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House Republican Asks Xi for Visa to Visit Uyghurs After Diplomat Paints Organ Harvesting Bill as ‘Anti-China’

By Danielle Wallace, Fox News, 2023.4.18

Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J. sent a letter to the Chinese president himself requesting a visa to visit the region inhabited by Uyghur Muslims, challenging a Chinese diplomat's late-night email rant to the representative's office categorizing legislation passed by the House condemning "forced organ harvesting" as "anti-China" and demanding the bill be stopped.

In a letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping, Smith, who is chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, requested a visa to visit Xinjiang to personally assess claims touted by a top Chinese diplomat in a bizarre late-night email to his office that

"China fully protects the rights and interests of all ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs in Xinjiang."

"The Chinese Embassy's Minister-Counselor for Congressional Affairs in Washington, Zhou Zheng, stated that 'China fully protects the rights and interests of all ethnic minorities including Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and the living standards and human rights protections of all ethnic groups continue to improve,'" Smith said, citing the email his office received from the Chinese official one day after the House passed Smith's Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act.

The bill would impose serious sanctions "on



those complicit in the Chinese Communist Party's ghoulish industry of stealing internal organs from political prisoners," Smith's office said.

"This is of great interest to the Commission, which is a bicameral, bi-branch, bipartisan organization, established by the United States Congress to monitor China's compliance with international human rights standards," Smith, who took the helm of the China Commission for a fifth time in January, told Xi. "For several years, the Commission has published and maintained a database of victims of human rights abuses and has encouraged the development of the rule of law in the PRC."

Smith's letter on Monday comes just weeks after a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson welcomed foreigners to visit Xinjiang to see it "with their own eyes" when asked at a March 27 press conference if China would be willing to invite a U.S. congressional delegation to the region.

"In light of Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning's remarks on March 27, 2023, that 'the door to Xinjiang is always open,' and that people from all countries are 'welcome to visit,' I write in my capacity as the Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) to request a visa in order to visit the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the People's Republic of China," Smith said in the letter, according to a copy obtained by Fox News Digital.

"The Foreign Minister's open invitation is a welcomed opportunity for the CECC, and others, to personally assess Mr. Zhou's comments against the veracity of reports of mass internment and forced labor in the

XUAR. Having found those multiple reports to be credible, I would like to visit sites where mass detention and forced labor are generally believed to occur," Smith wrote. "Additionally, there are a number of American citizens, permanent residents and others who have been detained due to their apparent ties with the United States whom I would like to visit."

Smith's chief of staff previously received an unsolicited, late-night email from a Gmail account signed Zhou Zheng, the Minister-Counselor for the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America based in Washington, D.C., the congressman's communications director told Fox News Digital last week.

The message, viewed by Fox News Digital, voiced Zhou's "strong opposition" to the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act of 2023, which the Chinese diplomat purported "directly targets the Chinese Communist Party and government and is raised by Congressman Smith."

"China firmly rejects this absurd bill. Chinese law strictly prohibits the sale of human organs, and China's organ transplantation policy fully complies with the human organ transplantation guidelines formulated by the World Health Organization, with relatively strict management regulations that conform to ethical and legal principles. As early as 2018, Jose Nunes, the director of the World Health Organization's organ transplantation program, publicly stated that the claim that 'China has 60,000 to 100,000 organ transplants annually' is completely unreliable," the emailed rant continued. "Falun Gong is a completely anti-human, anti-science, and antisocial cult organization. I wonder why Congressman



Smith believes in any words from such an insane cult. The so-called 'forced organ harvesting' in China is a farce orchestrated and a scam hyped up by 'Falun Gong.'"

The diplomat further claimed to Smith's chief of staff that "China fully protects the rights and interests of all ethnic minorities, including the Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and the living standards and human rights protection of all ethnic groups continue to improve. The so-called 'genocide' and 'forced organ harvesting' are lies that will eventually shatter into pieces in front of facts and truth. It is the time that the US side immediately stops baseless hype and anti-China moves and stops preceding this legislation."

