

**Chairman Gallagher Opening Remarks**  
*Remarks for Fight for Freedom Roundtable*  
6.5.23  
*as prepared for delivery*

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A friend from China told me an old joke: Under the CCP the future is predictable, but it's hard to know what is going to happen in the past.

There's no better example of the CCP's obsession with rewriting history than their censorship around this week, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989.

In their telling, the People's Liberation Army never stormed Beijing. They never crushed peaceful demonstrators under their tank treads. They never turned their guns on their best and brightest young people, killing thousands. But of course all these things happened.

We cannot let them control the past. We must remember.

If the Tiananmen Massacre is an indictment of the CCP, it is also an indictment of us. The mask slipped. We saw the CCP's true, brutal, paranoid face. We saw it live on TV.

And what did we do? We rewarded them.

Not immediately. But in the end.

We delinked human rights from trade status. We shepherded their accession to the WTO.

When we here in America look at Tank Man, we should feel no righteousness. His courage is remarkable because it is set against the backdrop of our own cowardice. We gave the PRC diplomatic slaps on the wrist, issued some sternly worded statements, and went straight back to our policy of relentless economic engagement.

Our message was: keep the cheap goods flowing and if you're going to abuse human rights, try not to get caught on camera. We told ourselves the fairy tale that as China liberalized economically, the CCP would liberalize politically. But the opposite has happened.

And now after 34 years of relentless economic engagement, what do we see? Concentration camps in Xinjiang. The militarization of the South China Sea. A Hong Kong where over 20 people were arrested yesterday simply for wearing the wrong T-shirt, holding a candle, holding two flowers. Anything that could possibly be interpreted as a symbol of June 4th. The CCP is just as paranoid, just as vicious as they were those fateful days in June 1989.

Why is Beijing so obsessed with squashing all mention of the Tiananmen Massacre? Because they are terrified that they will lose control of one of their most important narratives. In their telling, the Chinese people desire the safety and security the Party provides far more than any pesky freedoms of conscience.

That's why CCP censors have also removed Sitong Bridge from the map apps in China this week, the site of Peng Lifa's famous "Bridgeman" protests in October of last year that led to the White Paper movement.

Bridge Man shows that today is not just about remembering something that happened 34 years ago. It's about learning lessons for our current time.

Alarming reports have detailed a crackdown on White Paper protestors around China. If the world turns its back on the peaceful white paper protestors and Peng Lifa, the CCP will know that it can still get away with brutalities like Tiananmen Square. The PRC must provide information about the whereabouts of these brave voices for freedom and release them.

Appeasing the CCP only emboldens the worst authoritarian instincts of this Marxist-Leninist regime. The famous Soviet dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn may have put it best: "The very ideology of communism, all Lenin's teachings are that...if you can take it, do so. If you can attack, strike. But if there's a wall, then retreat. The Communist leaders respect only firmness

and have contempt for persons who continually give in to them.” It’s not too late to learn the lessons of June 1989.