

SEN. CRUZ SPEAKS AT “COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER: CHINA” EVENT

FRANK GAFFNEY:

Senator Ted Cruz is known to everyone in the room, of course. We are extraordinarily pleased that he was able to take a few minutes from an unbelievably packed day, part of the challenge for us was that tomorrow everybody is going to flee Capitol Hill for the next two weeks and we wanted very much to get this program underway and so, Senator, I'm grateful to you for making this fit. You know him to be the Senator from Texas, a junior senator from Texas, but very much a driving force on Capitol Hill, particularly on matters involving the national security of the United States. Former member of the Senate armed services committee, now a member of the Senate foreign relations committee as well as the judiciary committee, from which he must have just come, where Attorney General Barr is being put through the third degree. Senator, we're glad to have you. Please, come forth and speak to us about whatever you'd like to speak about. I think we were told it was going to be academic and military espionage conducted by the Chinese communist party, but we're pretty much happy to have you talk on any subject. [APPLAUSE]

TED CRUZ:

Well, Frank, thank you very much. Thank you for your friendship and your leadership. Thank you, everyone, for being here. And for addressing the vital national security challenge that's facing our country. These are perilous times. And I think never more so, we face grave challenges and yet I'm encouraged that we are rising up and addressing those challenges and addressing them with strength rather than with weakness. Let me talk to you today about China. That's the focus of the discussion here. China is, in my view and the view of many, the greatest long-term geopolitical risk the United States faces. They are the greatest risk militarily, they are the greatest risk economically, and they are the greatest risk in expanding their world influence and seeking to constrain our own. So, how should we deal with that risk? Well, nobody thinks that we can sever ties with China. China is a massive trading partner. China is intricately involved in the economy, our economy and the world economy. But China's interests are not our own. And I believe we need multiple tools to combat the geopolitical and geo-military threat that we face. One tool is simply the light of transparency. History teaches us something, that dictatorships fear truth. Tyrannies and dictatorships always appear stronger than they are until they crumble. Why is it that mighty China was so terrified at Tiananmen Square? In my office, the Senate Russell building, the dominant feature one sees when one walks in is an enormous painting of Ronald Reagan standing before the Brandenburg Gate. And behind him, written above in German, in the style of the graffiti, are the words, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. The backstory, which many people here know, is that three times the State Department crossed those words out of the speech. And three times, President Reagan, with his own hands, wrote them back. And the State Department argued to him, Mr. President, you don't understand, this sentiment is far too belligerent. It's far too provocative and, Mr. President, come on, let's get serious. This sentiment is unrealistic. It will never, never, never happen. The Soviet Union cannot be defeated and the Berlin Wall will never come to the ground. And Reagan, with a proverbial twinkle in his eye, said, you don't understand. This is the whole point of the speech. And just a couple of years later, the Berlin Wall was torn to the ground without a single shot being fired. That's the power of truth. So, how does that impact communist oppression? Because they cannot stand those words, communist oppression. The apologists for the Chinese communists that we have in the media, that we have, sadly, in Congress, are not advancing the cause of peace or not advancing the cause of human rights, they're not advancing the cause of truth by hiding the truth. Several years ago, I introduced into law legislation that would rename the street in front of the Chinese embassy Liu Xiaobo Plaza, named after the Nobel Peace Laureate who was wrongfully imprisoned. Now, that's actually a strategy that I took unapologetically from Reagan. Because Reagan had named the street in front of the Soviet embassy Sakharov Plaza. On exactly the same theory – you think about it, actually, that in terms of shining a light, every letter the Soviet communists had to write to their embassy, they had to write Sakharov

