatives could be quite powerful.

Third, pending TNR should be high on the diplomatic agenda in bilateral, multilateral, and international forums. U.S. administrations should commit to giving the

nature and number of crimes -- stalking, harassing, hacking, assaulting, and other elements -- of transnational repression committed by Chinese Government or party actors prominence ahead of and during any-high level interactions.

Senior U.S. officials should publicly and directly call on Chinese authorities to end their harassment of peaceful critics and their family members in China and give a platform to courageous individuals targeted by Beijing.

They should also be on the lookout for TNR's different kinds of subnational cooperation resume or start.

Finally, democracies must remain focused on changing the ultimate enabling condition for transnational repression, and that is Xi Jinping's and his allies' profound hostility towards human rights in China.

Democracies cannot content themselves with, quote, responsibly managing competition with Beijing about human rights. They must aspire to win it. They should devote the necessary diplomatic, financial, and political resources to holding Chinese Government officials accountable for atrocity crimes, challenging Beijing's encroachment on the international human rights system, and to ending the ruthless suppression of peaceful government critics inside and outside China. A failure to do so enables further abuses.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Richardson follows:]

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Chairman Gallagher. Thank you very much, Dr. Richardson.

I want to -- just one observation. Curious if my colleagues agree. You know, we have disagreements about trade, industrial policy, the relative prioritization of certain things in our relationship with China.

But if you think about it, it's pretty easy for us to go on TV and speak our minds about the CCP or any other issue. It's just not like a real consequence to us and our families.

But our witnesses here today, I mean, they're taking a real risk and have suffered enormous consequences for speaking the truth and sticking up for values that aren't just American values. They're universal values. They're human rights, as Dr. Richardson so eloquently expressed.

And that's just -- I admire your bravery and courage and I have serious concerns -- I hate when people use their question time for speeches, and now that's what I'm doing.

Their -- listen, I'm not naive about the way that international politics works. It's a dangerous world. It's an anarchic system and sometimes we have to make painful choices between security concerns and human rights, but we don't have to make that choice right now. I think we lose nothing by putting human rights at the forefront of our agenda in this competition with the Chinese Communist Party.

And I have serious concerns, serious concerns that right now we are seeing the very slow deprioritization of human rights for the sake of other priorities.

And I really hope, given what I perceive to be the bipartisan support for all the issues that we've talked about on this committee, starting with the hearing that we held on the genocide in Xinjiang and the hearing we're having tonight, I hope we can ensure

that that is indeed not the case going forward.

Mr. Zhang, you -- I understand that you've been harassed by members of the Georgetown chapter of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association. Could you talk about that organization? Is this an example of what you call informal or formal TNR? Just give us a little bit more on that if you don't mind, sir.

Mr. Zhang. Sure. Regarding that incident of harassment with the members of the Chinese on Georgetown's main campus, I would classify that as an informal instance of transnational repression because there was no formal notice of any kind of protesting activities against the authoritarianism of the Chinese Communist Party. But this person encountered me randomly on campus and decided to start churning out the name calling and decided to try to record me by video and decided to try to report me to the Chinese police.

And the Chinese Students and Scholars Organization, I would say it is a organization that's been taking orders a lot from the Chinese Embassies, the Chinese Embassies and consulate outside of China. They have many liaison activities that's going on for times of Chinese festivities. For example, in the Chinese New Year they will organize different activities where they gather together and try to reinforce that -- the kind of feeling that you're still under Chinese control, you are still connected somehow with the regime that is controlling China.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Ms. Kwok, in maybe a bit of a detour, it seems that we -- I fear that we are not fully cognizant of what is happening in Hong Kong right now, what has -- what has happened there.

And I just would be curious. If you would, what is -- what do you want the American people to understand about what has happened to Hong Kong, and what can

we do about it in the United States Congress?

Ms. Kwok. So the -- in Hong Kong, the national security law passed in 2020, and that was a law that completely override any other judicial independence and system that Hong Kong used to have.

And after that, we have been documenting the numbers of political prisoners in Hong Kong. And right now we have more than 1,700 political prisoners. And we have more than 20,000 of cases that have been arrested, people having been arrested for standing up for themselves and standing up for their rights inside of Hong Kong.

And I think what is special about Hong Kong's case is that Hong Kong used to be this international financial city that people looked to. If you look at what kind of financial hubs that people are still traveling to, to this day, Hong Kong is still one of them. Businesses are still going to Hong Kong as if business is usual, is as usual.

But we know that the situation has changed so drastically. We no longer have that one country-two systems we were promised. Why are businesses still heading to Hong Kong as if things were normal? I think that is definitely one thing that we have to change through policies and also change through, you know, how the Government wants to position themselves in terms of trade relations with Hong Kong.

And on the other hand, we also see there's an increasing tendency of the Chinese Government using Hong Kong as their springboard to export their influence, for example, with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices present in the United States and also with Hong Kong's presence at APEC and WTO as a independent member. And this is how China and Beijing also gets one extra vote in bilateral and multilateral organizations and that must change.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

My time has expired.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to talk a bit about how the CCP actually carries out TNR. So first I want to talk about private investigators, also known as PIs, profiting off the CCP's TNR efforts.

Behind me is a picture of Sergeant Michael McMahon. For years he served in the New York City Police Department until he decided to leave and become a PI. Earlier this year, he was found guilty of knowingly acting at the direction of the CCP to harass, intimidate, and try to involuntarily return a New York resident to the PRC. This is part of the Chinese Communist Party's Skynet program.

Dr. Richardson, it seems like there's a trend where the CCP is increasingly hiring PIs to surveil and harass critics of the CCP. Isn't that right?

Ms. Richardson. Yeah, it's a worrying phenomenon.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And it feels like a lot of these PIs appear to be former law enforcement officials, right?

Ms. Richardson. I don't know the full scope of cases. But certainly the ones that have been written about publicly suggest that this is a serious problem, so much so that there's actually a separate document produced about not being a pawn of repressive foreign governments. It's just it's a serious problem.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Well, I was just going to get to that. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence put out a KYC, a know-your-customer bulletin, to PIs in case they were unwittingly helping the CCP.

But in the case of those who are wittingly or knowingly helping the CCP, it feels like we need to do more to police that practice. Wouldn't you agree?

Ms. Richardson. I agree.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Let me turn to another topic which is the CCP doesn't just

directly harass its targets. It also goes after their families. And Mr. Zhang talked about this earlier.

But I want to you look at the graphic here, Ms. Tursun, a Uighur woman who escaped to America and criticized the CCP. Now the Chinese Communist Party is using her family ties in China as leverage against her. Put yourselves in her shoes and imagine getting this presumably forced voicemail from her brother.

It goes, quote, You should go to the Chinese Embassy right away and denounce all the things you said about the Chinese Government. Otherwise, China can get you wherever you hide.

Unfortunately, Ms. Tursun is not alone. Mr. Zhang, Chinese Communist Party agents repeatedly interrogated your family members in the PRC because of your speech here in America, right?

