

Testimony of Zhou Fengsuo, President Humanitarian China and student leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations

Congressman McGovern, Senator Rubio, Members of Congress, thank you for inviting me to speak in this special moment on the 30th anniversary of Tiananmen Massacre.

As a participant of the 1989 Democracy Movement and a survivor of the Massacre started in the evening of June 3rd, it is both my honor and duty to speak, for these who sacrificed their lives for the freedom and democracy of China, for the movement that ignited the hope of change that was so close, and for the last 30 years of indefatigable fight for truth and justice.

I was a physics student at Tsinghua University in 1989. The previous summer of 1988, I organized the first and only free election of the student union of my department. I was amazed and encouraged by the enthusiasm of the students to participate in the process of self-governing. There was a palpable sense for change in the college campuses.

When Hu Yaobang died on April 15, 1989. His death triggered immediately widespread protests in top universities of Beijing, because he was removed from the position of the General Secretary of CCP in 1987 for his sympathy towards the protesting students and for being too open minded. The next day I went to Tiananmen Square to offer a flower wreath with my roommates of Tsinghua University. To my pleasant surprise, my words on the wreath was published the next day by a national official newspaper. We were the first group to go to Tiananmen Square to mourn Hu Yaobang.

More and more students came to Tiananmen Square to mourn Hu Yaobang on April 17. And the topics quickly changed to broader political issues. In April 18, a petition of 7 demands was drafted and submitted by Peking University students. Among these 7 demands, the most important ones are freedom of press and disclosure of the assets of top government officials and their families. The petition quickly gained supports from students and people of Beijing and other cities.

In the evening of April 18, when hundreds of students gathered at the base of the Monument to the Heroes of the People, I gave a speech criticizing the Chinese Constitution against the Declaration of Independence, which was the true model of a legitimate government. I believed that the Chinese Constitution wasn't legitimate because it lacked the consent of the people. I was pushed down from the impromptu podium by the organizers because my opinion was considered too radical. But I was thrilled because I was able to share my deeply held belief to the public in this special arena of people's opinions.

When thousands of students of Tsinghua University gathered in the evening of April 21, I volunteered to lead the group to Tiananmen when I realized that there was no one else willing to stand out to be responsible for the protest. From that time on, I became a leader of the independent student organization at my university, eventually represented Tsinghua University at the Federation of the Independent Student Unions. For this reason I was most wanted by the Communist Government after the crackdown, number 5 on the most wanted list.

When the demand for a direct dialogue with the government wasn't making any progress despite several marches of students joined by citizens of Beijing, hundreds of students went on hunger strike on Tiananmen Square. I didn't go on hunger strike, but organized the student volunteers to provide for and protect the students, for this process I built the broadcast station "the Voice of the Student Movement", which became the commanding center of the protesters as well as the public forum for the people on Tiananmen Square. We were able to make sure that while a million people were occupying the Square, medical services and supplies were delivered without a glitch.

For the first time in Communist China, millions were able to speak truly and freely. It was the most peaceful and hopeful time, democracy was so close, almost within reach. The protests brought out the best of people's heart. The prospect of a democratic China resonated through the world, especially riveted people from Hong Kong, Taiwan.

But the Communist hardliners felt the threat to their absolute power, they reacted with brutal power. Deng Xiaoping first mentioned about killing the students on April 25. His personal verdict became April 26 Editorial, which made it clear that they will crackdown on the peaceful protesters. In the evening of May 19, Marshall Law was declared in Beijing. Zhao Ziyang, the nominal leader of the CCP, was ousted without due processes because he was against military crackdown.

When the citizens of Beijing saw the military trucks and armored vehicles, they laid down on the road to block the advancing troops. They pleaded with the soldiers, sometimes with kids on their shoulders to show that Beijing was peaceful. Initially, the troops had to withdraw. For two weeks. The students called for a emergency meeting of the People's Congress to intervene, with enough qualifying signatures of the legislative members collected.

In the morning of June 3rd, while at my dormitory at Tsinghua University. I heard that a truck full of weapons was somehow in the hands of students before the students returned the truck to the police. Realizing that this was a sign of imminent crackdown, I went to Tiananmen Square and stayed till I was driven out by troops and tanks in the morning of June 4th.

I stayed at the Tiananmen Square because it was the center of the protesters, therefore considered the most dangerous place. But it turned out to be the eye of the storm. While CCP's over 200 thousand troops invaded Beijing from all directions, people of Beijing poured into the streets to block the fully armed soldiers with their bodies. We were protected by these courageous citizens.

Beginning from about 10PM till morning, with the news of people injured and killed, I heard gun shots from all directions around the Tiananmen Square. Military flares flashed up the night sky. It was like a war, Beijing was invaded by CCP's troops with tanks and machine guns, while the other side were students and citizens defending the city and a dream for a democratic China with their body and heart.

I was the last to leave the Monument from the south side when the soldiers began to push us down, beating us with sticks and pointing guns at us. Tanks were about ten feet from me. Day light was breaking on the Square which was like a war zone. When I heard the sad cries of the despondent students, I vowed that we would come back with a triumph over the brutal force of CCP. On the way back, I saw more than 40 bodies on the ground in the bicycle shed outside of Fuxing Hospital, apparently overwhelmed by the injuries and deaths. One of them was Zhong Qing, a student of my University Tsinghua.

