

**Internal Security & Grand Strategy:
China's Approach to National Security under Xi Jinping**

Statement before the U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission
Hearing on "U.S.-China Relations at the Chinese Communist Party's Centennial"
Panel on "Trends in China's Politics, Economics, and Security Policy"

28 January 2021

Sheena Chestnut Greitens, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
Faculty Fellow, Clements Center for National Security
Distinguished Scholar, Strauss Center for International Security & Law
University of Texas at Austin

Hearing Co-Chairs Bartholomew and Kamphausen, distinguished Commissioners and staff, fellow panelists, it is a pleasure to join you today. Thank you for inviting me to testify about recent and future trends in Chinese security policy. My remarks will focus on China's approach to national security under Xi Jinping, and are based on past research and on a book manuscript that I expect to complete later this spring.

The central point I wish to emphasize today is that Xi Jinping has outlined and operationalized a new national security strategy -- a new grand strategy -- for the People's Republic of China. The contents of the Fifth Plenum communique, which your questions asked me to comment on, reflect that strategy. We often don't recognize it as such, because we are used to thinking of grand strategy purely in foreign policy and often military terms. When the CCP uses national security, however, it means state or regime security -- the security of the Chinese Communist Party and its ability to govern Chinese society. Internal security is one of the chief ends of China's strategy, not just a means or a constraint on foreign policy, and unless we understand that, our analysis of China's security behavior -- both domestically and externally -- is going to have significant errors.

The Fifth Plenum Communique: on National Security

The Fifth Plenum communique, issued at the conclusion of four days of meetings in Beijing in October 2020, was both a retrospective and a forward-looking exercise; it assessed the results of the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) and the prospective 14th Five Year Plan (2021-2025), which will be unveiled at the National People's Congress this coming March.¹ Many of the themes of the communique are consistent with past rhetoric in which Xi Jinping has laid out a new understanding of China's threat environment, and proposed a new approach by which the party-state should address this environment. As it relates to national security, the main passage of relevant text read:

The plenary session proposed to plan/coordinate development and safety to build a higher level of "Safe China." Adhere to the comprehensive national security concept; carry out the national security strategy; protect and shape national security; plan/coordinate traditional and non-traditional security; integrate the development of security into every domain and every process of national development; prevent and resolve the various risks that (adversely) influence the country's modernization process; and build a firm protective screen for national security. It is vital to strengthen the national security system and build its capacity; guarantee the country's economic security; protect the people's lives and safety; and maintain social stability and security.²

¹ The formal name for the document issued at the Fifth Plenum is "The CCP Central Committee-Formulated Proposal for the 14th Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan, and 2035 Long-Term Goals" (中共中央关于制定国民经济和社会发展第十四个五年规划和二〇三五年远景目标的建议). It is available at http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-10/29/c_1126674147.htm

For a good English-language explainer of the context in which the discussion of national security takes place, see Jude Blanchette and Scott Kennedy's analysis at <https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinas-fifth-plenum-reading-initial-tea-leaves>

² The Chinese reads: 全会提出，统筹发展和安全，建设更高水平的平安中国。坚持总体国家安全观，实施国家安全战略，维护和塑造国家安全，统筹传统安全和非传统安全，把安全发展贯穿国家发展各领域和全过程，防范和化解影响我国现代化进程的各种风险，筑牢国家安全屏障。要加强国家安全体系和能力建设，确保国家经济安全，保障人民生命安全，维护社会稳定和安全。

Both in this passage, and elsewhere in the text, there are some highlights worth noting:

- The directive to adhere to Xi Jinping’s “comprehensive national security concept” (*zongti guojia anquan guan*), with its attention to both traditional and non-traditional security threats.³
- An “increasingly complex” international environment, characterized by “profound changes” and heightened uncertainty and instability. The communique includes the formulation “changes in the world unseen in a century,” a phrase that has been the subject of close textual analysis and discussion both in China and in the United States.⁴
- The CCP’s efforts to reform both the military and the internal security, or political-legal, apparatus, the latter of which is referred to using the “Safe China” phrasing (*ping’an Zhongguo*).⁵
- The important role of technological development in achieving modernization of “national governance system and governance capabilities” and building an overall “national security system.”⁶
- The need to “coordinate development and security,” but with a slight shift in emphasis toward the idea that security must be incorporated into development work.⁷

The communique assesses that in the past five years under Xi Jinping’s leadership, national security has been comprehensively strengthened. and that society has maintained or preserved both harmony and stability.⁸ It also notes improvement in “social governance (*shehui zhibi*), especially grassroots governance” as well as the system to “prevent and resolve” major risks.⁹

Analyzing China’s Concept of National Security

What are the sources of this assessment, and upon what is it based? I would argue that the introduction of Xi Jinping’s comprehensive national security concept in 2013-14, and subsequent fleshing out of that concept in both theory and practice, constitute a redefinition of China’s grand strategy. The Fifth Plenum communique, in combination with other evidence, indicates that this approach is now embedded within the party-state’s approach for the foreseeable future.