Mr. Zhang. Yes, that's true.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And, Ms. Kwok, I believe your brothers back in Hong Kong were also interrogated because of your outspokenness here in the U.S.

Ms. Kwok. That's correct.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Dr. Richardson, to counter this type of TNR, it would seem to me that Congress needs to formally define and criminalize TNR.

What do you think?

Ms. Richardson. I think too much is left uncriminalized, and so to clarify that in law I think would be helpful.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. It seems like right now a lot of law enforcement uses stalking laws and failure to register as a foreign agent laws, the FARA laws, as a means of going after people who might aid and abet TNR. But it seems like we should criminalize TNR to begin with.

Let me turn to my last topic here which is the CCP's use of malicious cyber attacks against dissidents and diaspora groups.

Earlier tonight we talked about the CCP's Skynet program. Now I want to talk about a CCP hacking group formerly known as Evil Eye. Let's look at one example of an Evil Eye attack against overseas critics of the CCP. Many of you may be familiar with the encrypted American messaging app Signal. I use it every day. I think many of the people in this audience use it, and so do many critics of the CCP.

If you look at this graphic, on the right is Signal's real website where you can download the app, and on the left is a CCP website designed to lure Uighur, Tibetans, and others into downloading a fake version of Signal, one that actually installs spyware onto a device.

And we've actually come across different WhatsApp messages and other texts where the CCP agent embeds the fake app link in the message and asks people to click on it.

So, Dr. Richardson, the CCP stalks its critics on our streets. It harasses their families in China. And it goes after them online. It seems like TNR has many faces. So how can Congress, how can we better protect people like Mr. Zhang and Ms. Kwok and others from TNR?

Ms. Richardson. Yeah, I think is a real problem with this sort of surround sound harassment.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Stereo, yeah.

Ms. Richardson. Yeah. I think it depends on whether you're talking about platforms that are headquartered in democracies, where I think there are at least redress mechanisms, although, as we've seen, you know, with the changes at Twitter/X, those mechanisms are not nearly as functional as they once were.

It's enormously problematic with Chinese platforms, where it's impossible to know about content moderation or about the algorithms. And there's no ability to have any sort of redress against these tidal waves of disinformation and harassment and threats, horrific misogynistic threats that are leveled often at activists.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Thank you.

Chairman Gallagher. Mr. Wittman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Wittman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to thank you and the ranking member for laying out a whole litany of issues involving China, whether it's their military expansion, exploitation of U.S. dollars and U.S. Capitol markets, theft of intellectual property, attacks on their Uighur population.

Transnational repression I think is one of the things at the very top of the list, China's effort to attack the rule of law around the world and their vigorous efforts to repress the liberties and rights of free people. Remember that's an endangerment to them. Their way of government is not about protecting liberties and freedoms. It's about putting government in the place of individual free will. That is a tremendous contrast between the two.

And the lengths to which they will go to achieve that is disturbing. That's what today's hearing is really getting to. And we have heard the ranking member talk about individuals as private investigators that go after Chinese population here in the United States. And for that matter, we know it's going on around the world.

I wanted to drill down a little bit more and get some of the real, the real individual stories about the lengths to which China goes to, to intimidate and repress people around the world.

And, Ms. Kwok, I think that your story is incredibly compelling about the bounty that they have put on your head, the attacks that you received from that, the threats that

you received from that, the threats that your family received.

Can you give us a little insight? What types of speech is Beijing most concerned about? And then what are the lengths that you've seen them go? And can you give us examples of individual threats and things that others have experienced from the CCP, whether they're from Hong Kong, or other experiences that you are knowledgeable, just so that we can understand the breadth and depth of what China's going to go to, to repress individuals?

Ms. Kwok. For sure. Thank you, Congress Member.

So, firstly, definitely what we have seen in APEC was horrifying. In San Francisco, as I was marching on the streets alongside our Tibetan and Uighur allies, I saw two Tibetan youths. They were just using their phone to record what was happening among the pro-Beijing protestors, when they were talking to each other.

But soon after they started the recording, their phone was snatched by these pro-Beijing protesters, thrown into the river, and, shortly after, they started getting beaten up by thugs with poles with them.

And that is just one of the things that the Chinese Government is not afraid of doing on American soil exactly because they know these perpetrators likely do not really have to pay a price. They will not be hunted down because law enforcement is basically not equipped enough to do that.

And also I've also seen on the ground of San Francisco that there were men with earpieces, looking like national security agents from China, stalking us.

So after I was leaving from the protest, I saw four men with strongly built physique. Obviously, they were members of the military. They were not ordinary citizens. They were following me to intimidate me and to send me a message that you are watched and you'll be watched.

And this is the length that they will go to here in the United States. So imagine what kind of harassment and assault they would do inside of China and Hong Kong and to Tibetans and to Uighurs. It's terrible and horrifying. So I think today it's really highlight that protection must be given to victims on the ground.

For example, I'm speaking as an asylum seeker here in the United States. And throughout my process of asylum seeking, sometimes I don't know whether I can go to law enforcement faithfully because of my status here. And even though I'm someone with a relative amount of heavy exposure, I have that anxiety.

So imagine Hongkongers who are not publicly speaking to the public. They feel even more acknowledges conscious.

I was speaking to a Hong Kong student who studies at Cornell University. He was being pushed by Beijing protesters simply for putting up fliers around the campus. But afterward, even though I encourage him to file a police report, he refused because he's seeking asylum and he doesn't know if that will affect his asylum cases.

So I really echo what Dr. Richardson was saying about protecting victims and giving them pathways to gain legal statuses such that they can be protected and they can continue to speak up here on American soil.

Mr. Wittman. Thank you for that. It sounds it's a very clear case of expanding the law to protect folks against this Chinese transnational repression.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mr. Moulton.

Mr. Moulton. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to all the witnesses for your critical testimony and your courage in coming forward.

Mr. Zhang, what do you think would happen to you if you went back to China?

Mr. Zhang. I think, first of all, when I first enter the country, they will scan my passport on some kind of database. And then they will see that I have participated in prodemocracy activities outside of China.

And then very soon after, I think there will be charges that's pressed, and I will be arrested.

And at least where I'm from, the interrogation techniques of the police are still very, I would say, barbaric and premodern. There's many kinds of forced confession that's going on. And many suspects, merely suspects, are chained to radiators for days on end and are beaten in places where scars will form.

And after they go through this whole custodial process, I will be hauled in front of a biased judiciary system where they enforce a different kind of fairness, a different kind of justice, a different kind of law for people who are accused of political crimes.

And then for incitement of the subversion of the Chinese regime, the crime I believe starts with a sentencing of 10 years and then the maximum is the death sentence and that gets carried out a lot.

Mr. Moulton. I certainly hope you never experience that, that horror. And we will essential work to ensure that you never do.

Of course, the reality is that the barbaric behavior that you're describing, the Chinese Communist Party, is -- it's par for the course. The CCP routinely disappears its own citizens. It's not just prodemocracy activists. We discussed transnational repression at length earlier this year in relation to the CCP's genocide against the Uighurs.

