

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BILL DELAHUNT

on the upcoming introduction of the

Resolution Condemning the Violent Repression of Uighur Protests in China

I want to welcome everyone here.

My name is Bill Delahunt and I am chair of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Human Rights. I am joined by the senior Republican on the Committee, and my friend, the Ranking Member Dana Rohrabacher.

Today, we are introducing a resolution that condemns the Communist Chinese Government's past and ongoing repression of the Uighur people. The Uighurs are a Muslim minority that live in northwestern China.

We are honored to have with us the leader of the Uighur people ... Ms. Rebiya Kadeer. Her bravery and commitment to the freedom of her people -- and people everywhere regardless of ethnicity and religion -- is unmatched and truly inspirational.

Our Committee has held a number of hearings on the plight of the Uighur people and the 22 Uighur men wrongfully imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay. Thirteen of those men remain there today as we speak.

Our hearings have demonstrated -- and recent events have confirmed -- that the Uighur minority in China is brutally persecuted. In the past two weeks, according to Chinese media, 156 people have been killed. Our sources place that number closer to 500. In addition, thousands have been wounded and imprisoned.

This continuing brutality must not be tolerated.

Our own State Department has also documented a litany of human rights abuses. We are talking about cases of religious repression-- measures to dilute expressions of Uighur identity-- And long prison terms or execution for political speech. More disturbing, our own State Department has noted the Chinese regime often characterizes peaceful political protests as

terrorism. In other words, false accusations of terrorism are being used as an excuse for brutality and oppression.

This past week we have witnessed this yet again.

This violence and the loss of innocent Uighur and Han Chinese life is appalling.

Also appalling are the accusations the Communist Regime has been leveling against this woman standing next to me. The Regime has gone so far as to call her a terrorist-- just as they have done in the case of the Uighur men wrongfully imprisoned at Guantanamo.

I know Rebiya Kadeer. She has devoted her life to freedom and to fighting for her people. She believes in democracy and in working peacefully to help all people live in freedom.

And so today, we call on our colleagues in the House to join us in condemning not only this tragic violence in China but also the slander and lies that have that have been directed at Ms. Kadeer-- a woman who has been nominated on three separate occasions for the Nobel peace prize.

Now I also want to recognize Ms. Susan Baker Manning. She will be speaking in a few minutes. She has served as an attorney to many of the Uighurs held at Guantanamo.

For a long time, we have attempted to search for the truth in the case of these men. In fact, Mr. Rohrabacher and I requested permission to travel to Guantanamo and interview the Uighurs. We had received the consent of their lawyers-- they were willing to meet with usBecause we suspected that instead of terrorists these men were political refugees fleeing Chinese persecution. That request was denied by the Department of Defense. Yet, at the same time our government gave permission to Communist, Chinese intelligence agents to go to Guantanamo to interview, threaten and intimidate these men.

While the Department of Defense would not provide us a clear explanation of why this occurred—the Department of Defense told Fox News that they allow foreign governments in to Guantanamo to ensure detainees are being “humanely treated” and to help them understand who they are.

Let's put it this way—the Department of Defense authorized a totalitarian regime that consistently violates human rights to visit members of a systematically persecuted minority in our custody. **It would appear that they wanted to make sure the Uighurs were being treated humanely.**

I will hold a hearing on this very issue next week.

In the meantime, I will urge my colleagues in the House to join me and Mr. Rohrabacher in supporting this resolution that condemns the violent crackdown on peaceful Uighur protests and calls upon the Chinese government to stop its irresponsible slander of Ms. Rebiya Kadeer.