³ 坚持总体国家安全观.

⁴ Some of the language from the communique that describes this environment includes the following: 当今世界正经历百年未有之大变局… 国际力量对比深刻调整… 同时国际环境日趋复杂, 不稳定性不确定性明显增加. For contrasting interpretations of the “changes unseen in a century” phrase and its implications for China, see Rush Doshi, “Beijing Believes Trump is Accelerating American Decline,” *Foreign Policy*, 12 October 2020; Alastair Iain Johnston, “China’s Contribution to the US-China Security Dilemma,” in Avery Goldstein and Jacques DeLisle, eds., *After Engagement* (forthcoming).

⁵ 平安中国建设达到更高水平, 基本实现国防和军队现代化.

⁶ 基本实现国家治理体系和治理能力现代化

⁷ 统筹发展和安全. Note, however, that this brief reference glosses over some important changes in thinking under Xi Jinping with respect to the relationship between security and development. Whereas previous Chinese leaders tended to see development as a tool for producing security, Xi Jinping has at times suggested the reverse: that security is the necessary precondition for development.

⁸ 国家安全全面加强

⁹ 社会治理特别是基层治理水平明显提高, 防范化解重大风险体制机制不断健全.

One popular way of defining grand strategy is that it is a “state’s theory about how it can best ‘cause’ security for itself,” and it operates by identifying threats and proposing possible remedies.¹⁰ Although there has been much written since this definition that tries to more specifically define grand strategy in both comparative and American context,¹¹ I use this definition because it is the one that I think gives us the most clarity on how to look at what China is doing. In this sense, Xi Jinping has articulated a new threat environment for China; he has proposed a different organizing concept for how to approach this environment (a new theory of how to create security for China); and he has operationalized that concept in significant reforms to law, personnel, organizations, budgets, and policy. In other words, there is a direct connection between the strategic concept he’s outlined, and China’s subsequent policy behavior.

We do not tend to talk about China’s grand strategy in these terms, however -- in large part because doing so requires significant departures from classic Western assumptions about what grand strategy is and what it focuses on. Canonical Western scholarship on grand strategy emphasizes military power, focuses almost solely on foreign policy, and treats domestic politics primarily as a constraint on or enabler of the means by which a state pursues grand strategic ends abroad.¹² China’s grand strategy, by contrast, focuses on regime security, and pays explicit attention to both internal and external dimensions.¹³ Moreover, in the Chinese framework, internal security is the end toward which grand strategy is directed, not a) a means by which external goals are pursued or b) a constraint on pursuing them. China’s notion of grand strategy or national security also includes a much more prominent place for surveillance, policing, and internal instruments of non-military but coercive regime power. To understand Chinese security behavior now and in the foreseeable future, the United States will need to revise its thinking about how Beijing formulates and defines grand strategy.

In retrospect, the first signal of this new grand strategy appeared in a brief discussion of national security in the communique issued by the Third Plenum of the 18th Party Congress in November 2013, but it became much clearer with the unveiling of the Comprehensive National Security Concept in April 2014¹⁴ and launch of the Central National Security Commission.¹⁵ Analysts originally speculated

¹⁰ Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), esp. p. 13.

¹¹ For two recent reviews of the literature on grand strategy, see Rebecca Friedman Lissner, “What is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield,” *Texas National Security Review* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2018); Nina Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword: Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy,’” *Security Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (2018), pp. 27-57.

¹² On the role of domestic politics, for example, see Richard Rosencrance and Arthur Stein, *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Cornell University Press, 1993).

¹³ Sulmaan Wasif Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2018); see also Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China’s Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997).