Dr. Richardson, you wrote a piece last month, describing Xi's atrocity crime against the Uighurs. Can you elaborate on how the CCP is using transnational repression against Uighurs outside of China?

Ms. Richardson. It's not a discrete event. It's a life reality. Uighurs around the world, even ones who are living in democracies, wake up in the morning, many of the people I know think immediately about family members they can't reach and they don't know whether they'll ever see again. They don't know whether they should spend their days publicly advocating for the release of those people and whether it makes their loved ones' realities better or worse. They don't know whether they'll succeed. Some choose to stay quiet for perfectly sensible reasons. Some are at the barriers every day.

But the cost to people, the toll on them, even of exercising their rights when they're safe in democracies, is enormous. And that's before you pick up your phone and you see all of the message that have rolled in from local officials in the Uighur region, harassing you and telling you to shut up, or the message from your family members, suggesting that maybe you should stop your advocacy because it brings greater attention to them in the region.

You know, it is pernicious and pervasive and all permeating in people's lives. I don't know a better way to describe it than that.

Mr. Moulton. I think it's hard --

Ms. Richardson. But it's a toxic reality.

Mr. Moulton. -- for us to understand just how pervasive it is and how fortunate we are to never have to worry about that in America.

Mr. Chairman, we unanimously endorse the idea of strengthening support for Uighur refugees in our Uighur Human Rights Report. But the testimony we've heard today suggests that we need to be supporting refugees facing transnational repression from China, as well.

And it calls to mind that a great bipartisan group of veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan came together to ensure that our allies in those conflicts could find refuge in

the United States.

I guess the Congress debates immigration policy this week. It's an incredible opportunity for human rights, for countering China, and for sending a message to other brave Chinese dissidents around the world if we could do a better job finding these courageous, freedom-loving exemplars of democracy a way to come to America.

Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mr. Luetkemeyer.

Mr. Luetkemeyer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I thank our distinguished panel for their -- sharing your stories this evening. It's, wow, it's compelling. Thank you for what you're -- your being here.

I know I think, Ms. Kwok, you made the statement here that, Even though I was in the land of the free, I was not free. I was trapped in the constant mental pressure of being hunted.

And, Mr. Zhang, in your testimony you say, No matter where in the world you are, even in the most mature democracies or centuries-old traditions of civil liberties, you are never free as long as anyone or anything you care about is under the control of the CCP.

That is as hard-hitting and chilling as statements as we've seen in this committee.

You know, if you don't feel free in this country, we've got a problem. We have to find a way to allow you to be able to be free and feel free.

And so I guess in your testimony, Mr. Zhang, you talked about Radio Free Asia and the Radio Free Voice of America as being impactful in being able to get the message out.

Would you like to expand on it just a little bit?

Mr. Zhang. Yeah, sure. I think for the first time the Radio Free Asia reached out to me was sometime earlier this year regarding the formation of that prodemocracy

organization that's in George Washington University.

And then I formed a relationship with the journalist, and then she reached out to me later in the summer about whether there was any incidents of students reporting on their own teachers on Chinese campuses.

But then I directed her to the fact that many of the suspected members of the prodemocracy organization at George --

Mr. Luetkemeyer. How widespread is the radio Southeast Asia -- or Radio Free Asia? How extensive is it? Is it listened to in China?

Mr. Zhang. Oh, I would say for a lot of prodemocracy Chinese people, they will listen to media like Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, depending on what their home languages are. The Mandarin speakers listen to the Mandarin one, and for Tibetan people, I think the audience is much larger in China.

Mr. Luetkemeyer. Okay. You know, again, I go back to your hard-hitting statements for just a second.

And I think we've talk about a little bit here about protecting you, even when you're here. Would each one of you like to give me some other ideas -- I think you mentioned a couple of them already -- on ways that you would be -- that cue feel more protected? Is there a way we could do something here as a committee, as a country?

Should the police be more informed of your being in the neighborhood, being in the area so that they would be starting to watch out for you? What sort of things would you like to see done that would make you feel more safe, because you've talked about some retributions, some things you've experienced with regards to not just harassment but physical abuse.

Mr. Zhang. Yeah, so for the informal kind of transnational repression, I would say imposing some kind of consequence on that kind of behavior on American soil is very

important.

And for the formal kind of transnational repression, I would say giving the dissidents from authoritarian regimes a safe place to continue on their ideals, I think that is very important.

Mr. Luetkemeyer. Okay. Ms. Kwok.

Ms. Kwok. I would also like to add I think there are really a few expects.

So the first thing in my entire experience was actually local law enforcement are noted educated on what transnational repression is. And I think that is a way to start making us feel more safe is that when I speak the police, I expect that they have some sort of knowledge or understanding of the situation that if I get dismissed because they think there's no such thing of Chinese Government being able to just, to do this sort of repression on American soil, then, of course, my instinctive reaction would be feeling dismissed and not protected.

So there are several things I think that could be done. First is educating the local law enforcement officers.

And secondly is openings an FBI tip lion that would gather intelligence and information of potentially perpetrators of TNR.

And, thirdly, having someone with the linguistics ability to speak to Hongkongers, Uighurs, Tibetans or impacted communities is also very important because a lot of the times people who are targeted may not be able to speak the most accurately in English because this is not their first language. And I think having officers who are trained in other linguistic capabilities would be a huge impact.

And I think it's also important, last but not least, to have a better research on United Front network here in the United States. As I've said in my statement, United Front network is what enables transnational repression. These networks are -- have

been trained by pro-Beijing officials to do this kind of harassment, intimidation, information gathering, and assault.

If they can still roam freely in America, what we're going to see the next 10 years is more horrific cases happening. And if we only act by then, it will be too late because by then we'll see kidnapping. We'll see people actually dying from these assaults.

And I think by that point, it's too late to really pluck all these, you know, infiltration or networks that have been finding their ways in America.

So right now in Congress there's a bipartisan legislation called the Transnational Repression Policy Act, and I believe that legislation is a way for us to start building capacity for U.S. institutions, as well.

Mr. Luetkemeyer. Thank you very much.

My time has expired.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mr. Auchincloss.

Mr. Auchincloss. Thank you, Chairman.

I want to echo my appreciation for the bravery afforded to and demonstrated by our witnesses.

The Chinese Communist Party isn't just harassing protesters and activists. There's documented evidence of harassment of journalists living in places like the United States and Europe, as well, where free speech is assumed to be a protected right, because in Xi Jinping's China, there's a high price to be paid by those doing the hard work of speaking truth to power.

In our first hearing on this committee, I spoke with Mr. Pottinger about the importance of supporting independent journalism. Radio Free Asia, also developed and funded through the United States Agency for Global Media, is providing these vital

services to the Indo-Pacific region.

And they were the first media outlet, for example, to publish reporting about the CCP's systematic attacks against the Uighur people.