As of June 2022, the U.S. government

estimated that since April 2017, the government has detained more than 1 million Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Hui, and members of other Muslim groups, as well as some Christians, in specially built internment camps or converted detention facilities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region under the national counterterrorism law and the regional counterextremism policy.

The U.S. Department of State cited human rights NGOs and former detainees as having said authorities subjected individuals to forced disappearance, torture and other physical and psychological abuse, including forced sterilization and sexual abuse, forced labor, political indoctrination and prolonged detention without trial because of their religion and ethnicity.

US Senator Marco Rubio Reintroduces Uyghur Policy Act

By ANI, 2023.4.23

US Senator Marco Rubio reintroduced the Uyghur Policy Act in the Senate. This bipartisan bill would increase US support for the Uyghur diaspora in the United States and other countries, as well as advocate for improving the conditions of Uyghurs in China who suffer human rights abuses at the hands of the CCP, press release from Marco Rubio's office said.

As recent arrests by federal law enforcement have shown, dissidents who oppose the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continue to be targets of intimidation campaigns by CCP security and intelligence officials in the US, the release stated.

"The CCP is carrying out a disgusting campaign of genocide and human rights abuses committed against Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups. The United States cannot be silent in the face of such horrific abuse. I'm proud to reintroduce legislation to increase awareness and advocacy for Uyghurs, and I urge my colleagues to quickly pass this bill" the press release quoted Senator Rubio.

US Representatives Young Kim and Ami Bera introduced companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

"Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, just because of their identity, are repeatedly



silenced, detained, imprisoned, tortured, and brainwashed in concentration camps led by the Chinese Communist Party. We must say no to the Uyghur genocide and the CCP's repeated disinformation, coercion, and abuse. The Uyghur Policy Act equips the US with the tools needed to support the basic human rights and distinct identities of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region subject to the CCP's inhumane treatment. I will continue to firmly push back against the CCP's abuses and support human rights and freedom around the world," the press release said quoting Congresswoman Kim.

"Despite widespread international condemnation, the Chinese Communist Party continues to target Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region for their culture and beliefs. Our nation has a responsibility to lead by example and work closely with the global community to defend and advance

human rights and freedoms. The Uyghur Policy Act reaffirms America's commitment to defending democratic values abroad and bolsters our response to these atrocities by ensuring interagency cooperation and providing the State Department with the resources to effectively respond to this crisis," said Congressman Bera, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific.

The Bill Directs the US Department of State to include Uyghur human rights activists in its US Speaker program to speak at public diplomacy forums in Muslim-majority countries about the repression of Uyghurs and other minority groups in Xinjiang.

The bill requires a strategy from the Department of State on how the Department will seek to use diplomatic meetings with CCP officials in order to gain access to detention facilities in Xinjiang and secure the release of detained Uyghurs. It also requires the US Secretary of State to make available Uyghur



language training to Foreign Service Officers (FSO).

Further, the bill requires that at least one Uyghur-speaking FSO be assigned to each US diplomatic and consular mission in China, Turkey, and other nations hosting Uyghur

diaspora populations.

The bill directs the US Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) to oppose any motion that would prevent consideration of issues related to Uyghurs and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in UN activities.



Hikvision Internal Review Found Contracts Targeted Uyghurs

By Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, Ina Fried, Axios, 2023.4.17

Chinese surveillance giant Hikvision has repeatedly denied reports that the company is complicit in human rights abuses targeting Uyghurs in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang.

But new details from an internal review of its contracts with police agencies in the region

reveal the company has known since at least 2020 that some of its Xinjiang contracts were a "problem" because they included language about targeting Uyghurs as a group, according to a recording of a recent private company meeting obtained by technology trade publication IPVM and exclusively shared with

Axios.

Why it matters: The Chinese government is perpetrating an ongoing campaign of genocide and mass detention of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in the country's northwest region of Xinjiang.

Procurement documents reportedly show that Hikvision cameras have been installed in public spaces across Xinjiang and in mass detention facilities, and Hikvision cameras have captured footage that has led to the detention of Uyghurs.