¹⁴ On the NSS, see “Xi Jinping Chairs Political Bureau Meeting on Outline for National Security Strategy,” *Xinhua*, 23 January 2015, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2015-01/23/c_1114112093.htm. On the CNSC, see “National Security Matter of Prime Importance: President Xi,” *Xinhua*, 15 April 2014, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2014-04/15/c_1110253910.htm;

¹⁵ “习近平：坚持总体国家安全观 走中国特色国家安全道路 [Xi Jinping: Adhere to the Concept of Comprehensive National Security and Take the Road of National Security with Chinese Characteristics],” *Xinhua*, 15 April 2014, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2014-04/15/c_1110253910.htm; “Xi Jinping

that China's NSC might mirror the similarly-named body in the United States, but China's CNSC -- a party rather than state body -- has clearly adopted a more inward focus and releases relatively little information about its deliberations. The launch of both the concept and commission was followed a year later by the issuance of China's first national security strategy, a document that is not public but that, from available reporting, appears to reflect and build on the ideas conveyed a year earlier.¹⁶ The inauguration of a codified national security strategy on its own is a break with precedent, and indicates a different approach to these matters under Xi Jinping.

Minxin Pei notes that throughout China's post-1949 history, Chinese leaders have typically tended to offer a framing of the threat, which spells out what policy options are available and which are non-starters.¹⁷ Xi Jinping's characterization of China's threat environment, as noted above, is distinct from those of his predecessors. In November 2012, Hu Jintao stated that the "balance of international forces is developing in a direction favorable for the maintenance of world peace... [and] for overall stability in the international environment."¹⁸ By spring 2014, however, Xi Jinping described China as facing "the most complicated internal and external factors in its history."¹⁹ He quoted the Book of Changes, and warned listeners that "in our efforts to safeguard national security and social stability in these new circumstances, we are confronted with increasing threats and challenges. And, more importantly, these threats and challenges are interlocked and can be mutually activated."²⁰

Xi's reference to "interlocking" threats indicates a key aspect of his framing of China's security environment: the interrelationship, even inextricability, of external and internal threats, and the potential for one type of threat to exacerbate (or "activate") the other. In remarks at the first meeting of the National Security Commission, he called on the CCP to "attach equal importance to internal and external security."²¹ Moreover, the language of "mutually activated" is significant: it suggests that China will not necessarily retrench in the face of domestic insecurity or difficulty, as typical US-centric approach to grand strategy might presume, but in fact may very well escalate or at least become more active abroad. If internal and external threats are truly interlocking and mutually activated, one would not focus on one at the expense of the other, but must address both simultaneously. This has important implications for the United States and international community as they try to predict China's response to various external developments.

Chairs First NSC Meeting, Stresses National Security with Chinese Characteristics," *Xinhua* News, 15 April 2014, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2014-04/15/c_1110253910.htm;

¹⁶ "Xi Jinping Chairs Political Bureau Meeting on Outline for National Security Strategy," *Xinhua*, 23 January 2015, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2015-01/23/c_1114112093.htm. Note that while the presence of a national security strategy (in document form) is new, China has long had military guidelines; see Taylor Fravel, *Active Defense: China's Military Strategy since 1949* (Princeton, 2019).

¹⁷ Minxin Pei, "Investigation of a Death Long Feared," *China Leadership Monitor*, September 2020, p. 4.

¹⁸ Hu Jintao, "Unswervingly Advance Along the Path of Chinese Characteristics, Struggle To Complete the Building of a Well-Off Society in an All-Round Way," Report to the 18th Party National Congress, 8 November 2012 (*People's Daily*, 9 November 2012), <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2012/1109/c1001-19529890.html>.

¹⁹ "习近平：坚持总体国家安全观 走中国特色国家安全道路 [Xi Jinping: Adhere to the Concept of Comprehensive National Security and Take the Road of National Security with Chinese Characteristics]," *Xinhua*, 15 April 2014, http://www.xinhuanet.com//politics/2014-04/15/c_1110253910.htm;

²⁰ Xi Jinping, "Safeguard National Security and Social Stability," 25 April 2014, in Xi 2014, p. 234.

²¹ Xi Jinping, "A Holistic View of National Security," 15 April 2014, in Xi 2014, p. 232.

