

CCP Transnational Repression Opening Remarks

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As prepared for delivery

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 it “transnational repression”

A jargony, complicated word that belies a simple, but world-shaping question: 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’s not the CCP’s desired answer. The CCP 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.

One of their coveted targets? US 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, 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 malign behavior is a huge problem but I’m afraid to speak out about it.”

We heard that from Hollywood producers who admitted censoring themselves to appease Beijing.

We heard from tech executives who told us they were loath to talk about the CCP’s ongoing genocide of the Uyghur people publicly.

We 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 first hand.

Unlike those titans of industry, these witnesses do not run multinational companies, command vast wealth, or have the governments of the world on speed dial.

They have harnessed a different kind of power—they have the courage to speak out.

They are joining us at great risk to themselves and their families. Thank you. Your bravery inspires us all.