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Author, *From Tiananmen Square to Iraq*

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Testimony to
The Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International
Organizations
and
the Committee on Foreign Affairs
in the U. S. House of Representative

I. Statement

Chairman Chris Smith, Ranking Member Bass, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today, in remembrance of the events at Tiananmen Square 25 years ago in June of 1989. My own experience of that historic event remains vivid in my memory.

On the evening of June 3rd, 1989, I was at Beijing University, listening to a radio broadcast that described the events taking place. Communist military troops had marched into the Forbidden City and opened fire on citizens and the students. Immediately, a friend and I rode our bicycles toward Tiananmen Square. After 3 miles, when we passed by the People's University, we saw thousands of people and students holding hands to form a wall, preventing people from passing them. They shouted at people trying to break through, "Don't go!" "Don't go!" "They will kill you!"

Eventually, my friend and I forced ourselves past their barrier and continued towards Tiananmen Square. As we went, we found even more people had formed "human walls" and tried to persuade anyone going toward the danger. However, I felt I had to go since I was one of the student leaders who had initiated the democratic movement.

To force our way through the people, we had to abandon our bicycles and make our way forward on foot. As we approached, we saw the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) had tanks, vehicles, and troops moving into Tiananmen Square. Soldiers with helmets and AK47's were randomly shooting at protestors as they chanted slogans and tried to hold their ground. My friend and I crept forward, the sound of bullets, shooting, crying, and tanks blended together.

As we continued to move forward, we saw horrific scenes of students who were both wounded and dying. Few knew First Aid, and I remember having feelings of helplessness as people cried out medical assistance.

I knew I needed to report the events taking place, so I found a phone booth and called my wife. I asked her to go to the Beijing University radio station to tell the truth - that the PLA soldiers had opened fire on students and citizens and that hundreds were killed. I continued to relay new information to the radio station until the early hours of morning.

After the protest was broken up, I was put on a list of “most wanted student leaders.” After my capture, I endured nearly two years in a Chinese prison. It was not until after leaving prison that, with the help of an underground church member, I became a believer in God and began my journey in the Christian faith.

I arrived in the United States in 1992 and just two weeks later was able to celebrate the Fourth of July. I saw then the meaning of freedom – the freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom from fear that all Americans enjoy. Since the time of my baptism as a Christian, I also found the freedom that knowing God provides.

As a commissioned officer in the United States Army I serve to protect these freedoms. As an Army Chaplain my job is to assist my commander to ensure that all members of the Army Family receive the religious support they need to freely exercise their faith, according to the Constitution.

As we mark the 25th year since the Tiananmen Square Massacre, I am thankful that the United States continues to remember and honor the lives that were lost, and continues to promote the struggle for democracy and freedom in our world. It is my prayer that the lives taken at Tiananmen Square will continue to live on in our memory, and inspire us to continue working toward a better world, free from tyranny and persecution, that upholds the rights and freedoms for all peoples.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.