In the evening of June 13th, I saw my name on the most wanted list students broadcasted on national TV. I was number 5 among the 21 most wanted students. I was shocked because I was only acting out of the duty of a student and a citizen, at the same time deeply proud of myself because I believed that the 1989 Democracy Movement was the greatest days of China under communist rule and it was an honor to be officially recognized for my part. I was arrested and spent a year

In prison, released on the eve of the U.S debate of Most Favored Nation status for China. For me this was just the beginning of my journey over last 30 years.

I came to the United States in 1995 after being denied a passport for several years. In year 2000, I was the led plaintiff in a lawsuit against Li Peng for his crimes in 1989 against humanity filed in Manhattan when Li Peng visited. I was an early supporter of 64memo.com, the online archive of history of Tiananmen Movement started by Feng Congde. I co-founded Humanitarian China in 2007 with other participants of the 1989 Democracy Movement abroad. Humanitarian China is dedicated to promoting human rights and civil society in China.

For more than a decade, Humanitarian China has provided humanitarian aids to hundreds of families of political prisoners and the Tiananmen Mothers, covering rights lawyers, journalists, writers, labor and feminist activists, political protesters, persecuted house churches. Humanitarian China raised fund for Ilham Tohti, the Uighur economist, after he was sentenced to life in prison.

Humanitarian China supported the victims of earth quakes in Sichuan and Yushu Tibetan area through local volunteers. Humanitarian China also supported the work of Wu Renhua, who documented the Marshall Law troops through careful research.

One of the most important work of Humanitarian China was to bring Fang Zheng and his family to the San Francisco Bay Area and assisted him till he was able to make a living and support a family of 5 through his own work running an AirBnB and as an Uber driver. Fang Zheng lost his legs to the charging tank in the morning of June 4th while saving a female student from the tank attack.

Now he is the President of Chinese Democracy Education Foundation and a leading witness to the brutal massacre. His smile and character embody the spirit of the Tiananmen Movement. Through our work at Humanitarian China, we have been intimately connected to every group who share the memories and legacies of Tiananmen, including the Tiananmen Mothers, the citizens of Beijing who fought the invading troop to protect the students, the protesters in other cities who were persecuted more harshly than students of Beijing, and these who defied CCP by openly commemorating Tiananmen. These Tiananmen protesters who persisted tirelessly for the freedom of China like Liu Xiaobo.

Thanks to this great country, we have been able to aid them and speak up for them, we can provide a sanctuary for the true heroes of China like Fang Zheng and Zhao ChangQing. We are also leading an effort to build a permanent museum for Tiananmen 1989 at Liberty Sculpture Park.

China took on a wrong path 30 years ago. The world allowed the regime that rolled tanks in its own people to exist and strengthened this regime through trade. Especially after China joined WTO at the same time erecting a fire wall to enslave Chinese in Cyberspace, it has quickly become an existential threat to the world through globalization and digital totalitarianism. We face the ever-growing shadow of CCP even in America.

Together with a handful of protesters, I beaten by massive supporters of CCP's Olympic Torch relay in San Francisco piers while SF police watched with folded arms even when I pleaded for protection of our rights. My LinkedIn account was briefly censored because I was inconvenient for LinkedIn's China market. A scheduled press release of Humanitarian China in New York was cancelled within an hour after I posted the event. Columbia University rejected our proposal to donate a Liu Xiaobo bust sculpture without consulting me even once. I am shunned in colleges, churches, book clubs, industry organizations, as long as there is a whiff of Chinese connection. The situation gets worse year by year.

But I believe this committee is in a unique position to push for some real changes that could have profound and persistent impact.

1) Insisting on removal of the firewall as the precondition for any trade agreement. The existence of CCP's Firewall is the biggest threat to keeping the truth of Tiananmen 1989. The firewall is also the most important trade barrier that forces U. S companies to kowtow to Beijing.

2) Magnitsky Act. It could be a powerful tool against perpetrators of Tiananmen Massacre and human rights violations. But so far only one name was implemented by the State Department, out of dozens perpetrators we provided with detailed information with. The most notorious one is Li Xiaolin, daughter of Li Peng, Butcher of Beijing. After the massacre, the families of Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng were both rewarded with ill-gotten wealth for the blood on their hands. Banning her from entering and freezing her family assets will be a welcome step toward justice against the masterminds of the Tiananmen Massacre.

3) Liu Xiaobo bust sculpture in Capitol Hill. 30 years ago, Liu Xiaobo flew back to China to participate the Tiananmen protests, eventually laid down his own life for China. He was the second Nobel Peace Laureate to die in incarceration, the first was Hitler's Nazi Germany. The world should be alarmed by the similar path of Xin Jinping. CCP wants the world to forget him, even his ashes could be found. Please help us preserve Liu Xiaobo's legacy by placing a bust sculpture in Capitol Hill. He belongs to the same place as his friend Vaclav Havel, who has a sculpture. A bust sculpture in Capitol Hill would demonstrate the commitment to the democratization of China and warm the hearts of the 1989 generation.

4) Act against CCP's peripheral organizations in the United States, for example, CSSA on campus. When I had the opportunity to talk to Chinese students in U.S. Universities about Tiananmen, their responses have been strongly positive and sympathetic. But it is extremely difficult for us to get such opportunities, the most important reason is the pervasive presence of CSSAs that monitor and organize the students on behalf of the Chinese Embassy. Targeting active individuals of CSSAs will be very effective. The Australian example of expelling Xiang Xiangmo set a good precedence to deal with such individuals.