

DR. YANG Jianli's Presentation at PUBLIC HEARING "Authoritarianism and shrinking space for freedom of expression, press freedom and human rights defenders, with case studies on China, Egypt and Russia" held by Subcommittee on Human Rights (DROIT) of European Parliament on Tuesday, 18 February 2020, 14.30 – 17.00, Brussels, Belgium

I. Remarks

Ms. Chairwoman Maria ARENA,

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this timely and important hearing. It is timely because the coronavirus epidemic has helped reveal fatal defects of the Chinese Communist Party's totalitarian governance system under the leadership of Xi Jinping. This is deeply relevant to the theme of this hearing. The mishandling of the epidemic on the part of the CCP government, and its consequences for the entire Chinese society, has everything to do with Xi's totalitarian politics. Everything that is going wrong in this crisis could have gone wrong under the CCP rule without Xi Jinping, as we learned in 2003 when SARS plagued China, but it is significantly much worse under Xi.

Xi Jinping has grasped all the levers of power in the Party and the state including the military and police. The Party has reclaimed the authority over economic policy that it delegated to the state starting in the 1980s. Within the Party, Xi acts as if he is personally in charge of everything. He chairs eight of the leading small groups. Xi's hold on the People's Liberation Army is even more complete than his hold on the Party and the government. Xi is preoccupied with shoring up loyalty to the Party and himself. Party officials in general are told to shun any "improper discussion" that questions central policies. These warnings serve not only to reinforce Xi's authority and keep the Party in line behind him, but also to cripple the ability and power of other politicians and officials on various levels to do the governance job that any government should do.

Xi has also turned left ideologically, striking fear into intellectuals, journalists, and private businesspeople. Returning to Mao-style rule by terror, Xi is intent on controlling every aspect of people's lives. At the 19th party congress that kick-started his second term in power, Xi evoked a famous saying by the late Chairman Mao Zedong: "Party, government, military, civilian, academic; east, west, south, north, and the center, the party leads everything." In addition to absolute control of political power, it ensures that the party state will monopolize the key economic sectors.

Under Xi, the CCP's stability-maintenance machine has become more efficient and more totalitarian. Censorship was once fragmented across agencies, with cracks that nimble journalists and netizens could exploit to circulate information. Now the censors are more consolidated and centralized. A potent new Cyber Administration, run by a leading small group that Xi chairs, aims to win what Xi calls the "struggle for public opinion." Over 30,000 Chinese surveillance companies have more than 1.6 million employees. These firms are led by Huawei, Zhejiang Dahua and Hikvision. They toil to perfect and export China's mass surveillance system. Their products such as Hikvision cameras are widely sold in the European market. Some of them, such as Alibaba and Tencent, use the EU free market to access capital and technology to develop surveillance products. Because thought control requires monitoring people's activities, mass surveillance is required. The CCP has spent lavishly to build a massive

surveillance system that allows China to deploy its sophisticated network of social control. Just as with the Party in Orwell's Oceania, the reason is to preemptively eliminate any risks that could threaten the regime's security. In the CCP's phraseology, it is to "improve the three-dimensional, legalization, specialization and smartness of social security." No doubt, China has become a high-tech digital surveillance superpower since Xi took power, and now its surveillance long arm is reaching out to the world.

The overriding grand goal of China's national rejuvenation and the China dream allows the party-state to continue denying the political rights of Chinese people as well as people of Hong Kong, and to continue to oppress the Tibetan and Uyghur Muslim minorities. Gross abuses of power in China are rampant. China's model of governance reflects Xi's regression to a Mao-style strongman rule — characterized by absolute party, dictatorship, violence and terror, and absolutely no mercy for any dissent.

All this has happened as the CCP itself and its apologists believed that western liberalism as a mainstream global political ideology is declining rapidly, along with its governance system. They can no longer hold the world together, and the world is looking for China to provide an alternative ideology and governance model. That strategy evolved into actively participating in and pushing for global governance reforms, a euphemism for rewriting international rules, which further developed into "one world, two systems," by creating a dual international system to directly compete against the liberal democracy. Now the People's Republic of China has entered what Chinese official media have called the "inevitable stage of China's rise" — China will lead the world into the future, driven by the laws of history.

