

HEARING

ARIA in Action, Part 1: Human Rights, Democracy, and the Rule of Law

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Dr. Michael Pillsbury points out in his book *The Hundred-Year Marathon* that Chinese Communist Party leaders are aiming to challenge American leadership in the world. In their minds, “every place could be a battlefield in the future.” Chinese leaders are indeed currently treating every single country in the world as their own battlefield now as they take extraordinary measures to target individuals and whole governments to keep them quiet and passive to the world’s largest mass incarceration of an ethnic minority since the 1940s.

This re-emergence on Earth of concentration camps is happening in my homeland of East Turkestan, home to more than 11 million Uyghurs, in what the Chinese government refers to as its “New Frontier” – Xinjiang. Formally, China calls it the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, but in reality, there is no autonomy – just an Orwellian mass surveillance state where Uyghurs are treated as an “other” and subjected to forced *Sinification* as Chinese Han rapidly settle there, and more than one million Uyghurs are arbitrarily detained outside the legal system in concentration camps.

Since early 2017, the Chinese government has conducted a policy of mass disappearance, internment, and imprisonment of Uyghur people. Experts have estimated the number of Uyghurs interned in the concentration camps at between 800,000 to 1.5 million, in addition to approximately 1.5 million imprisoned formally, making this campaign targeting an ethnic minority – in this case Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs – the most extensive since the Second World War. In March 2019, researcher Adrian Zenz estimated the number of Uyghurs and Turkic people interned outside of the formal prison system at 1.5 million. The few survivors’ reports emerging from the camps describe an alarming catalog of crimes against humanity, including torture and deaths in custody. Incessant political indoctrination, enforced silence, inhuman conditions, and denial of Uyghur ethnic identity is part of the daily routine in these facilities.

The camps are the result of decades of repressive and assimilatory policies by the Chinese government that aim to totally assimilate and socially reengineer the Uyghur people. Due to the Chinese government’s information blockade, many people in the world do not even know about

the plight of the Uyghur people. The tragedy unfolding today is beyond comprehension and only comparable to some of the worst human rights atrocities the world has ever seen. Everything that makes the Uyghur people unique has been treated as an abnormality and targeted: language, culture, history, religion, and ethnic identity. According to the Chinese ambassador to the US, Beijing is trying to turn Uyghurs into “normal persons”. Today, all normal religious activities are banned for the Uyghurs as though they constituted a form of religious extremism that must be eradicated under a “War on Terror” pretext. Utilizing this anti-terrorism pretext, China has developed a mass surveillance police state, complete with DNA collection, ubiquitous cameras, facial recognition software, and GPS tracking devices on vehicles. There are QR codes on Uyghur homes and even utensils. The entire region is marked. Punishment is collective, aimed at Uyghur culture. This is the testing ground for China’s vision for using technology and artificial intelligence to subject all individuals to an unimaginably invasive authoritarian state. What China tries out in Xinjiang against Uyghurs will surely be deployed against other minorities in Tibet and against China’s more than 300 million Han Christians and even against the Han population generally in order to keep the ever-diminishing Communist Party, that actually rules as an authoritarian kleptocracy siphoning the country’s wealth into officials’ pockets, in power.

Today, the entire Uyghur population faces persecution and arbitrary detention. Every family is affected. Fear is intentionally instilled by the authoritarian regime. Famous Uyghurs and those well known for having a voice, have been silenced to completely eliminate anyone who might cultivate or defend Uyghur ideas and values. Uyghur elites, philanthropists, shop-owners, intellectuals, professors, writers, journalists, doctors, academics, actors, and entertainers are primary targets. At least 386 identified Uyghur intellectuals imprisoned or forcibly disappeared since April 2017 clearly reveal the falsity of the Chinese government’s continuously repeated claim that those camps are somehow for “vocational training” in addition to targeting “religious extremists”.

