

Written Statement Presented at CECC Hearing on

China in 1989 and 2015: Tiananmen, Human Rights, and Democracy

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by Ho Pin

Representative Smith and Senator Rubio:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to stand here today and give voice to a brave Chinese journalist, Ms. Gao Yu, who has recently been imprisoned on fictitious charges for the third time. The seventy-one-year-old Gao Yu merely fulfilled her duty as a journalist and shared the truth that she knew with the public. Gao Yu's case is not isolated. More and more writers, thinkers, and human rights lawyers are being illegally detained or imprisoned. They include Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, economist Iham Tohti, writer Xu Zhiyong, lawyer Pu Zhiqiang. The list goes on.

Over the years, many people have stood in this very spot, urging the world to pay attention to China's human rights abuses. But, this solitary light in the darkness has not been able to illuminate China's blatant violations or pierce through the smog shrouding all the injustices. Therefore, I don't want to go that route again and focus solely on China's human rights issues or to condemn the Chinese government like others have done before. I want to raise some questions instead.

With its deteriorating human rights records, why is China getting stronger by the day? Why are Chinese leaders getting more popular in the international community? Is China building its national strength for the sole purpose of jockeying for the number one position with the United States? Will China engage in a war with the United States and its Asian neighbors such as Japan and Philippines? Will the world return to a cold war?

These are not new questions. American experts have already provided some answers. Some scholars believe that there is a secret "bamboozling" department within the Communist Party. It has designed strategies that have successfully deceived the world and gained China several decades of time to develop. Some say the rule of the Chinese Communist Party is already approaching its end and the regime is on the verge of collapsing. Others claim that US-China relations have deteriorated to a critical point and that the US should throw China some candies to lure it back to the right track.

So what are my views?

First, I believe that China has risen, and it has, as advertised, risen peacefully. China is the world's No.2 economy and has splashed huge amount of investment across the globe. Millions of wealthy Chinese travelers flock to every famous tourist site and the most expensive department stores. It would be impossible to close your eyes and ignore China's rise. The only thing China has yet to achieve is the number one position in the world.

At the same time, China's rise has not led to any wars. Even though the Chinese army has been acting like a belligerent hormone-raging teenager in the South and East China Seas over the last few years, I don't think the Chinese leadership has plans or the desire to start a war in Asia. Especially when they are not psychologically prepared to lose a war. The most arrogant and bold military commanders can merely strike a pose through minor incursions or the intimidation of the militarily weak Philippines. With the exception of its strategic missile defense systems, which aims to deter, rather than invade, the Chinese army doesn't yet have the ability to project its power around the globe. Even in the Pacific region, Chinese navy and air forces are not capable of a sustaining war against Japan and the US.

In other words, China lacks the ability to launch a large-scale war in the Pacific theater in the foreseeable future, not to mention launching a world war like the Nazi Germany did. China does not have the capability, nor the guts. It's not their intention. There is no Adolf Hitler in China. More importantly, the Chinese leadership doesn't see the necessity.

In addition, China has no plans to engage in a cold war with the West, United States included. The current political system in China cannot be defined in conventional terms. It's neither socialism, nor capitalism. It's not an empire in the traditional sense. It is a mongrel. One of the most famous maxims of Deng Xiaoping states that "It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice." Therefore, the end justifies the means. While this pragmatic philosophy has contributed to China's rapid economic growth, it also turned the Chinese political system into a twofaced monster the likes of which one normally sees only in computer games. Like the legendary cat that has nine lives, it's adaptable and resilient.

As a consequence, many incomprehensible things have happened - the ruling Communist Party has defied expectation and lived on. The government can blatantly repeat something that is universally acknowledged as lies. For example, the Communist Party is promoting an anti-West agenda in its internal documents. The Communist Party's propaganda machine distorts truths about Western democracies to prevent the pursuit of democratic values by its citizens and to threaten its citizens who are trying to demand the rights to select their own leaders, criticize their governments and use the law to protect themselves. On the other hand, the Communist Party has long abandoned socialist theories. Many leaders are big fans of Western democratic societies. They send their children to study in the West or secretly help their relatives who intend to emigrate. Some view the fact that they can visit the West as a badge of honor. I have met and talked with many Chinese officials when they traveled in the U.S., and hardly anyone was a true opponent of Western values. On the contrary, they all agree that a democratic system can guarantee fairness and bring stability to the country.

In other words, the Chinese leaders have no intention of building another Berlin Wall. Neither do they plan to start a cold war with the West. They have no desire to impose their systems on the West because they can't even define the kind of political system China has. There is no Stalin in China and nobody wishes to be his disciple. President Xi Jinping has heaped praise on Putin, but his praise has its own purpose. President Xi admires Putin's personal power. It is true that the Chinese president stood side by side with Putin to inspect the troops in the Red Square a few days ago, but that doesn't mean

that China and Russia can establish an alliance against the U.S. Mistrust of Russian by the Chinese government and people is deep-seated and hard to dispel.

Thirdly, the conflicts between China and the West are not about ideology or cultures. The mainstream religion, in China has long served as a tool to unite all factions of society. Religion, a tamed pussycat, is becoming an integral part of the Communist Party. The Chinese are not capable of starting a holy war against the West. They wouldn't even dare. Nationalism is nothing more than lip service. The Chinese leaders use this type of neurotic nationalism to cover up their empty and phony ideology. No leaders would want nationalism to become fanatical and get out of control. Overheated nationalism could set the house of the party on fire.