The CCP's grand strategy seems to avoid direct confrontation with the United States, and to use global "rural areas" to encircle the US. It believes that the EU is the 2nd world that can potentially form a united front against the US, a Maoist strategy. The EU is thus a main battle ground in China's war for world dominance, a new cold war if you will.

The challenges posed by the CCP lie in the Party's lies and deception, its financial power, its propaganda apparatus, and its adaptation of the West's rules of the game, in order to win the match. China is pretending to be a peace loving, benevolent authoritarian ruler to get a foothold into the EU and expand its political and economic influence. Central Europe is a particular target because the CCP believes this area is a weak link in the chain where democracy has not firmly rooted, a region where China can achieve a breakthrough.

China wants to use the EU to establish RMB's dominance against the US Dollar: another challenge. The export of Huawei's cheap 5G technology to control the EU communication network is still another strategy of domination.

What this means for the world is that China is on offense, with the intention to lead through economic growth initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, development via the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and, for a vision of united global future, China's "Community of Common Destiny for All Mankind," rhetoric that animates Chinese official documents and speeches.

Despite China's global governance ambition and aggressive propaganda campaign, the failure in containing the Wuhan pandemic shows its inferiority. The virus is shaking Xi Jinping's totalitarian system, and his plans for global control.

Madam Chair, on December 6, 2012, a little more than 7 years ago, I spoke at the Public Hearing " held by this same subcommittee.

I predicted in my presentation that “(t)here may not be significant change to the Chinese regime in the next one to three years, but there will be a major one in the next 5-10 years.” I might have surprised many people by saying so. My prediction was based on the following analysis, which was also laid out in the same presentation. It usually takes four factors to be present at the same time to begin a real democratic transition in an autocratic country: 1) general robust disaffection from people; 2) split in the leadership in the autocratic regime; 3) viable democratic opposition; and 4) international support. Plus one triggering factor: crisis.

I knew the crisis would sooner and later come, natural and man-made, given the nature of the system; like the Soviet Union, PRC must have its Chernobyl moment.

Time does not allow me to elaborate on these factors, which are in the making in the epidemic crisis. I would like to talk about them in Q&A.

With regarding to the factor of international support, I want to emphasize that the EU should soon come up with a contingency plan taking the leverage provided by this disaster to re-shape China’s future course, making sure the lives lost in the epidemic and the sacrifices many Chinese heroes have made in past decades are not, after all, in vain.

I do additionally have quite a few recommendations to make specifically to the EU, which I would reserve for Q&A.

Thank you all.

I. Recommendations for the EU

1. The EU needs to launch a counter campaign to raise awareness of the Chinese Communist (CCP) regime’s ideology and governance model, and its efforts to replace western liberalism and democratic system with its own are clear and present danger to the free world. The campaign must include ideological and information warfare, counter-infiltration efforts to expose the hypocrisy of the CCP’s core principles of the ideology, the hidden meanings of its neologisms such as “the community of shared destiny for mankind,” the ideological contradictions and failings inherent in the CCP’s governance system, as well as how it spreads the CCP narrative within and outside of China. EU should design anti-CCP ideology policy and create a counter-narrative to raise public awareness.

2. The EU member states’ information agencies, such as RFI, DW must be reformed to generate innovative contents advocating universal values, and contract third parties to produce honest assessments of the Chinese regime’s deleterious actions against its own people. The EU official media must illuminate the dangerous audacity of Xi’s ambition, including the use of the Belt and Road Initiative to mask China’s desire for control and determined intent to undermine the existing liberal international order.