Also embedded at the core of this new strategy is the perceived need to move further toward preventive management of potential instability, as a way of responding to the heightened uncertainty and instability of China's overall security environment. Xi Jinping telegraphed this principle in April 2014 by saying:

To safeguard national security we must maintain social harmony and stability, *prevent and resolve social conflicts*, and improve our institutions, mechanisms, policies and practical endeavors to make this happen.... [We must improve] the mechanism for assessing potential risks, so as to *reduce and prevent* conflicts of interest.²²

In 2015, Meng Jianzhu repeated Xi's formulation about prevention and control (防控, *fangkong*) as the "correct direction" for political-legal work;²³ in early 2019, Zhao Kezhi urged China's various public security bureau directors to "always insist on putting *prevention* of political risks as the first priority."²⁴ The emphasis on prevention and control as a byword for the management of Chinese society indicates a more proactive and preventive way of approaching governance than even the stability maintenance (*weibu wending*) framework used during the Hu-Wen era, and at times has implied some criticism of it (though as the Fifth Plenum text shows, the term has not disappeared).²⁵

The fact that "prevention and control" does double-duty discursively in both public security and public health helps to explain why China's response to COVID-19 was inextricable from the country's broader surveillance and social control projects. Pandemic management efforts drew on the infrastructure of public security, and amplified the strength of those systems in turn.²⁶ But alongside the securitization of public health has come the medicalization of public security, which is perhaps even more troubling in its implications. In 2016, Meng Jianzhu referred to the need to 'immunize' the Chinese body politic and to strengthen its overall immunity against politically problematic thinking;²⁷ in Xinjiang, officials have repeatedly likened perceived threats (usually the "three evils" of separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism) to cancer (tumors) and infectious disease (ideological viruses). This metaphor makes clear that the CCP's preventive logic requires targeting and "treating" citizens long before they have shown any symptoms of threatening behavior, based only on the regime's perceived perception of someone's "susceptibility" to incorrect political thinking.

²² Emphasis added. Xi Jinping, "Safeguard National Security and Social Stability," 25 April 2014, in Xi 2014, p. 235.

²³ Meng 2015.

²⁴ Emphasis added. His statement was "始终坚持把防范政治风险置于首位。" Li 2019.

²⁵ For example, in 2015, Meng Jianzhu appeared to implicitly criticize "stability maintenance" by saying it had been too reliant on "suppressive control."

²⁶ Sheena Chestnut Greitens and Julian Gewirtz, "China's Troubling Vision for the Future of Public Health," *Foreign Affairs*, 10 July 2020.

²⁷ For example, in 2015, Meng Jianzhu appeared to implicitly criticize "stability maintenance" by saying it had been too reliant on "suppressive control."

From Concept to Behavior: Why a New National Security Strategy Matters

The conceptualization outlined above is not simply abstract theorizing; it has shaped and justified concrete policy changes that have made headlines in and outside of China since 2014. According to Chinese analysts and commentary, existing security frameworks and tools “did not meet the requirements of safeguarding/protecting national security.”²⁸ The increased prevalence of non-traditional security threats in China’s new security environment, combined with the increasingly interlinked relationship between internal and external security threats, propelled reforms of China’s national security institutional infrastructure, and many recent developments reflect the party-state’s attempt to operationalize its new national security strategy. I have written about many of these developments at some length elsewhere,²⁹ but let me review a few key points below.

Organizationally, the inaugural national security strategy has been operationalized through steps such as the creation of the Central National Security Commission, reorganization of the People’s Armed Police, and creation of a new and much stronger supervision-and-discipline apparatus that is sometimes now referred to as a “sharp sword” that parallels the gun of the military and the knife of the domestic coercive apparatus. As noted above, these reorganizations are often explicitly justified by linking them to the comprehensive national security concept and subsequent new approach. Leaders of the People’s Armed Police (PAP), for example, have cited the inadequacy of the old organization as a reason to reorganize and change the command structure of the PAP.³⁰

A new legal architecture has also been constructed through the nearly twenty pieces of legislation related to national security passed by the National People’s Congress, from early ones such as the Counter-Espionage Law in 2014 to the Hong Kong National Security Law in summer 2020. As with organizational reform, legislation has been explained as emanating from the Comprehensive National Security Concept.³¹ These laws have paved the way for an assertion of extraterritorial authority that only makes sense in light of the permeability of internal and external security asserted by Xi and the Comprehensive National Security Concept. Among other effects, this has posed challenges to academic freedom in the United States, particularly (but not only) when Chinese students taking courses from American universities are physically located in the PRC.³²

In terms of *personnel*, Xi Jinping has replaced almost all of the senior leaders across the political-legal apparatus, either through retirement or via anti-corruption investigations. His rhetoric, and that of senior officials, frames corruption itself as a matter of national security; earlier this month, at the annual meeting of the Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection (CCDI), he repeated a

²⁸ Xi Jinping, “Explanations of ‘the CPC Central Committee’s Resolution Concerning Several Major Issues in Comprehensively Deepening Reform,’” *Xinhua*, 15 November 2013, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2013-11/15/c_118164294.htm; Hua Yiwen, “‘Three in One System’ Opens New Stage in National Security,” *People’s Daily*, 2 July 2015, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-07/02/c_127974791.htm; See also Chen 2013; Gong 2014; Liu 2014.