According to numerous testimonies, detainees in those camps are subjected to food and sleep deprivation, forced medication, and torture leading to brutal deaths; and the dead are cremated to leave no evidence. Radio Free Asia reports the government is constructing massive crematoria throughout the region nearby the concentration camps for a culture that does not believe in cremation. Is this not a potent warning sign to the whole world? Conditions in the camps are so intolerable that a brother of my high school classmate, Qeyser Qeyyum, who was the chief editor of a literature magazine, committed suicide in September 2018 by jumping from an 8th-floor window when he received the order for his arrest and detention.

I am a vocal human rights activist for my people. I decided to help expose the atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese government in Xinjiang, the fate of my in-laws, and the conditions inside the camps as one of the panelists at the Hudson Institute on September 5, 2018. Six days later, my sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, and my aunt were abducted as Beijing’s tactic to silence me and stop my lawful activism inside the United States, which is my Constitutional right. Since September 11, 2018, my sister is detained in Xinjiang’s Orwellian political re-education camps in retaliation for my public advocacy here in my own country. Both my sister and my aunt are unusual targets. They are not famous; they are not educators, writers or scholars. Neither has traveled to any foreign Muslim country, and they both speak Mandarin Chinese fluently. I say this because Uyghurs are often targeted when they travel abroad (under the suspicion of

“collusion” with “terrorism” or “foreign powers”) or if they cannot speak Mandarin (which is seen by the Chinese central government as a sign either of ignorant backwardness or nationalist rebellion).

My sister worked in a government-run hospital as a medical doctor before she retired early for medical reasons. Neither she nor my aunt fit any of the usual criteria for so-called “vocational training centers.” The only reason for their abduction is “guilt by association” with me – an American who dared to exercise her freedom of speech inside the U.S. They became victims of reprisal by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for my free speech in the United States. I have been a proud citizen of the United States for 25 years, yet the long arm of the Chinese communist regime has extended its reach across borders to ravage my heart by jailing the only close family it could. China’s targeting of Americans to take away their Constitutional right to free speech must be deterred by the United States as it is otherwise a highly effective attack on individual Americans. And China is repeating these attacks regularly against Uyghurs in every country to silence them. Physical attacks are far less troubling psychologically than China’s current unanswered tactics. Knowing my sister’s health conditions, I am extremely worried for her. I am not sure if she is able to tolerate the intentionally harsh conditions of the camps this long and survive when she is facing food and sleep deprivation, dehydration, forced medication of unknown chemicals, and physical and mental abuse for over 7 months now.

My niece is here with us today. She came from Florida, where she lives with her husband and 9-month-old baby. She wants to know if her mother is alive. Her husband and I both served this country as DOD contractors supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Guantanamo, Cuba, as U.S. citizens. Please help us get information about my sister. We do not have any information on her since her unlawful detention. This is a specific attack on American citizens that needs an answer by our government. It is too much for individual Americans to have to bear alone while our government takes no meaningful action to deter China from targeting Americans intentionally via their family members. We worry for my sister’s health conditions. It is devastating not knowing what has happened to my sister. We feel stranded. Isolated.

Do we have a government that would defend its citizens from such targeted attacks against them? Or is the lure of a trade deal sufficient to buy off yet another country’s silence when the whole world should be saying “Never Again!” right now to China via sanctioning the perpetrators and their enablers? If China can keep the U.S. silent in action before a trade deal, it has already won in linking the two issues together. We must reject such linkage and assure the authoritarians of this world that they hold no power over us either as individuals or as governments to silence us. I will not be silenced. Will you stand by as our country remains silent when U.S. law – the Global Magnitsky Act’s targeted sanctions on gross human rights violators – has yet to be meaningfully applied against China for its concentration camps?

Ms. Zeynep Ablajan here with us today is the wife of a famous Uyghur scholar Yalqun Rozi. Yalqun Rozi worked on compiling Uyghur textbooks with the Chinese government’s request. However, Beijing changed its laws later and eliminated the Uyghur language. Consequently, Yalqun Rozi’s work became his crime and he was sentenced 15 years in jail.

Like so many other Uyghurs in the U.S. and around the world, my family's and Ms. Ablajan's stories are not unique. Almost every Uyghur in the U.S. has friends and family detained—sometimes dozens and dozens of family members detained.