These journalists have dozens of family members overseas in China who are missing or currently detained by Chinese authorities in an attempt to chill their speech and their investigations.

In Spain, for example, a Chinese student documenting and sharing protests in China during their zero-COVID lockdowns lost his job after the company he partnered with received a letter from the Chinese Embassy. All his Chinese accounts related to banking, payments, and even games have been frozen.

The success with these tactics is a harbinger of the lengths that the secretary will go to extend his repression from the Chinese mainland overseas to democracies, as well.

How can we protect these journalists, their families on the Chinese mainland, and the work that they do so that we can ensure that we are able to extend investigative journalism in the free press as much as possible into the Chinese Communist Party's domain?

Dr. Richardson, take the first.

Ms. Richardson. Sure. I think one of the hardest aspects of dealing with TNR is that the threats accrue to some extent to people who are not within the U.S.'s jurisdiction. Right? And that's a real challenge.

I think the very rock-bottom minimum is for the U.S. Government at the highest possible levels to be naming the family members of, for example, the RFA journalist, assuming that that's what those journalists want, but also to prioritize trying to find a way to get them out of the country, again, if that's what family members want, not to just simply accept the reality that there's nothing to be done.

I think one of the -- one of the biggest mistakes many administrations have made is to not sufficiently insist on the releases of certain individuals and kinds of people, particularly the family members of U.S. citizens, for example.

Mr. Auchincloss. So if I could say back to you what I think I'm hearing from you and tying into your written testimony, at the level of principle to principle-to-principle diplomacy, it shouldn't just be talking about hostages or U.S. nationals wrongfully detained but also about the harassment of family members of U.S. nationals in an attempt to silence them, that that needs to be in the same domain of diplomatic negotiations.

Ms. Richardson. Yeah, and I think there's -- I think we should consider the, for example, the special coordinator on hostages focuses only on U.S. citizens --

Mr. Auchincloss. Right.

Ms. Richardson. -- abroad. I think that should be amended to include the family members of U.S. citizens who are being targeted by hostile governments.

Mr. Auchincloss. And it needn't necessarily be wrongfully detained, but it could be illegally harassed or wrongfully harassed because it sounds like some of this is in a gray area where maybe they are in their home but they are being forcible -- intimidated or harassed in a way to intimidate the family members --

Ms. Richardson. Correct.

Mr. Auchincloss. -- overseas.

Would you imagine that as in the same office or a separate office?

Ms. Richardson. I could imagine it being in the same office. I think it obviously it would need more resources to do that.

But I think it's intensely frustrating for U.S. citizens or LPRs who have family members who are wrongfully detained or harassed in the mainland to be told that their

family members don't --

Mr. Auchincloss. Separate judicial system, right?

Ms. Richardson. Right, yeah, and that they get a lesser status. Right? I mean, American citizens are affected by these things. They should get that same kind of support and concern.

Mr. Auchincloss. In my last 30 seconds, Ms. Kwok, how does TikTok intersect with the intimidation campaign?

Ms. Kwok. TikTok is a social media governed or controlled by the Chinese Government, and a lot of the propaganda campaigns on TikTok is actually used to rile up a sense of nationalism for youths in China.

So whenever a Chinese -- sometimes Chinese people, you know, who go onto TikTok are always consuming content that will make them think the China governance model is the best in the world and that that Chinese Government is faithful to its people.

And once they have that sort of nationalism inside of them, they sometimes actually become the agents of transnational repression. They are the ones who go after us on American soil, and they do not have that direct connection with the Chinese Embassy. Right? They are not directed by the Chinese Embassy or consulate to do that. However, they do bear the mission from the Chinese Government to conduct this sort of repression.

So I think that's a problem with the propaganda campaign that the CCP has been waging, and TikTok definitely is one of the most serious platforms that we can see this happening.

Mr. Auchincloss. Thank you.

I yield back, Chair. Thank you.

Chairman Gallagher. Mr. Barr.

Mr. Barr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this very important hearing and to the ranking member, as well, and to our very courageous witnesses.

Tonight's hearing, entitled, The Chinese Communist Party Transnational Repression: The Party's Effort to Silence and Coerce Critics Overseas, we have two of those critics front of us tonight.

And, as I said before, your testimony demonstrates your commitment to subordinating your own personal safety to a higher principle. And for, that we applaud your prodemocracy activism.

According to Freedom House, the Chinese Communist Party conducts the most sophisticated global and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world involving a wide range of tactics from direct attacks like renditions, to co-opting other countries to detain and render exiles, to mobility controls, to threats from a distance like digital threats, spyware, and coercion by proxy.

Targets include ethnic and religious minority groups, dissidents, human rights activists, and journalists.

Ms. Kwok, can you describe, in addition to the CCP placing a 1 million Hong Kong-dollar bounty for your arrest and online threats, how else has the Beijing-controlled Hong Kong government attempted to silence you or your work?

Ms. Kwok. For sure. I think actually I've spoken at length about what kind of individual harassment I've gotten and the impact on me personally.

But I think what's the most important issue out of it all is that it poses a risk to not only myself but people who even come close to me and my team members.

Now in the work we do advocating for the Hong Kong movement as a diaspora, it's very important for us to build a sustainable and constructive diaspora among the people we have outside of Hong Kong.

But with these bounties, with these harassments I'm getting, people around me are scared. They're scared of getting in touch with me.

And, you know, in the beginning it was only people who are still inside Hong Kong who have cut ties and cut connections with me. But right now even people in America, do not want to really reach out to me privately because they don't want to be watched.

And I think that's the most destructive way we're seeing from the Chinese Government is to break up all the trust and all the organizing we have so that in the future our community will be gone and you will stop hearing from Hongkongers.

And but going back to the question, aside from, you know, the threats and the bounty, we also have been receiving, you know, hacking or attempts from the Chinese Government to actually enter, for example our Google accounts.

Mr. Barr. Thank you.

Mr. Zhang, the price you paid as a law student in the United States, as a member of the Chinese diaspora for engaging in political activism, prodemocracy activism, not just being threatened by pro-CCP individuals and harassment but also your father, your father was detained by the police for lengthy questioning. And officials in China told your father that you should love your country and the CCP more.

Can you elaborate on that?

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[8:04 p.m.]

Mr. Zhang. Yes, I think my father during this whole interrogation process, he was under a tremendous amount of pressure because he never knows when the next wave of threat is going to come.

And the interrogation process is a process that's designed to wear you down, to wear your mental stamina down, and also to break up the kind of sense of unity that's between the family members and the dissidents themselves.

Mr. Barr. And in the remaining time, either Mr. Zhang, Ms. Kwok, or Dr. Richardson, can any of you give us another example, besides the two courageous witnesses here, of the most egregious example of CCP transnational repression that you've heard of?

Mr. Zhang. Okay. I will say it is the incident where I think that happened in Boston where somebody who was really supporting the CCP was trying to personally follow and hunt down and try to beat up a person who is a Chinese student who was supporting democracy.

Mr. Barr. And final question in the remaining time.

