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Opening Statement
Chairman Stephen Lynch
Joint Briefing on “China’s Oppression of Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang”
House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on National Security
Monday, August 17, 2020

Good morning, everyone. I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe during the August recess.

Before we begin, I would first like to thank Mr. Bera, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, Nonproliferation, and the Pacific, for hosting today’s briefing jointly with me and the National Security Subcommittee. I would also like to thank Ranking Member Grothman for requesting that we hold this briefing and for his and Ranking Member Yoho’s leadership on this important issue.

The Uyghur people are a predominantly Muslim, ethnic minority that live in the Xinjiang autonomous region in northwest China. Since at least 2016, the Chinese government has been carrying out a systemic campaign designed to subjugate and assimilate millions of Uyghurs into Chinese society and crush political dissent.

The harsh methods employed by Chinese authorities include detaining millions of Uyghurs in “Vocational Education and Training Centers,” where they are forced to learn Mandarin and undergo daily indoctrination in Chinese Communist Party propaganda. Those not in re-education centers are often deported from Xinjiang to work in factories elsewhere in China.

China has also created a highly-invasive technological police state in Xinjiang using facial recognition technology, involuntary DNA sampling, and mass data collection to monitor and intimidate the local population. Xinjiang authorities are also reportedly using pregnancy checks, forced intrauterine devices, sterilization, and even abortion to reduce the Uyghur population.

Let me be clear: China is committing demographic genocide against Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and Beijing must stop these human rights abuses immediately.

In recent weeks, the United States has taken multiple steps to hold China accountable for its actions in Xinjiang. In May, Congress passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, and last month, the State Department imposed sanctions against the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corp.

The United States cannot lead this effort alone. The international community, including global businesses and multilateral institutions, must also do more to hold China accountable for its human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

To that end, I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of H.R. 6210, the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which would ensure that goods made with forced labor in Xinjiang cannot enter the U.S. market.

One final point: it is critically important that Democrats and Republicans continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in condemning China's oppression of Muslim Uyghurs. This will send a strong, unified message to President Xi Jinping - and our allies and partners - that the United States will not tolerate what is happening today in Xinjiang.

I would like to thank our witnesses for briefing our Subcommittees today, and with that, I will now turn the floor over to Ranking Member Grothman from the great state of Wisconsin for his opening remarks.

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