



Chairman's Opening Remarks June 17th Hearing

"The Chinese Communist Party is not a trade competitor that plays by different rules. It's not a diplomatic challenge to be managed through the right mix of engagement and pressure.

It is a country whose government has made a strategic goal of weakening the United States, and that's the nice way you can say it, deciding that senior citizens are a legitimate target.

This hearing will cover the concrete, measurable harms that are being done to America's seniors by a government in Beijing, led by the Communist Party, who views our country's most vulnerable as economic opportunity.

The list of dangers that Communist China presents has grown as they become more aggressive. Those threats now impact every square inch of American life.

Let's start with fentanyl and other illicit drugs. America has lost hundreds of thousands of our people to deadly drugs.

Since 2013, China has been the primary source of fentanyl and the precursor chemicals that drug cartels use to manufacture it and kill American citizens, thanks to Communist China.

We hear a lot about young Americans dying from fentanyl poisonings, and they are, but seniors are a growing share of the victims.

Older Americans living with chronic pain, veterans managing injuries, and patients seeking alternative sources for the medications due to rising costs are dying because Communist China profits from their death and because the CCP has chosen again and again to look the other way.

China has made some announcements about controlling precursor exports. We've heard those before, and rarely do they hold up their end of the bargain. They never hold up their end of the bargain.

Now let's talk about the pills themselves – legal ones that seniors depend on every day.

As you've heard in this committee time and again, over ninety percent of the prescriptions filled at American pharmacies are generic drugs. The active pharmaceutical ingredients, or APIs, in most of those drugs come from China or India.

For many critical medicines, China isn't just a major supplier. They're the only supplier. There is no domestic alternative standing by.

If Beijing decides tomorrow to restrict drug exports – as it has explicitly threatened to do in the CCP's state media, American seniors will feel it in weeks.

According to a CPA report, Communist China supplies 87% of US antibiotic API imports and 80-90% of global API production. We cannot field a military if China stopped exports.

We saw how China withheld PPE during Covid. This is a real problem.

China has leverage. China knows it has leverage. And our committee's investigative work has made clear that they are not shy about reminding us.

That is why legislation like the CLEAR LABELS Act is important. It's time Americans truly know where their drugs come from.

We would have never let the Soviets have this kind of leverage over us during the Cold War. We should be taking this issue just as seriously now.

No sane country would act like this when their opponent wants to destroy them. We have to wake up.

That's why we're pushing the federal government every day to support domestic manufacturing and leverage the full buying power of the government to support our domestic drugmakers, and I want to thank the Ranking Member for her actions here.

Here's another way Communist China hurts our seniors...relentless scams.

In 2024, Americans over 60 lost nearly five billion dollars to financial scams.

That's not just a crime statistic, but a coordinated campaign, run at an industrial scale, by organized criminal enterprises with direct ties to actors operating under the protection of or at the direction of the Chinese Communist Party.

We held a hearing earlier this year on foreign scam compounds. These are physical facilities in Southeast Asia where trafficked workers are forced to run fraud operations targeting Americans around the clock.

I'm sure you've gotten a scam call before, I actually get them everyday, – who hasn't?

These AI-generated voice clones, deepfake video calls, grandparent, romance, and investment scams all look and sound entirely legitimate until, all of the sudden, the money is gone.

These sophisticated, well-funded criminals have focused on seniors because they have their retirement savings and are less likely to report what happened to them.

Congress needs to act now and pass legislation targeting these bad actors before even more Americans lose their life's savings to these thugs.

The SCAM Act passed this Senate. The STOP Scammers Act is waiting. We need the rest of Congress to act with the same urgency that our seniors deserve.

Finally, I'd like to talk about data, because everything else becomes more dangerous when the CCP knows your medical history, your financial accounts, your daily routine, and the names of your grandchildren.

Communist China is systematically acquiring the personal, financial, and health data of older Americans through connected devices, digital health platforms, data broker purchases, and cyberattacks on American institutions.

We saw this with BGI, the Beijing Genomics Institute, potentially acquiring genomic data from US patients. That led to the passage of the BIOSECURE Act which prohibited federal agencies and federally funded groups from utilizing biotechnology equipment and services from biotechnology companies of concern.

For too long, Washington has treated all these issues as individual problems. I believe it's time we take a comprehensive approach to fighting Communist China's growing threat.

The legislation mentioned today in my opening is just the beginning – but the breadth of that work cannot be captured in an opening statement.

So today, I'm posting online a list of bills I've sponsored or cosponsored that speaks to the threats we're examining in this hearing, with a plain-English summary of what each one does—and I know the Ranking Member is all over this.

You deserve to know where your Senator stands. And I'd ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to look at that list and ask themselves the same question I ask every day: what are we waiting for?

The bottom line here is that America has enemies—whether we like it or not— and we need to act like it. Communist China wants to destroy our way of life.

50 years ago, we never would have given the Soviets the kind of leeway we give China: the access they have to our economy and our information, the dependence they enjoy from our supply chains.

We need to get serious about this before it's too late."