The Belt and Road Initiative. We are hearing that the PRC and CCP is using the Belt and Road Initiative as a vehicle to implement extradition agreements with other countries so that these other governments are forced to hand over individuals the CCP may consider a dissident. Anyone want to comment on that?

Ms. Richardson. I'll note that the Chinese Government has certainly sought to establish extradition agreements with a lot of different kinds of governments, particularly recently in the region, I think with the view towards making it easier to have people sent

back.

It's already an enormous problem where I think the U.S. and other democracies could step up and be much more assertive about stepping in and offering to take people so that they are not forcibly returned to China.

Mr. Barr. Well, thank you for your testimony. And I do think this testimony does counsel in favor of criminalizing transnational repression.

And with that, I yield.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Our committee rules don't allow for audience participation. But to the gentleman who raised his hand, as soon as the hearing is done I look forward to hearing your story, because I know we have a lot of important people in the audience tonight.

Ms. Stevens is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Stevens. Jimmy Lai is an internationally respected entrepreneur and a leading campaigner for democracy and human rights in Hong Kong. He is the founder of the Apple Daily, a Chinese-language pro-democracy newspaper which was forced to close in June of 2021. Mr. Lai has been in detention in China since 2020. He will stand trial next week on charges of foreign collusion.

Ms. Kwok, are the charges against Mr. Lai and the detention of Mr. Lai legitimate?

Ms. Kwok. Definitely not, Congresswoman.

So in Hong Kong we have been seeing this huge trend of arbitrary detention of any political leaders who are opposing the Hong Kong government. And the Hong Kong government has been using the time that these people are detained to make up and fabricate evidence of crimes against them. And --

Ms. Stevens. And is this an attempt to silence a pro-democracy voice?

Ms. Kwok. Definitely.

Ms. Stevens. And so I mentioned that Apple Daily was forced to close in 2021. Why was that paper forced to shutter? And what is the state of independent journalism in Hong Kong today?

Ms. Kwok. The reason the Apple Daily was forced to shut down, alongside Stand News and other prominent independent media outlets in Hong Kong, was because they dared to speak up against the government. They dared to investigate into the truths of Hong Kong during the 2019 movement, and also before the 2019 movement, how the Hong Kong government has been colluding with, for example, organized crime and other Chinese -- pro-Beijing Chinese parties to harm the interests of Hong Kongers.

So in Hong Kong we are seeing that if you speak the truth then you are actually going to end up in jail.

Ms. Stevens. Do you expect that the 76-year-old Mr. Lai will get a fair trial or sentence?

Ms. Kwok. Definitely not. Mr. Lai is being tried by a handpicked and selected judiciary system.

Ms. Stevens. So at this moment I call on the CCP to immediately release Mr. Lai. His family deserves his safe return. In addition, I call for the release of all political prisoners in Hong Kong.

And I also want to take a moment to highlight that there are currently three Americans wrongfully detained by the CCP, Mark Swidan, David Lin, and Kai Li.

"Wrongfully detained," as we were hearing from Dr. Richardson, is a designation by the Secretary of State. It is based on the totality of circumstances, confirming that each of these individuals are being detained unjustly. And so while we could dedicate an entire hearing to just these three individuals, they have been detained for years.

And so, Dr. Richardson, what does the CCP gain from holding these individuals?

Is there a good reason?

Ms. Richardson. No.

Ms. Stevens. And so we need to call on China to release these individuals and to bring them home to their families.

I have the privilege of not only serving on this committee, but serving as the co-chair, alongside my colleague Congressman French Hill of Arkansas, on the Task Force on American Hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained Abroad.

We work to support those wrongfully detained and their families. We work with SPEHA. I think you made a phenomenal point, Dr. Richardson, that we do need to offer as much resources as possible. We should fully fund our government, fully fund the Office of SPEHA and then some, to support these families.

And this work has also come on the heels of my constituent, Paul Whelan, who is about to hit 5 years unjustly and wrongfully detained in Russia, a canary in the coal mine for international lawlessness that has been going on. And certainly we are having this hearing on the heels of supplemental funding to help us in our pro-democracy efforts across the world.

Funding for Taiwan, funding for Ukraine, funding for Israel, that also needs to happen immediately. Russia needs to release my constituent, Paul Whelan. We must continue to show strength. And we must continue to call out the CCP for their lawlessness.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mr. Moolenaar.

Mr. Moolenaar. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank our witnesses today. And again, like others have said, thank

you for your courage. It's really inspiring to hear.

I want to start with Mr. Zhang.

When you were confronted by your Georgetown classmate, I'm just curious to kind of hear what went through your mind in terms of, did you report it to the university? Did you have confidence that they would respond in an appropriate way? Kind of how did that work?

Mr. Zhang. Right. So when the incident happened, I was standing on the place called the Red Square on Georgetown's campus. And then I was handing out the fliers and then this person came to -- I believe he was going from one class to another class.

And then he violently told me that, "I do not want your fliers." And then he told me that, "I am going back to China. I'm getting a tenured position in China. And I believe you're trying to run away from China and stay in America, right?"

And then he told me, "Well, how much money did the American Government pay you for saying this?"

And I responded -- so I was really confused at this point, because I've not been receiving money from the American Government. So I responded, "No, I'm not receiving any money from the American Government."

And then the name-calling began. He called me a traitor and scum of the Earth for just trying to demonstrate against authoritarianism in China.

And then later on, for that incident in particular, I didn't report it to the Georgetown administration because of how really -- how brief that interaction was, and I was not really sure of the identity of that person. But just instances like this.

Mr. Moolenaar. I'm curious because I'm just wondering if the university administration would know how to handle something like that and how they would respond. And it's something to just consider as we think about our universities.

Dr. Richardson, tonight we've heard about the tactics the CCP engages in in transnational repression. Has the CCP used its corporate subsidiaries in America to advance its agenda of transnational repression?

Ms. Richardson. Well, I think if you think of, for example, social media, Chinese-based social media platforms, the answer is unambiguously yes.

But I can also imagine a longer conversation about companies that, for example, are involved in medical technology, science research, that are deeply involved in human rights violations in the mainland, whose business activities here I think implicate larger abuses. I'm trying to think of good examples of --

Mr. Moolenaar. Well, let me ask you a question. Do you think if a CCP-affiliated company is allowed to build a factory in the United States, would it be an extended arm of the CCP and possibly be used in repressive activities?

Ms. Richardson. Most large Chinese companies have a party office built into them. That's not necessarily always present in subsidiaries of those companies overseas. But I think you would want to know who exactly was working in a facility and what the oversight of it was.

Mr. Moolenaar. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Kwok, based on your experience with Hong Kong, what would you want the people of Taiwan to know?

Ms. Kwok. I think Hong Kong is a perfect case study of the tricks that the Chinese Communist Party is capable of doing. And that includes economic coercion. That includes the United Front network and their work in Hong Kong.

And I think for the Taiwan people, first they have to remember that the CCP, it's still an authoritarian government and they always want to export their authoritarian control to every single corner in the world.

