China’s Population Policy

Harry Wu / September 1, 2001

I am honored to testify here again on the Planned Birth Policy in the People’s Republic of China.

In 1998, I testified alongside other crucial witnesses on this same issue before this very committee. Unfortunately, the Planned Birth Policy is still carried out as the national policy of the People’s Republic of China, and consequent violations of basic human rights are perpetrated no less frequently.

A Gross Human Rights Violation

It is regrettable that in addressing human rights issues, the United States government fails to accuse the Planned Birth Policy of the People’s Republic of China — a policy of gross human rights violations — from a proper standpoint. Primarily focusing on persecution cases of prominent dissidents, our government often overlooks China’s systemic violations of basic human rights, violations that affect each and every citizen: the intellectuals and workers, urbanites and peasants, Han Chinese and minorities, the men, women, and children of China. Those overlooked include the massive Laogai (“reform through labor”) system, the Planned Birth Policy, the horrible practice of mass and public execution, the harvesting of executed prisoners’ organs, and the all-around ruthless persecution of religious believers.

To become a peaceful, prosperous, democratic, and free nation, China must significantly improve human rights conditions from the most basic and universal aspects. Otherwise, more skyscrapers and high-rises, more manufacturers, and more technology will only transfuse more blood to extend the existence of this regime.

The population policy that began in the 1980’s is a policy under the absolute control of the Chinese Communist Party, a policy that grossly violates human nature as well as human rights. Based exclusively on political considerations, it is a barbaric action.
Poverty in China

China argues in support of its population policy, saying that to become prosperous, China must curb its population growth. They claim that limited living and land resources as a result of overpopulation lead to poor education, environmental hazards, poor medical care, and a low quality of life for the population. To summarize, the Chinese government wishes that people around the world, particularly the Chinese people, could agree that overpopulation is one of the major reasons why China remains poor and corrupt. But such an argument is preposterous and entirely unacceptable. One only needs to glance a few inches on a globe to see why: Japan, which has far more people per capita than China, is in fact a developed nation, well-educated, stable, and tackling population control through better education rather than brutal control.

In actuality, China’s Communist political and economic system is the main reason why it can barely develop, which in turn causes an exploding population and stagnant economy. The only way to solve China’s population problem is not to strengthen Communism’s political powers, but to drastically change its irrational political and economic system.

Birth — A Basic Human Right

To give birth is a basic human right. No government, organization, or individual should, based on political, economic, cultural, religious, and racial reasons, deprive a human being’s right to give birth. To give birth is also an act of nature, and try as we might, we cannot always control a human being’s reproductive system. To violently punish a woman and her unborn child for natural consequences often beyond their control is the epitome of cruelty. And, to hold such power in the hands of a central totalitarian regime invites far too many human rights abuses to terrify the masses.

It is my hope that all of you who are here, all American statesmen, scholars, religious workers and grassroots citizens, will agree that such a personal, yet universal issue of one’s right to procreate deserves a standard that cannot be overlooked by China.

In 1998, I testified on how the Planned Birth Policy was implemented in the Fujian Province. Today I testify on new research in Tianjin Municipality and in regions of national minorities.

Tianjin, with its population of ten million, is one of China’s four municipalities directly under the central government, the other three being Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing. With its
better economic and cultural conditions, one would expect the implementation of its Planned Birth Policy to be relatively more “civilized” than in other regions.

New Findings

The following is a description of our investigation:

1. According to Article Four of Tianjin Municipality Regulations of Planned Birth, which was promulgated on April 15, 1994 by the Seventh Plenary Session, Twelfth People’s Congress Standing Committee of Tianjin Municipality, Tianjin carries out a system that holds the CEOs of work units accountable for population quotas during their tenure. In other words, the responsibility of CEOs for population quotas is fixed by their governmental superiors. CEOs at all levels are duty-bound, authorized, and determined to make it impossible for population growth to surpass fixed quotas during their tenure. If they fail to do so, they will lose their promotions and risk dismissal or punishment. This is the principal reason why Communist cadres at all levels resort to desperate, barbaric practices of forcing abortion and sterilization, and killing infants. Such a practice relates directly to the security of their jobs. For instance, superior units allow Xinanliuxing Village of the Dongpuwa Township in Wuqing County, Tianjin, which has a population of 500, a quota of only 2.5 children annually, or, 5 children every two years. Should more than five children be born, the punishment befalls the village party branch secretary and planned birth director. Subsequently, they sterilize all women with two children in the village. All women with one child are forced to undergo device-insertion surgery. The IUD’s reliability and pregnancy are checked every three months. If a woman is pregnant, she must undergo an abortion. In the Aiying (“Baby-Friendly”) Hospital in Tianjin, a facility affiliated with the Tianjin Central Women’s Hospital, Wang Gulian, a woman with one child who became pregnant again at the age of 25, was forced to undergo an abortion for causing “overbirth” (over-quota birth or out-of-plan birth). This hospital, which receives funds from the United Nations Children Fund, performs around 300 forced abortion surgeries and 100-150 sterilization surgeries monthly.

2. According to Article Two of Tianjin Municipality Regulations of Planned Birth, out-of-plan births and out-of-wedlock births are prohibited; birth can only be granted to children within the plan. As Tianjin Planned Birth Committee explains, “Prohibiting out-of-plan births means prohibiting non-approved second or third births”; “out-of-plan...
wedlock births means unmarried people giving birth,” and this is considered to be illegal; “population growth must correspond to plan” means that the superior government units stipulate subordinate units’ birth plans, which must in no case be “overfilled.”

Such a population control policy, with the government stipulating birth figures, has been unprecedented in world history. The figures have legal binding force and are executed by CEOs authorized by the government to implement their quotas.

Minorities not Equal

An investigation report shows that the Planned Birth Policy of the People’s Republic of China allows national minorities to be treated somewhat differently. But, to learn the truth of that, one needs only to read the statement of one Uzbek minority woman. A young woman with one son was held down against her will despite legislation allowing minorities two or three children while nurses forcibly pushed her healthy, unborn child out of her womb.

According to a recent report issued by the Chinese authorities, as the result of implementing the Planned Birth Policy over the last twenty years, the Chinese population is 330 million less than had been predicted.

Coming Imbalance

It is important to note that if Chinese authorities continue to implement this Planned Birth Policy, the Chinese population will be horribly unbalanced. In a small village in the Guanxi province, 19 out of 24 births during the year 2001 were boys. China’s population of 1.2 billion people has 41 million more men than women. The Chinese generally prefer their only child to be male, particularly in the countryside where boys are of more help to the family. Therefore, female infants are often killed or left at orphanages. If this continues, the proportion of males will quickly tower over the proportion of females, leading to a vast network of women trafficking as men scramble to find wives. Upcoming generations will have no concept of siblings, cousins, uncles and aunts. China will be an abnormal, hapless nation.

I stand before you today to condemn the nature and implementation of China’s Planned Birth Policy. I wholeheartedly agree that something must be done to control China’s
population problem. However, what I have described today is a brutal method that, in time, will only further sour the relationship between the government and the masses and lead to problems of a far more serious nature. I therefore urge the Chinese authorities to seek out and consider alternative methods of population control, to research more successful and less violent methods implemented by other nations. And I urge the American government to assist them as best they can.

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