Beijing's human rights abuses do not stop in East Turkestan; they terrorize psychologically the entire Uyghur Diaspora. Uyghurs living abroad are in despair. They cannot communicate with their families. They cannot get any information on where their missing relatives are located or even if they are alive or dead. The harsh situation in East Turkestan is affecting their work, schooling, daily activities, emotional states, and health. Helplessness, obscurity, pessimism and depression are growing, and they are suffering from intensely traumatic chronic fear and anxiety. Many young students abroad no longer receive the funds sent by their parents back in East Turkestan for their schooling because the Chinese Government has stopped all money transfers abroad, frozen financial accounts, or simply detained their families. They are facing hardships in their lives and are often unable to continue their education. While the U.S. government has yet to demand with actions that China empty its concentration camps, it has also failed to even address the follow-on effects happening within its borders. Surely there could be some program to assist Uyghur students whose parents are taken into the concentration camps. If that is too financially burdensome for the U.S. government, please start charging the Chinese officials responsible for the concentration camps whose relatives enjoy ease of access to western education here in the U.S.

I personally know several young Uyghur girls in NY and Boston who came to the U.S. as international students and who have one or both parents who have disappeared into the vast system of concentration camps. Their relatives back home have told them not to go back and not to call them. Since they no longer receive financial support from home, suddenly their lives in this new environment are turned upside down. Instead of focusing on their college studies for future career success, these young women in their early 20's are worried about their school tuition, daily living expenses, and their younger siblings left behind at home alone or sent to orphanages in mainland China. Financial hardship and emotional distress have taken a toll on their emotional, mental, and physical health. Certainly the U.S. Congress can effectively address this particular hardship caused by China's concentration camps but experienced within our own borders.

Miss Adila Sadir, a young Uyghur lady living in Boston is an American citizen. More than thirty of her relatives are in the concentration camps, with ages ranging from a 20-year-old to a grandfather who is 90 years old. Why would the U.S. government not ask by name for the freedom of Americans' relatives when they are intentionally targeted for being Americans' relatives? Please start asking by name for their freedom. And if that list grows to record every individual of the more than one million victims inside China's concentration camps, please deliver a hardcopy to President Xi personally with the request that they be freed.

To combat the backlash China is receiving from some of the western countries pertaining to the Uyghur crisis, the Chinese government is pressuring countries that they have influence over to make public statements showing support of the camps to justify what they are doing and ultimately weaken the opposition of western countries. This is unsurprising when you look at how countries influenced by China act within the United Nations. China is the second largest

donor to the UN and economically dependent countries turn a blind eye to China's actions. China has been granting loans and paying for infrastructure projects in poor countries around the globe, knowing that those countries cannot pay them back, as a means to buy their silence in the United Nations and bully them on other political matters. China claims it is "anti-terrorism and de-extremization work protecting its national security." The only "crime" of my sister and the other million Uyghurs in China's *Gulag* is being ethnic Uyghurs.

What the Chinese government is doing is evil. It is a crime against humanity. It threatens life and liberty. Collective punishment of an entire ethnic group with atrocities not seen since Fascism should not be allowed in 2019. Most of the world remains silent while over a million Uyghurs are detained, stripped of their culture and language, and forced to swear fealty to the Chinese Communist Party and Xi Jinping. The U.S. began speaking up a year ago in response to China's actions, but it has yet to take even the slightest action to separate itself from the perpetrators and enablers. Indeed, while existing U.S. law remains unimplemented by the Treasury, U.S. companies, researchers, technologies, and even CA and NY teachers are being found to be complicit in providing services, funding, and high tech used inside the concentration camps. Secretary of Education DeVos' own brother, Erik Prince, even had a company that announced its intention to build a training center for China's security personnel in Xinjiang.

Thousands of Uyghur children have been forcibly separated from their families and put into state run orphanages as a means to assimilate them into Chinese culture. Dilnur Enver, a mother of three, went to Istanbul in 2016 to study for a master's degree. Her two young children (ages 5 and 7) were left with their grandparents in Qashqar. In April 2017, the local police in Qashqar contacted her and requested her immediate return; otherwise she would be punished. Dilnur knew the returnees from Egypt and Turkey were arrested and died or disappeared with no trace. So she did not return. Her children were then taken from their own grandparents. As of today, she does not know their whereabouts. While China takes such extraordinary measures to pressure Uyghur exiles to return to be sent to the concentration camps, very few countries have even turned off deportations of Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs to China, let alone asked or taken actions to deter China from such now routine methods to pressure people within their borders to comply with whatever China asks, even turning some into spying agents for China.