So whatever promise they are making, it's not true. It's for the ultimate goal of actually putting their dictatorship around the world.

The reason why Hong Kong failed was because we trusted the CCP. The people of Hong Kong thought "One Country, Two Systems" would have worked. But it did not work because the CCP would never obey to whatever they agreed to.

So I think the people of Taiwan should be aware of that, and they should know that the CCP is not to be trusted. And the same goes to countries and governments around the world as well. Even if you gain short-term economic relief or economic benefits, it's not going to be long-lasting.

Mr. Moolenaar. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Mr. Khanna.

Mr. Khanna. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to you and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi for the strong bipartisan report that this committee put together that I think sends a clear message to the Chinese Communist Party.

What doesn't send a clear message, in my opinion, is when you have Chamber of Commerce members applauding Xi Jinping; when we have some of our politicians going to China without raising some of these issues.

And I guess I'd like your thoughts, Dr. Richardson and the panel, what message does it send when you have American business leaders or American politicians meeting with senior Chinese Communist officials and not raising these human rights issues?

Ms. Richardson. It guarantees impunity. It encourages more bad behavior. I mean, let's think back over the last 20 or 30 years in which even well-meaning administrations and diplomats and others have tried to press the Chinese Government for better compliance with the human rights standards it freely signed up to in international

treaties, and it's never enforced those, and business interests have always been put first, even as the violations committed by the government became progressively more serious, rising to the level of atrocity crimes.

And the fact that U.S. business leaders go ahead and have conversations with a government that's committing some of the worst crimes and that administrations have not sought to prioritize the pursuit of accountability for those crimes I think only ensures that we will see progressively worse crimes going forward.

Where is the deterrent put forward to the Chinese Government against atrocity crimes? I don't see it.

Mr. Khanna. As some of my colleagues know, I have suggested at some point members of the committee should meet with people in China. And one of the questions I'd have for you is, if some of us were to do that at some point, what would you say would be the most effective things we could do to advance these issues? And do you think it would be productive or not? Not a leading question; I'm genuinely curious about all three panelists' view. And if folks were to do it, how would we make it productive?

Ms. Richardson. Sorry, Mr. Khanna. Just to make sure I understand the question, you're imagining actually traveling to China and trying to --

Mr. Khanna. No, or meeting them here.

Ms. Richardson. Or meeting them here.

I think meeting with people and recognizing their realities and holding them up is extremely important and putting them on par with Chinese Government officials and soliciting their views.

In my view, the single most important thing that the U.S. Government should be pushing to do is actually investigating atrocity crimes and pursuing accountability for those, actually prosecuting the Chinese Government officials who are responsible for

genocide and crimes against humanity. I think that would be a transformative project.

Mr. Khanna. Mr. Zhang or Ms. Kwok, any thoughts?

Ms. Kwok. Yeah. So I think there are several things to do.

So first is not to set a precedent that human rights do not have to be mentioned. Last month Governor Newsom of California went to China and Hong Kong and he did not mention human rights. And he only did so after we repeatedly pressured him. But still, he refused a meeting with us before or after his trip.

So I think --

Mr. Khanna. Why do you think that was?

Ms. Kwok. Sorry?

Mr. Khanna. Why was that? Why did he do that?

Ms. Kwok. Why was he --

Mr. Khanna. Why did he refuse a meeting?

Ms. Kwok. I have no idea. So his scheduler said his schedule was too busy for us.

And I think it's important that, if any meeting is to happen with high-level officials from China, it's important to also meet with people like us. Listen to our concerns, know what is happening, educate yourself on the situations in our part of the world.

And secondly, so other than speaking to us, I think it's also important that if any officials were to come to the United States for a meeting, their personnel and other officials accompanying them on the trip should be vetted.

That is my new thought after what I saw in San Francisco. I saw that there were people who did not look like they are from the United States and they look like national security agents back in China.

I could recognize because that's the kind of people we would see in 2019 in Hong

Kong. And I think it's important to have a better vetting process whenever these trips or meetings were to happen.

Mr. Khanna. Thank you.

Chairman Gallagher. Mr. Banks.

Mr. Banks. In 2020, a Chinese national student at Purdue University in my home State posted an open letter honoring students who were killed at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Within days, the secret police visited his parents in China and forced them to call their son crying and begging him to stop his criticism of the party or else, quote, "We are all in trouble."

Instead of defending their fellow student, members of Purdue's Chinese Students and Scholars Association, or CSSA, denounced and threatened him.

One problem that we find with countering CCP's repression on U.S. campuses is that students reporting their peers to the CCP is not an obvious crime. So we don't have a good way to stop it.

Mr. Zhang, you faced this type of harassment and these threats to report you from your fellow students. Would you agree that the U.S. Government needs some way to deter students from reporting on their fellow students to the Chinese Communist Party? And how do we do that?

Mr. Zhang. I definitely agree that we should do more to deter this kind of behavior, because they, effectively, by doing this, they are helping the repression that is being carried out by the Chinese Government.

Mr. Banks. If the United States conditioned student visas in some way on the visa holder not reporting their fellow students to hostile foreign governments, would that help fix the problem?

Mr. Zhang. Yes, I think that would be a very good idea. And also maybe having some kind of mechanism in place to maybe cancel the student visa of people who are trying to be the agents of foreign governments that are hostile to the United States, that would be helpful as well.

Mr. Banks. Yeah. How would that be taken by other Chinese national students who come to the United States? Would they feel threatened from that or would that be a measure that might feel them more protected when they are here?

Mr. Zhang. I feel like the Chinese students who are having dissenting opinions from the Chinese Government would really appreciate that kind of legislation.

Mr. Banks. Very interesting.

Over the last several years we've seen evidence of Chinese diplomats funding and coordinating the disruption of anti-Communist Party events and the surveillance and punishment of dissident students, as we've been talking about.

Should the United States revoke the visas of foreign diplomats who surveil and threaten students on U.S. campuses or who engage in other kinds of transnational repression?

Mr. Zhang. I think if they are helping with the atrocities that are being committed by the Chinese Government, then yes.

Mr. Banks. Very good.

As some here tonight have already noted, Chinese Students and Scholars Associations, or CSSAs, as I talked about a moment ago, have aided and abetted the CCP's repression on U.S. campuses like they did at Purdue and like you've found at Georgetown.

Should Chinese Student and Scholars Associations that are financed and overseen by the Chinese Communist Party and other United Front organizations be forcibly removed from U.S. campuses?

Mr. Zhang. I think removing them from U.S. campuses would definitely be helpful to prevent more transnational repression from being carried out.

Mr. Banks. Yeah. Much like we have removed many Confucius Institutes on college campuses, these CSSAs seem like a similar threat.

Mr. Zhang. Yes, they are enjoying the protection of the systems of our universities, but they are trying to undermine that. So I think that is fair.

Mr. Banks. If CSSAs receive funding from the Chinese Government and engage in surveillance and repression of their fellow students on the party's behalf, should the U.S. Government force these groups to register perhaps as foreign agents?