Plaza if they wanted it to get there. In today's world, on the website, if you want to tell people how to get to the embassy, you got to put the address. So, that legislation, when I introduced it, there was a series I rose and asked unanimous consent to pass it in the Senate and there was this series of times that Senator Feinstein stood up and objected. And she and I debated vigorously on the Senate floor. Well, one of the things one learns in Washington is there are various levers of influence of power. And so, one of the tools that I had at my disposal that I used is I placed a hold on every State Department nominee. I said, we're done confirming State Department nominees until this gets through. Well, that dismayed a lot of people. And I said, listen, I'm perfectly willing to be reasonable, I'm perfectly willing to cut a deal. Pass my legislation and I'll lift the hold. They came back and they said, well, how about if we just pass a resolution? I said, that's an interesting idea. Let me repeat the deal again. Pass my legislation [LAUGHTER] and I'll lift the hold. Well, at the end of the day, what did the Senate do? It passed my legislation and I lifted the hold. [APPLAUSE] Now, that ended up not passing in the House. It was sadly blocked by a House Republican, I might note, but it was blocked in the House and so, it didn't pass into law. And so, if you go to the Chinese embassy today, it is not located on Liu Xiaobo Plaza. But I'll tell you something very interesting, fast forward to the Trump Administration, the Chinese government, when they laid out their top priorities, right at the top of the list is preventing that Cruz legislation from passing into law. I remember having breakfast with Rex Tillerson at the State Department. He was shaking his head, he couldn't understand it, but for whatever reason, China, when they were talking to him, front and center, is do not let that legislation pass. Now, at the time, Liu Xiaobo had passed. But his widow, Liu Xia, was still in China, was prevented from leaving China, was prevented from going and getting the proceeds of the Nobel Peace Prize that he had won. And so, I told Rex very simply, I said, all right, I'll tell you what, tell China to let Liu Xia go. If you let her go, I'll relent and stop pushing the legislation. But if they don't let her go, they'll see me continue to push it and I'll point out, I passed it once. And I have many faults, but lack of tenaciousness is not one of them. [LAUGHTER] Well, I can tell you, after considerable pressure, both public and private, China finally relented and released Liu Xia. [APPLAUSE] Now, look, at some level, people might say, come on, we're talking about a street sign. No, we're not. We're talking about shining a light in the darkness. Some years ago, I had the opportunity to sit down with Natan Sharansky, the famed Soviet dissident. He and I visited in Jerusalem. He described to me how, in the gulag, they would pass from cell to cell notes, did you hear what President Reagan said? Evil empire. Ash heap of history. Tear down this wall. You come to my office, there is a silk painting of me, it was given to my office, that was made by dissidents in North Korea who had smuggled it out. Now, I've never been to North Korea. When each of you are speaking, you may not think your voice is penetrating beyond the Beltway. But just as with the Soviet gulag, shining a light on evil and oppression is heard in the very darkest of hellholes. And tyrannies fear that. Speaking out, highlighting, speaking out about the Uighurs, the persecution, the religious persecution, speaking out about Tibet, shining a light is powerful. The second thing we need to do is we need to take these threats deadly seriously. That's why I'm so grateful that we are in the midst of the biggest military rebuild since Ronald Reagan. Part of the reason China is [APPLAUSE] part of the reason China is so formidable is that they are investing billions in building up their military forces. And after eight years of the Obama administration, of weakening our ability to defend ourselves, it is critical that we are, in fact, turning that around. And that includes not just jets, not just ships, both of which are desperately needed, but that also includes the next domain, which is space. The threat in space is profound. [APPLAUSE] Our vulnerability in space is profound. The Chinese are investing billions in offensive weaponry in space. For years, on the Senate armed services committee, when generals or admirals would come before me, I would ask over and over again, I'd say, tell me, how many times are you practicing military exercises in a space down environment? It's all fine and good to have a fifth generation fighter aircraft, but do you know how to land it if GPS goes down? Do you know how to hit your enemy without all of this wonderful technology? Our aircraft carriers are mighty sailing cities that depend intimately on the satellite data they are receiving moment by moment. We need to be investing far more vigorously in defending space. That's an area that I have led the charge for the last seven years. One of the things I'm most proud of on the Senate armed services committee is passing into law for the first time legislation as part of the National Defense Authorisation Act directing the

Department of Defense to develop and implement a missile defense test bed for space-based missile interceptors. [APPLAUSE] And critically, the important thing about space-based – so, our missile interceptors right now can intercept a missile as it re-enters the atmosphere. The problem is, it is moving unbelievably fast. It may have broken into multiple warheads and countermeasures will be deployed. The beauty of a space-based missile interceptor is you can intercept at boost phase. When the missile is just taking off, when it's traveling slowly, when it hasn't broken into multiple warheads, when it can't deploy countermeasures. That investment is critically important. Let me say the third piece that I think is tremendously important for China. And that is safeguarding ourselves at home. China is not our friend. They invest billions in espionage and theft. The Senate armed services committee, I passed into law legislation giving the Defense Department the ability to veto universities allowing Confucius institutes onto their campuses. Confucius institutes [APPLAUSE] far too often has served as bases for active and aggressive espionage. And we need to understand that China is perfectly willing to invest money. We've seen it across the globe with the one belt, one road initiative. Where they're investing billions on expanding their influence. Well, the same is true here in the United States. Where they're investing billions on influence campaigns and in espionage and theft. I'll tell you, I've had multiple meetings with a major research institution in Texas that describes how they have on their research staff multiple Chinese nationals, who are researchers, who are employees of theirs. But they also happen to be on the payroll of the Chinese government. And the Chinese government is, in many instances, paying them two, three, four times as much as their ostensible employer. Well, what they started discovering is that they were working on research, cutting edge research, that they had not yet filed for US patents on. And suddenly, their research, they would discover China, a Chinese company filing for a US patent on the identical research. And this is not a military and defense research. The extent to which China is investing actively in espionage – you look at Huawei and Telecom and intercepting and spying, Confucius institutes, we need to guard ourselves at home. So, those are the three things I would encourage. Number one, shine a light and speak the truth. Number two, defend ourselves and be prepared to defend ourselves. And number three, guard ourselves at home. And the end of this, let me encourage you, I believe will be the same as the end of those words, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. Truth is stronger than lies and light is stronger than darkness. So, thank you for taking these threats seriously. [APPLAUSE]