Many male Uyghur detainees were moved from the "New Frontier" to mainland China last year. As predominantly Uyghur men are locked away in concentration camps, Uyghur women are being forced to marry Chinese men with government gratifications such as money, housing, and jobs for such inter-ethnic marriages. Neither the girls nor their families may reject such marriages for fear of repercussions.

The Associated Press reported recently that according to the Communist Party's official newspaper, 1.1 million Chinese cadres deployed to live inside Uyghurs' living rooms, dining areas, and even their bedrooms, and asked their children to spy on them. Yet, the world is silent. Worse, the OIC recently "commended" China, not condemned it, for its treatment of Uyghur Muslims.

As reported recently, in the last several years China invested billions of dollars in what is coined "debt-trap" diplomacy with foreign countries. This includes projects in Kenya, Malaysia,

Ethiopia, Pakistan, and the list goes on and on. These deals translate to much more than just money when it comes to foreign diplomacy. China is able to use economic pressure that it has on these countries in order to manipulate them politically. This manifests itself in many ways, but one of the most alarming is influence over the effectiveness of the United Nations. The United Nations was created in 1945 as a means of keeping international peace and security. But with China's overwhelming influence over key UN members through economic pressure, and the fact that China is the second largest donor to the United Nations, it has been able to halt criticism of its human rights abuses to barely above a whisper. What concentration camps? Where? International inspections – we'll handle that by offering carefully guided tours and keeping them well away from the razor-wire-topped walls and heavily guarded "vocational training centers" where instead of textbooks and pencils, officials procured batons, torture devices, and riot gear for them.

China is getting away with genocide while advancing its economic power. The Uyghurs have become human collateral. Unfortunately for the Uyghurs, their heartland lies in the strategic center of Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, and the land resides on top of the richest oil reserve in China. China is evidently resolved to eliminate Uyghurs through genocidal measures, but of course to be consistent with so many past genocides, countries are not even close to using that word lest they be required to act to stop it. With over 2 million people thrown into concentration camps and prisons arbitrarily, and millions more displaced, China is getting away with atrocities in front of the entire world. You would think all other countries would speak out against China's massive human rights abuses, especially Muslim countries, but China counts on their silence and believes it can uniquely get away with it at this time when the U.S. is evidently not prepared even to ask the rest of the world to stop deporting Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs to China since they are effectively sending them directly into the concentration camps.

It is no secret that China created militarized islands on top of coral reef reserves in the South China Sea. This land grab effectively extended their sea territory and increased tensions over disputed waters in the South China Sea. Keep that in mind when looking at the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)'s projected path so you are not surprised. Taking over the land is not enough for China, there is also a projected sea path for the BRI which will drastically affect neighboring countries and threaten the security of the democratically independent Taiwan. Control over key sea passages will choke out economic competition in the area and enhance China's authority in the Indo-Pacific region. From North to South, and East to West, China's growth and thirst for power is ceaseless. Bullying and manipulation of the United Nations should not go unchallenged. The model and the technology underpinning mass repression in Xinjiang is already being rolled out to other parts of China. East Turkestan has been a laboratory of repression, and the results are already being felt in Ningxia and elsewhere. Incredibly, the Hong Kong government announced that it was sending a delegation to Xinjiang to study China's model there, of all places. This should set our hair on fire. Instead there is nothing more than talk to this day. No actions. Yet there is even more. Not only is Beijing seeking to export its surveillance systems around the globe, it has openly stated that its model of "social stability" should be emulated within Europe and the Middle East, and it is actively exporting it to countries in Africa.