²⁹ <http://www.court.gov.cn/fabu-xiangqing-13840.html>

³⁰ Wang Ning 2017.

³¹ “Build a Firm System for National Security,” *Renmin Ribao*, 2 July 2015, <http://opinion.people.com.cn/n/2015/0702/c1003-27240271.html>

³² For example, see Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “America’s Universities Need a China Strategy,” *ChinaFile*, 27 August 2020, <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/future-of-china-studies-us>

statement made previously, that corruption was the biggest threat to the CCP's governance.³³ As I have written elsewhere,³⁴ the anti-corruption campaign is explicitly political, in that it targets not just criminals but their “protective umbrellas” in law enforcement and local government, on the belief that collusion threatens not just the safety or finances of citizens, but the political stability and “ruling foundation” of the Chinese Communist Party. This securitization of corruption means that both the military and the political-legal apparatus have been made primary targets of recent anti-corruption campaigns, including the rectification-and-education campaign that was piloted last summer/fall, and formally kicks off this year.

The anti-corruption campaign also demonstrates China's perception that internal and external dimensions of security interlock, meaning that anti-corruption is not just domestic politics but also drives some of China's foreign policy behavior. The Supreme People's Procuratorate, for example, has advertised its success in returning expats via Interpol's red notice system, and highlighted the promotion of a “Clean Belt and Road” alongside other forms of international cooperation on anti-corruption and law enforcement.³⁵ The fall of Meng Hongwei from Interpol leadership when he was detained by the CCDI in fall 2018 indicates that regime security takes priority over participation and potentially even leadership of international organizations when the two objectives come into conflict.³⁶ Moreover, there is some evidence that the penetration of external threats inside China's political system heightened the urgency of the anti-corruption campaigns in the first place; Zach Dorfman reported in late 2020 that Xi Jinping was impelled in part by concern that the American CIA had exploited corruption in China by paying officials' promotion fees and thereby recruiting them.³⁷

Procurement and budgets also reflect the new approach to national security; these documents show large increases in technological spending related to surveillance which is often explicitly linked to the aim of “prevention and control”³⁸ and which parallels the Fifth Plenum's rhetoric about construction and strengthening of “the national security system.” One phrase that occurs often in CCP rhetoric on public security management is the need for a “three-dimensional information-based prevention and control system for public-social security” (创新立体化信息化社会治安防控体系). A 2015 opinion from the CCP Central Committee and PRC State Council, for example, calls for this system to be

³³ Echo Xie, “Chinese President Xi Jinping says corruption remains biggest threat to Communist Party,” *South China Morning Post*, 23 January 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3118964/chinese-president-xi-jinping-says-corruption-remains-biggest>; see also http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2021-01/23/nw.D110000renmrb_20210123_1-01.htm

³⁴ Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “The *Saobei* Campaign, Protection Umbrellas, and Impact on China's Political-Legal Apparatus,” *China Leadership Monitor*, September 2020, <https://www.prcleader.org/greitens-1>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Colin Dwyer, “Meng Hongwei, Ex-President of Interpol, Sentenced to Prison in China for Corruption,” *NPR*, 21 January 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/21/798121397/former-interpol-president-sentenced-to-prison-in-china-for-corruption>

³⁷ Zach Dorfman, “China Used Stolen Data to Expose CIA Operatives in Africa and Europe,” *Foreign Policy*, 21 December 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/21/china-stolen-us-data-exposed-cia-operatives-spy-networks/#>