If the above are true, why are we worried? We should not only be concerned but also alarmed. It's not a matter of which country will be the world's number one. The changes in China will impact the world. If China can integrate itself into the civilized world, in which people's rights and self-determination are respected, the world will enter a new era. Mankind can truly base their thinking and policies on a common destiny. If the Chinese Communist Party, with its terrible records on human rights and stellar results in economic development, is allowed to continue, it will not only bring disaster to the Chinese people, but also destruction to the whole world. It is neither an actual war with weapons, nor is it a cold war between two ideological camps. It's not a conflict of cultures and value systems. China's mongrel and pragmatic nature has made its system more adaptable and more powerful. Its ability to destroy the world's political and biological environments and to spread such destructive power is beyond even its own expectation. A virus starts with just a few patients. Soon, it spreads to every corner, causing a worldwide outbreak. This is what China will do to the world - destroy the very foundation of human freedom.

What I want to emphasize is that this is not what the Chinese leadership envisioned thirty years ago. Neither is it the political ambition of the current leadership. The current situation is the consequence of human weakness, the short-sightedness of politicians of the West, the insatiable greed of unscrupulous capitalists and the distorted social and political structure in China. Together, they have created such a virus, or at the very least, they have provided opportunity for it to mutate and spread.

Two months after the Chinese government brutally cracked down on the student movement in China on June 4th, 1989, President George Bush provided prompt support for Deng Xiaoping through his secret envoy. The collapse of the former Soviet Union and East European Communism made many politicians in the West complacent. They forgave and accepted the paranoid and humble Chinese leaders. In return, Deng Xiaoping and his successors initiated open door and economic reform policies. These reforms didn't bring any political progress. Instead, China took advantage of the technology from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the West and the benefits of the WTO to boost its economy at the cost of social equality and its environment. Once the Communist Party strengthened its power through its strong economy, it went on to undermine Western opposition to China's human rights practices.

Now, the Chinese leadership practically doesn't care at all about the pressure from Western public opinion because politicians and businessmen from around the world are salivating at China's immense

purchasing power, investment and markets. It's no exaggeration to say that today, Chinese leaders are the most well-received, honored guests in a majority of countries worldwide; China is the destination for many of the world's elite who thirst for gold.

Beijing tightly controls the freedom of the press. They could cut off Google and Yahoo anytime; they'd refused visas for New York Times journalists, and blocked access to Twitter and Facebook. All without impunity. While at the same time, they can set up any media they would like in the US. They provide free trips to Chinese language media chieftains in the West to receive training in China, and they even hire secret hackers to attack independent Chinese media outlets overseas. Ironically, China, which screens, censors and bans any print and electronic publication, has been invited to serve as the country of honor at book fairs in Frankfurt, London, and New York!

Hollywood is the epitome of free American culture; filmmakers are free to ridicule, mock, and criticize American politicians and government officials such as senators, judges, and the president, without fear of persecution. But in their pursuit of China's box office dollars, Hollywood executives have consciously decided to steer clear of any criticism of the Chinese government. Despite this, American movies are still censored in China, and some are not allowed at all.

Given these circumstances, does China's leadership have to risk it all and start a war? Does China have to close its doors once again and restart the cold war against the West? They can get everything they need and they can reject everything they don't want.

The problem lies in the fact that the West pursues short-term economic interests by ignoring the worsening of Chinese people's rights. Western corporations scrambled to do business with China regardless of the record of human rights violations. A desire for profit with no social conscience encourages the growth of this new style of politics in China. It is tantamount to striking the core of every lesson Chinese officials learned about conducting their political business worldwide. Meanwhile, the cash that the Communist Party waves in their hands has made it possible for the China virus to spread unencumbered in the world, causing the value of Western freedom to grow weaker, feebler, and more and more susceptible to illness.

China was never a threat before. It was the Western world that has made the Chinese leadership think the West could easily be threatened.

So what can we conclude? No one can figure it out, because no one is consciously aware; to a certain extent, we have all been infected by the virus. Otherwise, we would not feel so confused and lost, so powerless. And because of our inaction and complacency, Gao Yu, Liu Xiaobo, Ilham Tohti, Wang Bingzhang, Xu Zhiyong, and Pu Zhiqiang are languishing in prisons. Chinese citizens who died 26 years ago in Tiananmen Square and now lie in the ground have turned into lonely ghosts wandering in the wild. Dawn has yet to arrive in China. If we continue along this muddy, murky road, we will also be swallowed by the darkness.

The reason that I'm standing here today is that the scene I saw 26 years ago in Tiananmen Square still has not faded from my memory. I share the pain of those who lost friends and relatives in Tiananmen

square. I firmly believe that things could change if America were to wake up from its vacant and passive view of China. America is not a narrow-minded nationalist empire. America represents the values established by people who pursue the dream of freedom. This means that America is destined to be responsible for people who are pursuing similar dreams in other countries. I am not advocating war between China and the US. I absolutely don't want confrontation between China and the US. I don't think it is necessary for another Pearl Harbor to wake up the American people. I hope that America will become the driving force for democracy and human rights in China. The very least we can do is to take actions that will not encourage the continued growth of a dangerous political virus in China that values cash more than freedom and human rights. We can, and should, work to assure the Chinese people their dignity, to assure a long-term friendship between the US and China, and to assure the security of the cornerstone of freedom for the whole world.

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