China should be held accountable for its actions. If we fail to challenge Communist China on this terrible atrocity with the determination to stop it, it would be the beginning of darkness for

accountable democracies as authoritarian governments effectively utilize mass surveillance and repression to instill fear at home and abroad, depressing actions even within the free world that we enjoy today. If we do not act soon, China's debt trap tactics, expansion of its BRI, and provision of 5G technology to the West will position China to treat the entire world's population according to its vision for Xinjiang, utilizing the West's technology for mass surveillance and individualized threats for far more than even ignoring the re-emergence of concentration camps. Just look at what the people of East Turkestan are facing right now and imagine the life and world that you are leaving behind for your children and grandchildren if you do not act to stop it now.

We appreciate the strong words coming from the State Department and Vice President Pence, but at some point, words are not enough—action is needed to hold Chinese officials and businesses accountable and to push back against the Chinese government's narrative, and to actually demand China close the camps.

We truly appreciate the leadership of Senator Rubio & Congressman Smith on the CECC—they started raising warnings over a year ago—and have kept this issue in the public eye and pressed the Administration to act.

The letter sent to the Administration last week by Mr. Rubio and 50 Members of Congress is important—and the Senate should stay on top of the Administration to use Global Magnitsky sanctions to target the Chinese officials complicit in crimes against humanity and employ enhanced export controls so that U.S. businesses are not assisting the Xinjiang government or Chinese businesses profiting from the mass internment and surveillance of the Uyghurs. I ask that this letter be added to the transcript of this hearing.

Please:

- Pass the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act sponsored by Senators Rubio and Menendez. Over 25% of the Senate have cosponsored. We hope the bill can be passed quickly.
- Direct Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Pompeo to impose sanctions on Chinese officials under the Global Magnitsky Act. It is U.S. law that is inexplicably unimplemented meaningfully against China in particular.
- Press for an urgent fact-finding visit to the Uyghur region, and to other cities where Uyghur detainees are being transported. Announce the request publicly. Urge every Member who visits China to request access to the Uyghur region, and specifically to the detention centers.
- Instruct the FBI and State Department to work to protect Uyghur, Tibetan, and other Chinese communities from threats or coercion from Chinese affiliated agents—this should include information to Uyghur and Chinese students that they can report on efforts to intimidate and censor them while they are on U.S. and international campuses. This is part of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act and a priority of Senator Rubio and Representative Smith, but I wanted to highlight that here for you. The FBI must urgently act to protect Uyghur-Americans from Chinese government “influence operations” here in America as they occur regularly. Chinese officials have openly stated, “The current target is the Uyghur ‘separatists’ and organizations abroad.” Beijing is extending its

oppression to Uyghurs who are American citizens, including me and probably every other person who speaks up.

- Authorize the doubling of broadcast time for RFA Uyghur language service—RFA reporters have provided the best information about what is happening on the ground in Xinjiang and RFA reporters have family detained in retaliation for their activities.
- Direct Secretary Betsy DeVos to work with American colleges to waive tuition for Uyghur students who are stranded in the U.S., unable to return home, and unable to pay fees due to their parents' detention in China.
- Of the money authorized in the Asia Reassurance Act for the promotion of democracy, human rights defenders, and young leaders (Sec. 409, 410, 411), we ask that money can be designated to assist Uyghur, Kazak, and other groups to document the atrocities happening in Xinjiang, document Chinese government's propaganda globally about their activities in Xinjiang, and support activities to preserve cultural traditions, sustainable development, and education in Uyghur communities in China and elsewhere.
- Direct the DHS Secretary to urgently review the cases of Uyghurs who have fled the repression of the Chinese Communist Party, currently being held up in the United States immigration offices.
- Let China know you are serious by closing its Consulate in San Francisco to protest its use of western technology for mass surveillance until it closes its concentration camps and agrees to reopen one as a U.S. Consulate that will closely monitor the human rights of Uyghurs.
- Point out to the Administration that if China is successfully keeping it from acting to deter the targeting of American citizens and to hold China accountable for the concentration camps, China has already won in linking anything, whether money from trade or fear of retaliation, to America's ability to stand up independently against evident evil. If the Administration waits to act until after the trade talks end, will it ever act when it has conceded such linkage and granted China such leverage over U.S. actions?