Hikvision has also advertised that it offers biometric surveillance technology that can track ethnic minorities, including Uyghurs, though in 2020 the company stated its products no longer offer that capability.

Human rights groups and the U.S. and other governments have accused Hikvision of participating in human rights abuses in Xinjiang — allegations the surveillance giant has rejected.

Background: In January 2019, as scrutiny of the company's Xinjiang operations grew, Hikvision hired Richard-Pierre Prosper, a lawyer and former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues in the George W. Bush administration, to conduct an internal investigation of its Xinjiang contracts. Prosper is currently a lawyer for D.C.-based legal and lobbying firm ArentFox Schiff.

In its 2020 ESG public report, Hikvision offered a one-sentence summary of Prosper's review, quoting it as saying: "We do not find that Hikvision entered into the five projects in Xinjiang with the intent to knowingly engage in human rights abuses or find that Hikvision knowingly or intentionally committed human

rights abuses itself or that it acted in willful disregard."

When facing criticism for its activities in Xinjiang, Hikvision has repeatedly pointed to its retention of an "internationally respected war crimes investigator" as evidence of the company's sincere desire to comply with international human rights standards.

ArentFox Schiff did not respond to a request for comment.

Details: Prosper gave a talk on human rights compliance, which the company referred to as a "training" in an emailed statement to Axios, to Hikvision's Australian company partners at the Hikvision Australia Global ESG Conference held near Sydney last month. Prosper's remarks contain previously unknown details from his report's findings.

Prosper says in the recording that the internal investigation's purpose was to assess "what was the company's responsibility and exposure" regarding human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Hikvision had bid on around 15 projects in Xinjiang and won contracts for five, Prosper says, and his team received at least 15,000 pages of related documents and reviewed about 5,000 "line by line."

"The most concerning on paper was the Moyu Project, which was down in the southern part of Xinjiang," Prosper says, referring to Xinjiang's Karakax County, a majority Uyghur region with numerous detention camps where leaked documents have shown that police detained Uyghurs for normal religious practices such as praying regularly and wearing a veil.

The Moyu project "was the most concerning because of the language in the contract," which Prosper says "identified Uyghurs" as a



group to focus on and called for surveillance of “religious facilities.”

Prosper says in the recording that his team told Hikvision: “We’re not going to absolve the company.” He pointed to some of the contracts that included “concerning” language “looking at groups and not isolated to a criminal.” Prosper says he told the company, “This is a problem.”

Prosper says that after his team completed the review, they told Hikvision: “We don’t think you were responsible, but there were some failings in the system where there’s some flags you should have looked at.”

In the recording, Prosper also says Hikvision built the systems but then handed them over to China without knowing how the government intended to use them. But he provides no documenting evidence.