³⁸ Jessica Batke and Mareike Ohlberg, “State of Surveillance,” *ChinaFile*, 30 October 2020, <https://www.chinafile.com/state-surveillance-china>

implemented so as to “comprehensively promote the construction of a peaceful China”³⁹ -- the same language invoked in the Fifth Plenum communique. Concretely, this directive calls for the expansion of networked video surveillance and community grid management, enhancement of predictive and early warning capabilities in public security, and reorganization of local party and government work to limit “information islands” and more smoothly coordinate information and public security intelligence.⁴⁰ The drive to develop these capabilities inside China has not just had domestic consequences, but is affecting governance worldwide; as of late 2019, Chinese tech companies had exported surveillance and data-integration platforms to over 80 countries worldwide.⁴¹

The advent of this new approach to national security has also produced significant changes in specific regions and policy issues -- perhaps most notably in Xinjiang, where the CCP has escalated a campaign of collective repression against the Uyghur Muslim population to the point where it was deemed genocide by both the outgoing Trump and incoming Biden administrations. In work published last year in *International Security*,⁴² two colleagues and I argued that China’s sharp turn to collective repression in spring 2017 was likely motivated not only by domestic factors, but also by heightened sensitivity to changes in their perceptions of the external threat environment, especially a desire to prevent terrorism from diffusing back into China via radicalized transnational Uyghur networks and links (however tenuous) to terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, Syria, and the broader Middle East. This is a particular variant of the internal-external security nexus that Xi Jinping’s comprehensive national security concept called on officials to scrutinize -- and when combined with the preventive logic of “immunization,” it has produced the sharp escalation in collective repression and grossly disproportionate violations of civil, political, and other human rights that the world has witnessed in Xinjiang.

Thus Xi Jinping’s comprehensive national security concept, China’s inaugural national security strategy, and a whole body of related writings lay out a revised understanding of China’s threat environment, and propose a new doctrine, or approach, to addressing these challenges. Understanding this affects how we interpret and predict any number of Chinese actions and behaviors, whether in Xinjiang or elsewhere, and can therefore generate specific policy recommendations for each individual topic or issue-area. But more fundamentally, I believe, analysts and policymakers must revise how they understand China’s approach to national security and grand strategy to account for the strategic framework I have outlined today. A more accurate understanding of the underlying concept will lead to better analysis, more accurate predictions, and more useful policy proposals across a wide range of issue areas, the full breadth of which we cannot hope to cover today.

³⁹ “全面推进平安中国建设。” CCP Central Committee/PRC State Council 2015.

⁴⁰ On the local application of these platforms to try to resolve the challenge of “information islands,” see Huirong Chen and Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “Information Capacity and Social Order: The Local Politics of Information Integration in China,” *Governance* (forthcoming).

⁴¹ Sheena Chestnut Greitens, “Dealing With Demand for China’s Global Surveillance Exports,” Brookings, April 2020.

⁴² Sheena Chestnut Greitens, Myunghee Lee, and Emir Yazici, “Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression: China’s Changing Strategy in Xinjiang,” *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Winter 2019/20).

Recommendations for Research and Policy

In addition to the specific issue-area recommendations that I mentioned, and which I would be happy to follow up on with the Commission after this hearing, the framework I have described today suggests a need for several structural changes to the way the United States seeks to understand and analyze the People's Republic of China. To begin, I would ask the Commission to consider the following:

- 1) Increased federal funding for the study of China (via FLAS, etc) to match the PRC's current strategic importance to the United States, and ensure that the U.S. has a pipeline of capable, trained researchers and analysts for the foreseeable future;
- 2) Establishment of a center or initiative that provides public translations of key open-source documents, so that analysts and policymakers are aware of important policy changes (or evolutions) in something closer to real-time, and so that fully-informed debate is not limited to those who speak and read fluent Mandarin Chinese;
- 3) Revised visa policies (and collaboration with American institutions of higher education) to facilitate exchanges between Chinese and American researchers in the social sciences, where the risks of illicit technology transfer are very low, but the benefits to national security of open dialogue (and particularly of avoiding misunderstanding of Chinese priorities and assumptions) are high;
- 4) Incorporation of analysis of Chinese law enforcement and domestic security actors into research on China's national security and foreign policy, whether in Congressional reporting requirements or this Commission's annual report. (In essence, there is a need to take China's framework for national security on its own terms to avoid mirroring errors that assume China sees the concept the same way the United States does.)

This is far from an exhaustive list, and I look forward to continued dialogue on these important issues and the policy recommendations that flow from them. The Commission plays an important role in bringing these questions and concerns to public light, in Washington, across the United States, and indeed internationally. I thank you again for your time and attention, and the opportunity to testify to you today.