Mr. Zhang. I think so, because they are receiving the funding from foreign governments and they are foreign agents.

Mr. Banks. I really appreciate your straightforward answer. This all seems like common sense, but you have a very unique and powerful perspective. So I appreciate that very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Ms. Brown is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Brown. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We should all be deeply concerned about the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party to silence critics around the globe through secretive activities, campaigns of disinformation, and outright illegal activity.

These attempts by the CCP to silence everyone from college students to minority ethnic groups pose a challenge to one of fundamental American ideals, the ability to criticize any government exercising freedom of speech rights.

Under President Biden our country has spoken with one voice in condemnation of

these offenses. Importantly, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said, "The United States rejects efforts by PRC officials to harass, intimidate, surveil, and abduct members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including those who seek safety abroad and U.S. citizens who speak out on behalf of these vulnerable populations."

So, Dr. Richardson, can you share the four pillars of the Biden-Harris administration's response to PRC transnational repression and why they are important?

Ms. Richardson. Thanks.

I will confess that I had to look this up to understand exactly the framing that you were referring to. But the administration thinks -- speaks about this with respect to accountability, working with third countries and international law enforcement in the private sector, to building the resilience of targeted communities, and to engaging allies and partners seem to be the four broad areas.

The rhetoric is good. I think the coordination across different agencies still leaves a lot to be desired. And I think there are still a lot of people who are affected by these problems who aren't necessarily being touched or served adequately by what the administration has set out, and particularly on building the resilience of targeted communities.

There are a lot of verbs here about engaging and advocating. I know far too many people who don't have the help and support and relief that they need.

Ms. Brown. Thank you.

And, Dr. Richardson, in addition to these significant actions taken by the Biden-Harris administration, why is it so important elected officials speak out boldly and publicly against CCP repression of critical speech?

Ms. Richardson. Well, first of all, to put the Chinese Government on notice that it is of concern not just to the administration, but to Members of Congress.

I think to encourage people who are affected by transnational repression to approach you and your staff members and to see their own experiences reflected in what you're talking about, I think that helps reassure people that there may be redress and maybe the vulnerabilities that they are dealing might actually be dealt with in ways that mitigate the problem.

Ms. Brown. Thank you.

The urgent need to combat hostile CCP activity and vitriol around the world and in the United States requires the House of Representatives' swift approval of President Biden's critical national security priorities supplemental funding request.

The President's strategic investments will provide decades of returns to the United States, our interests, and our allies. These investments will continue to strengthen security cooperation with close partners in the Indo-Pacific, blocking CCP efforts.

Our friends are on the front lines of a free and democratic world, and we have seen all too clearly there are forces, from Putin's Russia to CCP, attempting to destabilize, threaten, and undermine our precious liberties.

As President Biden says, the inflection point at which we find ourselves comes only once every couple of generations.

I know I speak for millions of Americans and people across the world when I say, thank you, President Biden, for your thoughtful, brave, and transformative leadership.

I hope my Republican colleagues will join me in passionately pushing for speedy approval of the President's emergency budget request.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Richardson, you noted in your testimony that transnational repression should be a priority of pushing back against -- it should be a priority in a variety of international and multilateral forums.

At last month's hearing, I talked about how China has worked pretty systematically to recraft the norms at the United Nations and other of these forums to really reduce scrutiny of China's abhorrent record on human rights.

And I suspect their abhorrent record on this sort of repression abroad also benefits from a reduced level of scrutiny or new norms at the U.N.

Give us some more sense of to what extent you've seen that.

Ms. Richardson. It's a serious problem. It ranges from the rhetorical phrases, like "win-win cooperation," all the way through to actual resolutions that the Chinese delegation will advance or get some of its allies to advance on its behalf.

It essentially seeks to do everything from exclude independent civil society from U.N. human rights proceedings and essentially reduce discussions to participation only by governments, but also to leach out of the U.N. the very idea of accountability, essentially leaving bodies that in some cases are the only redress or opportunities for recourse for the people who live in authoritarian regimes or whose governments are failing to protect them or to persecute them incapable, literally rendering them incapable of actually serving as forums for accountability.

Mr. Johnson. So, I mean, are there straight A students, are there countries that do a good job about talking about TNR at these multilateral forums?

Ms. Richardson. Certainly democracies are doing a better job of it. I'm not sure anybody gets -- I'm a tough grader, I wouldn't necessarily give anybody an A. I would go from B's down through sub F.

Mr. Johnson. So it just seems like this is the case so often when it comes to the

PRC and the Chinese Communist Party. People are a little concerned about maybe breaking too many eggs, breaking the china, that everybody sort of tiptoes around the really terrible, tyrannical behavior by this regime.

Is that a proper read on my part?

Ms. Richardson. Yes.

Mr. Johnson. So I want to talk about the National Endowment for Democracy, my understanding -- although I'm not an expert, I want to pick your brain -- supports programs related to digital security for Chinese dissidents.

Is this a tool that should be made better use of?

Ms. Richardson. As far as I know, they are very good programs. I'm a fan of the NED's work. I don't have intimate details about them. But certainly it's a topic, meaning about digital security for activists from the mainland, where all the more support would be really helpful.

Mr. Johnson. So, Mr. Zhang, I'll turn to you.

I think you mentioned -- well, I know you mentioned -- that WeChat was -- it was a terrifying moment when you talked about these messages between you and your family members, printoffs of them being presented to your family members.

Mr. Zhang. Yes, it was chat records between me and my mother and me and my sister, and they were shown to my father as printouts.

Mr. Johnson. So, clearly, there is no privacy on WeChat.

Mr. Zhang. Yeah. No, there is no privacy.

Mr. Johnson. Is that well understood by the Chinese diaspora across the globe?

Mr. Zhang. By the Chinese dissidents I would say it is very well understood that people won't discuss very sensitive matters that would tip off the Chinese Government on WeChat because it is heavily monitored.

Mr. Johnson. A little unfair for me to ask you to speak for the Chinese diaspora, the millions of people scattered across continents. But it does seem like it is almost an unsolvable puzzle for people who want to communicate with their family members. Their families members aren't allowed to have any free, fair apps that allow for private communication, encrypted communication.

And the people who -- I mean, WeChat, I have to imagine dissidents don't want to use that app because they know that it can be used as a tool against their family members.

Mr. Zhang. Yes, that is true, but sometimes it is the only way to reach their family members.

Mr. Johnson. So it is -- that's their only option. So they'll download it and they'll use it because it's at least some connection, even if it means they're not able to discuss cultural or political or other concerning matters with family members.

Mr. Zhang. Yes, I believe that is the case for a lot of dissidents.

Mr. Johnson. Is there something more that we could do to call attention to the fact that this, apps like TikTok and WeChat, help to continue this tyranny and this repression?

Mr. Zhang. I think in the ways that they are set up they are very friendly to authoritarian rulers, they are very easy to monitor. And I think there's algorithms in place that try to do some of the monitoring in the place of human censorship.