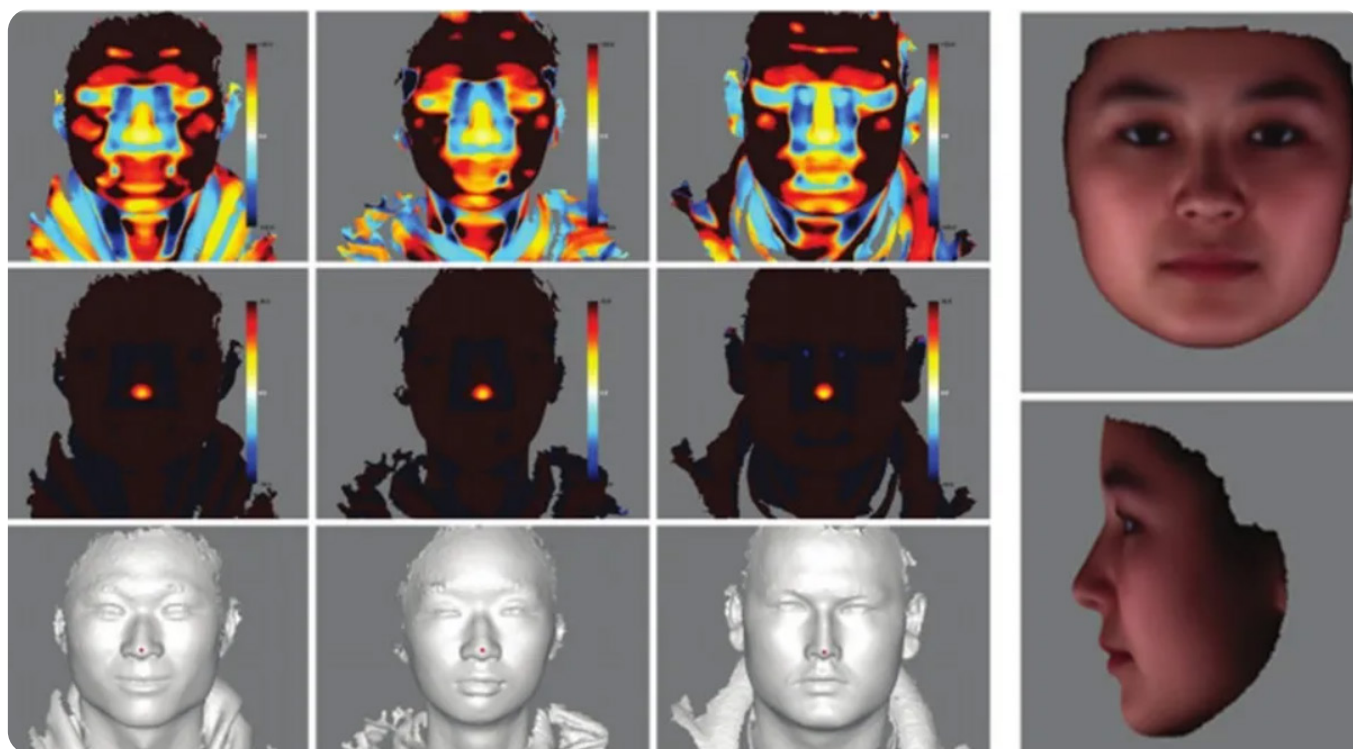
What they’re saying: “As a global company, Hikvision takes human rights seriously and recognizes our social responsibilities. The company has publicly addressed this concern

in its annual ESG Report, as concluded by Ambassador Pierre-Richard Prosper after his team’s thorough due diligence,” a Hikvision spokesperson told Axios in an emailed statement.

“The company is fully aware of the room for further improvement, evidenced by our efforts to enhance human rights compliance since 2018, of which this training is one of many measures the company has conducted. The company will continue to ensure that our employees and partners throughout the world are well versed in corporate governance and compliance.”

The Chinese government denies it has committed human rights violations in Xinjiang, instead casting its activities there as fighting terrorism and alleviating poverty.

In the recording, Prosper also casts Hikvision’s failure to identify this concerning language in the contracts in Xinjiang as an issue stemming from a “cultural divide” between East and West.



“We in the West, instinctively or initially, everything is human rights, individual rights,” Prosper says.

But China and other “Communist-based societies” emphasize “collective rights” instead of individual rights, and so the review team explained to Hikvision that individual rights “should be at the front of your mind,” Prosper says in the recording.

State of play: The U.S. government has taken steps to restrict Hikvision’s business activities and financial reach.

The Federal Communications Commission in November said it would stop approving new device authorizations for companies, including Hikvision, that had been deemed to

be national security threats.

On March 28, the U.S. government added five Hikvision subsidiaries in Xinjiang to the U.S. Commerce Department’s Entity List, stating that they were tied to the company’s police projects there. Hikvision was added to the entity list in 2019.

The FCC’s move essentially keeps Hikvision’s products from being sold in the U.S., while its inclusion on the Commerce Department’s entity list keeps U.S. companies from selling goods and services to the company.

What to watch: In February, Hikvision sued the U.S. government and the FCC over a ban restricting the sale of Hikvision products in the U.S.



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