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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

“Five Chinese Daughters to Beijing: Please Let Our Fathers Go Free”

*Excerpts of Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and Int’l Orgs.
2172 Rayburn HOB
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When China bullies, incarcerates, tortures—and even executes—a prisoner of conscience, their entire family and friends suffer an excruciating sense of loss, bewilderment, emotional pain and agony.

Often members of the family are themselves subjected to interrogation, mistreatment and house arrest in order to amplify the hurt.

In a very real sense, everyone close to a prisoner of conscience goes to jail and lives a seemingly unending nightmare. Every day, family and friends are left to wonder what terrible abuse awaits dad or mom or a brother or sister or child. Every day, the tears flow.

The people who rule China today with an iron fist resort to these ugly methods of control in the mistaken assumption that the people—the masses—can’t be trusted to govern themselves, practice their faith as they see fit or create a family. China’s barbaric one child per couple population control policy in effect since 1979 continues unabated to make brothers and sisters illegal and relies on ruinous fines and penalties, forced abortion and coercive sterilization—crimes against humanity—to achieve its ends. And all “news” content and commentary in cyberspace, TV, radio or in print media continues to be strictly controlled and manipulated by the communist party.

The Chinese government today is in the business of breaking minds, bodies and hearts. The repression is systematic, pervasive, unrelenting and unnecessary—the people of China love their nation and deserve better treatment. Even heroic persons like Chen Guangchen, Wei Jingsheng, Rebiya Kadeer, Bishop Su, Harry Wu and countless others who have demonstrated by

their extraordinary perseverance an indomitable will to advance bedrock human rights principles regardless of cost carry the indelible scars of unspeakable mistreatment.

The people who rule China today employ these ugly methods of control to prop up their own political power and increase their personal wealth. China, a great nation, deserves better.

Far too many of us who live in freedom often fail to exert ourselves in a meaningful way to assist prisoners of conscience and their loved ones—in China and elsewhere.

Far too many of us fail to empathize with their plight. Or to see what's just below the façade of the purported harmonious society.

How can it be that the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo remains in prison while his wife Liu Xia is forced to endure the extreme isolation of house arrest and is now reportedly experiencing severe depression?

Perhaps we are uninformed or too busy or prefer to look askance. However, with so much preventable suffering being endured by so many prisoners of conscience and their families in China today, the time has surely come for a more serious and sustained defense of these heroic individuals and their noble causes.

All of us—including the Chinese government—have a duty to protect.

Today we will hear the cries for release and freedom from five remarkable daughters on behalf of their wrongly imprisoned fathers and from a dad on behalf of his unjustly jailed son. We will also receive expert testimony from a previously incarcerated Christian pastor who cares deeply for the vulnerable and at risk and another human rights activist who was detained in China after an attempt to visit a dissident.