So there is definitely a lot more that we can do to try to limit those kinds of activities, especially when we use those apps on American soil. Then they are limiting American liberties.

Mr. Johnson. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Chairman Gallagher. Thank you.

Mrs. Steel.

Mrs. Steel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, for having this hearing, because this hearing is really very important and it's personal to me.

And I want to thank the witnesses for having the courage to speak out against the CCP. It's very hard to do because your families get involved with it.

And you know what? Before I start speaking, that the APEC meeting was held in San Francisco in my own State. I just wonder that why we even invited President Xi and we know that the CCP is the biggest threat to the United States and actually to the world.

I was really disappointed that our administration inviting Xi. And then, after the private meeting with President Biden, what we got out of it? Maybe we might going to bring panda back to the United States?

We really have to be practical. We are shining a light on the fact that the CCP suppresses free thought and individual liberty and we are seeing an uptick in transnational repression in recent years.

My own parents fled communism in Korea. And I know firsthand how this form of government is controlling and oppressive. And same story is what I hear from witnesses today that I heard from my parents about North Korea when they were under communism.

So having said that, I want to ask, Ms. Kwok, you're very courageous, and, Mr. Zhang, you are too, because if I am you, I mean, I'd get scared too if my families are in China.

You mentioned that we need to vet diplomats and personnel traveling to the United States on diplomatic trips. Why is this vital? What would you say to those who might have concerns that this would be Asian hating? Because I introduced a few bills against the CCP and I heard a few people were saying that we are going to increase Asian

hate crime because of that.

So what do you think and what do you say?

Ms. Kwok. Thank you, Congresswoman, for the question.

I think before I comment on the issue I do have to recognize that Asian hate is a very prominent problem in this country. As someone who has been living here for 7 to 8 years now, I have also encountered myself racism against Asians.

But at the same time, I don't think the fear of xenophobia should mean not progressing in terms of how we explore policy opportunities to work to combat transnational repression.

So for things we can do and why we have to vet diplomats, firstly, the reason is because they are here. When they do come accompanying high-level officials to have their meetings here in the United States, as I said earlier, I did see people who looked like national security police from the Chinese Government. And the only reason that I could so confidently assert that was because I'm a Hong Konger and I have seen that happening in Hong Kong.

And secondly, the reason is because if we don't vet these individuals, once they are here they can do whatever crimes they want. They can harass and assault whoever they want. And then they get on a plane and they fly back to China and there is no way to hold them accountable.

And by then it will also be too late to protect anyone who actually was hurt in these injuries. For instance, there are still people who were hurt and injured during the APEC summit that are still sustaining even trauma in their heads and they have concussions. Until today they are still having to go to the doctors to have their MRI scans and see what's going on.

And that's why I think vetting diplomats and vetting personnel who come to the

U.S. is very important. But at the same time, as I have said before, I think it's really important also to provide a nuanced understanding to the general public as well on how holding China accountable does not equate to xenophobia. But at the same time holding China accountable should also not contribute to the rhetoric that is spreading any sort of Asian hate.

So I think it's really important for bipartisan members to work on this issue together. And I think there is still a lot of room and opportunities for us to find out a nuanced and more comprehensive narrative to tackle this matter. And I also would appreciate if more Asian Americans can speak up on this matter.

So on this note, I think it's important for us to keep doing some things, but at the same time we have to stay sensitive about the solutions.

Mrs. Steel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have a couple more questions but I will submit in writing. Thank you.

Chairman Gallagher. Great. Questions for the record are due 1 week from today, on December 20th.

Thank you. Thank you to all of our witnesses for your excellent testimony. I think this is a fantastic way to end the first year of the committee's work. This thing was created. It did not exist a year ago. It was the idea of the former Speaker of the House.

I remember going to -- I rarely go to caucus meetings, but I happened to one day over a year ago. And I looked at the Speaker's proposal for his Contract With America and one of the bullet points was a select committee on China. And I thought, "Hey, that's a great idea."

And then when he asked me to chair it, I was surprised but very excited. And then when the ranking member was appointed I was even more excited. And then

when the committee was populated with incredibly serious, thoughtful, bipartisan members, I was really excited.

And we've had a phenomenal year. So I want to thank all the members for their commitment.

Mr. Johnson. Will the gentleman yield?

Chairman Gallagher. I will.

Mr. Johnson. Of course you would never toot your own horn, sir, but I would just say we have been blessed with a chairman and a ranking member that have been models of thoughtful partnership and bipartisanship, and the country is better because of your leadership. And I will push my luck and ask if maybe the room could give the two of you a round of applause.

[Applause.]

Chairman Gallagher. I will always yield for applause.

We have had some notable misses. I think we've had four overseas trips that have been canceled because of budgetary dysfunction, Speaker deposals, and things like that. But we will travel abroad soon, or we'll at least try again.

And if the members have ideas for how we can improve our processes going forward, if you'd rather do morning hearings rather than night hearings -- yes? We can consider that. I know how the ranking member feels about that.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. May I?

Chairman Gallagher. Of course.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. First of all, yes, morning would be great.

Chairman Gallagher. Everyone shows up at night.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. But any time is primetime with you. So it's all good.

But can I just say a word about the committee and the membership and the staff?

Can you give the staff especially a big round of applause?

[Applause.]

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. They work their tails off, the directors all the way down.

And their snack game is amazing, by the way.

Chairman Gallagher. Calvin.

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. Calvin.

[Laughter.]

[Applause.]

Mr. Krishnamoorthi. And then finally two things, Chair.

Thank you so much for your true bipartisanship. I think it's a model. It's kind of an -- this committee's like an oasis for a lot of us from what's happening in the rest of Congress right now, honestly. And I think a lot of us spend a lot of time on this work, obviously because we're passionate about it, but also because we enjoy actually the subject matter and the way that we get to interact with each other.

And finally, I just want to say thank you to the witnesses. I mean, you inspire us. Thank you.

[Applause.]

Chairman Gallagher. One final note.

Wait, the Oversight Committee doesn't operate this way?

One final note. This is the last day for one of our intrepid staff members, Matt Wein, who is our senior advisor and member of the comms team.

As one does, Matt Wein left a highly successful, much more lucrative career on Wall Street to come work on the Hill for a year. His thinking and his writing really set the foundation for a lot of our work. A lot of the themes that you hear expressed in every hearing are the result of his pen and his mind. Anything I've said that sounds

reasonably smart is probably something he's written.

And he has also developed in the course of the year's work a deep connection with the human rights community, starting with the first event we ever did, in New York, the protest outside the illegal CCP police station, where an hour before he warned me this is either going to be a big success or you might get mobbed during this. It turned out to be a big success.

And Matt also happens to be my best friend going back to freshman year of college. I would recommend all of you have the experience of working with your best friend for a year on a truly important mission, because it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

So, Matt, thank you for everything you've done.

[Applause.]

Chairman Gallagher. All right. Without objection, the committee hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 8:44 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]