3. The EU can help the Chinese people tear down the “Great Firewall” to win the war with China by using its leverage to force China to open up Internet, including confronting Xi’s claim that the internet must be cyber sovereign, firmly supporting the value of a free, open

internet. Additionally, the EU should use its muscle in trade negotiations and its market to open up the Chinese internet market and advance internet freedom. The EU should urge its member countries to partner with the private sector to develop technologies to defeat the Great Firewall. This might include creating a free web based on blockchain technology so that it will be unable to be censored, developing the next generation of VPNs, building global accessible internet access from satellites, and other tools of cyber circumvention.

4. The EU can help the Chinese people free from their digital shackle. The CCP weaponizes mass surveillance that has killed the Chinese civil society. Prohibiting the export of hardware or software that can be used for surveillance, tracking and censorship to government end-users in China and, in particular, image processing chips used for surveillance camera and video equipment; Denying foreign tax credits for any tax paid or accrued to the People's Republic of China by European companies that participate in China's surveillance system building and operation; Imposing an import ban on surveillance products from China; Banning financing of, investing in or research and development for Chinese surveillance companies by EU citizens, corporations or research institutions; Delisting and de-registering Chinese surveillance companies such as Tencent and their investors to deny their access to capital markets in the EU; and Redefining surveillance products and technologies to recognize and anticipate their potential for human rights abuses.

5. Passing legislation and stop importation of Xinjiang Cotton products and other forced labor products.

6. Pass EU version of Global Magnitsky Accountability Act.

7. The Huawei issue is symbolic of the gap between U.S. and European populations on how they view China's rise. The EU must understand this is not about great-power competition between the US and China but defending the common transatlantic values and norms. Preserving those values norms is crucial to advancing our shared interests. China must be compelled to uphold these values and norms if it wants to fully participate in building our shared future. The "West" needs to come together on a unified path forward before it's too late.

European countries don't have to like Trump to do what's in their own national security interest. Huawei [denies](#) that it works with China's intelligence services and says it would refuse Chinese government requests for information. In an emailed statement, Huawei said it "has never and will never covertly access telecom networks, nor do we have the capability to do so."

It should be noted that Huawei has launched an impressive public relations and lobbying campaign across Europe, inviting journalists and politicians to its headquarters and underlining repeatedly its separation from the Chinese state and communist party. In the meantime, recent days have seen revelations that software backdoors were found in Huawei equipment as early as 2009 by carrier Vodafone in Italy, and that despite recurrences to the contrary they remained in place at least until 2011. Although Vodafone said the issue was eventually resolved, this precedent, if further evidence corroborates it, should discourage allowing Huawei to operate at least the most sensitive components of 5G networks in EU member countries.

8. To better promote its interests, Europe should use its economic, political, and diplomatic power to level the economic playing field with China, guard against Chinese political influence, and defend democratic values at home. One thing stands in the way of such a strategy. Europe

remains divided over how seriously to take the Chinese challenge. In contrast to the strategic shifts happening in Berlin, Paris, and the EU capital, in Brussels, the leaders of many smaller states still see only the economic benefits of deeper engagement with China.

Each of the EU member states have been evaluated by a Chinese government-linked think tank as “‘friendly,’ ‘hardline,’ or ‘ambiguous’” in order to advance China’s interests in matters including energy, trade, Tibet and Taiwan—and to sow divisions between the member states. EU should set up a mechanism to engage in both collective confrontation and collective defense on human rights issues.

1). Collective confrontation has three levels:

- a. Each member passes a Human Rights Act linking human rights with all fields of diplomatic ties with dictatorships--regular assessments and executive reports to parliament, etc.
- b. Collectively confront human rights violating countries for human rights issues on various world platforms.
- c. Come up with united measures of punishment addressing individual human rights violating cases--economic sanctions, boycotting cultural events (exchanges, Games, etc.), Magnitsky sanctions, and so on and so forth.

2). Collective Defense:

This will help break the collective action dilemma all the democracies have been so far trapped in. It is very important for everyone, especially smaller ones. In the past, China, for example, has retaliated or threatened to retaliate the countries that confronted it for its human rights abuses.

So, the mechanism must be such that, if one member of the treaty organization is retaliated against economically by for standing up for democratic principles, all other democracies in the treaty agree to come to its defense, helping ease its economic pain.