



**Statement of U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown,  
Chairman of the Congressional-Executive  
Commission on China (CECC)**

**CECC Hearing on “Tiananmen at 25:  
Enduring Influence on U.S.-China Relations  
and China’s Political Development”  
Tuesday, May 20, 2014**

As prepared for delivery.

Today, we remember an event that occurred 25 years ago, but that continues to resonate in so many ways.

Twenty-five years ago, millions of people across China—*not just in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, but across China*—rallied in support of democracy, human rights, and an end to corruption.

Like many Americans at the time, I was inspired and moved by their courage and their pursuit of those fundamental freedoms – freedoms that we hold dear – and at times – take for granted.

I recall the optimism of that moment and how it was crushed when the troops and the tanks rolled in.

Today, we assess what the last 25 years have meant and what our policy toward China should be going forward.

In my view, opportunities were missed after Tiananmen.

We missed an opportunity to integrate China into the global community, while also ensuring that our economic interests were

protected and that China moved in the right direction on political reform.

Not an easy task, to be sure, but 25 years later, China is still a fundamentally undemocratic country and one that stubbornly refuses to play by the international rule of law.

In many respects, China reaped the benefits of open trade with the rest of the world, while avoiding many of its obligations.

Today, 800 million Chinese people still do not enjoy the basic right to vote.

Chinese citizens, including those who in recent weeks have bravely tried to commemorate Tiananmen, are imprisoned – simply for peacefully exercising their rights to free speech, assembly, and religion. These include human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang and writer Hu Shigen.

A generation of people – inside and outside China – knows little about the events that transpired 25 years ago, other than the government's official line.

Emboldened by growing economic clout that we in many ways supported, China's Communist leaders are sowing instability through alarming and increasingly risky attempts to exert its territorial claims in the region.

And just yesterday we were reminded of the lengths China will go to gain an unfair advantage for its state-owned enterprises and industries. The Department of Justice charged five members of China's People's

Liberation Army with hacking into the computers networks of the United Steelworkers Union and major U.S. companies like U.S. Steel, Alcoa, and Allegheny Technologies. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

In 1989, our trade deficit with China stood at 6 billion dollars.

By 2013, the trade deficit had grown more than 50 times to 318 billion dollars – the highest ever. That trade deficit and China’s currency manipulation has cost Americans millions of jobs.

In the end, we compromised too much and bought into the myth that China’s economic integration after Tiananmen would inevitably bring about human rights and respect for international rules.

In my view, that’s not what happened.

The question now is, how do we fashion a better policy toward China?

Through this Commission, we have tried to honor the memory of Tiananmen by making sure China’s human rights and rule of law record is not forgotten in our discussions over China.

Over the past year, we have highlighted many concerns—cybertheft, threats to democracy in Hong Kong, illegal and unfair trade practices, denials of visas to foreign journalists, food safety, environmental, and public health concerns, and a crackdown on human rights activists, including Ilham Tohti, a peaceful advocate for the Uyghur minority group.

In the Senate, I have pushed a bipartisan bill to combat China's currency manipulation.

It is my hope that we have an open and transparent debate about our China policy – whether it be on trade agreements that relate to China or on growing Chinese foreign investment in this country.

Our debate must give proper weight, rather than ignore our concerns over human rights, the rule of law, labor, public health, and the environment.

Above all, the debate must include all segments of our society, from our workers and small businesses, to NGOs and human rights groups, instead of just being led by powerful interest groups such as large corporations, some of which have a checkered history with China.

It is only in doing so, and continuing to work for improvements on China's human rights and rule of law record, that we can faithfully honor the memory of Tiananmen and ensure that the sacrifices were not made in vain.