

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we have Ms. Khalid.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you all once again.

Mr. Tohti, can you explain to us what these maps mean, in light of the briefs that you've submitted to us?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: There is China's belt and road initiative, proposed in 2014 by President Xi Jinping, owned by President Xi Jinping, and endorsed by President Xi Jinping. It is called a 21st-century Marshall Plan. It runs from the east coast of China all the way north to Moscow, to Europe and the Middle East, and to the southern part of Europe and Africa. There are four land lines, land corridors, as they are called, and also the Maritime Silk Road.

The Maritime Silk Road connects two points. One is Myanmar, stretching to the south. The second one connects to the Maritime Silk Road and the land corridor, and that's the Pakistani Gwadar port, which stretches from East Turkestan to Pakistan, because we have a border, and in the middle is the Central Asian land line. It covers Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, and the northern line stretches to Moscow.

The central part is the region of the Uighurs. The southern part is Tibet. The northwestern part is the Uighur region, what we call East Turkestan and China calls Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

Because China wants to achieve this 21st-century Marshall Plan, they are not hesitating to eliminate whatever they see as obstacles. The majority of Turkic and Muslim people are silent on the atrocities of the Uighurs, because they are expecting some kind of financial share from the promised Chinese investment.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: You mentioned that other countries that are part of this may not be speaking out because they're expecting financial gain. I understand there are some states that have spoken out. Can you elaborate a little bit on those countries that have spoken out?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: One is Malaysia, besides all major western powers, I mean. Malaysia publicly spoke out not only against China's belt and road initiative but also against China's oppression of Uighurs. Another is Pakistan, which also started to speak out because Pakistan realized that with the Chinese belt and road initiative, despite the investment, the majority of the construction and other money that China spends goes back to China again. That is, Pakistan realized that it kills the Pakistani industry.

In addition, there are more than 300 Uighurs married to Pakistani gentlemen, and all of them are in concentration camps right now. Some of the Pakistani gentlemen went to Beijing to protest, working with the Pakistani embassy in Beijing. Besides that, Europe, all the member states, twice issued a public statement. The United Nations issued a public statement. The United States and Australia had a fair hearing on these atrocities. Mostly, though, it's the western democracies that are talking about this, and then also Pakistan and Malaysia.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: When you say that they're talking about this, what is the nature of their statements? Are they outright condemning this practice? Are they taking any measures outside of the statements? Can you please describe what actions they're taking?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: Malaysia has stopped all Chinese investment under the name of belt and road initiative after the new presidential election. It not only stopped and paused the Chinese build and their other initiatives. At the same time, they spoke up and condemned the Chinese treatment of Uighurs in concentration camps.

Pakistan expressed concern about religious restrictions of Uighurs by the Chinese government. The statement is about concern, not condemnation.

The United Nations called on the Chinese government to close the camps and release the Uighurs.

• (1345)

The Chair: We go to Ms. Hardcastle for five minutes.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: Thank you, Madam Chair.

For a long time, foreign ownership in Canada has been a very political issue. It's escalated over time with Chinese-owned infrastructure in Canada now. I know you've talked a bit about sanctions like what the United States is doing with the Magnitsky law. Do you think the government should be going further than individual financial sanctions? Can you expand on that, in terms of Chinese ownership in Canada? Even as recently as the Canadian Wheat Board, the port at Churchill...

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: You are right. The sanctions are one part, and they are just on the individuals who are responsible. Mostly, we have to show some strong reaction.

As you said, China invests in strategic sectors like energy and infrastructure, so Canada should carefully review the Chinese investments and stop them. That is the mistake we have to learn from Australia and New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand turned their policy 180 degrees on Chinese investment because they lost a strategic part of Australia. So Canada is second.

When foreign money comes in, we have to be careful where that money is coming from and for what purpose. We have to review, not even from the dimension of the Uighur issue, but from the dimension of Canadian strategic investment.

The second thing is, we have to check if there are Canadian high-tech industries that are selling high-tech products to China for iris scans and DNA samples, or some others, and the camera security—digital cameras. The United States is looking into it and in Canada we have to look into it. Our products should not be used as a tool to repress other people.

There's a range of things we can do in Canada. We can not only issue a public statement, but at the same time review Chinese investments and why our key industries and key facilities are of big interest for the Chinese government.

Ms. Cheryl Hardcastle: What do you think are the best methods for us to be able to collect evidence that is needed if we're ever going to pursue any kind of human rights complaints at the United Nations level? Do you think that it should go through the United Nations, to be able to collect this evidence? What do you see as the global community's reaction?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: Well, we have to start from our own country, from Canada, and have our communities give testimony—everyone. Those people behind me right now, they have a list of relatives currently in Chinese concentration camps. We are going to collect those names as a community. It will be done everywhere—in the United States and Europe. There will be huge numbers. We will provide that list of names and information to your attention. Uighur Americans will do this with their government, and Uighur Europeans will do this with their respective governments. Then it will be channelled to one source, the United Nations, from our own respective governments. That is a good way.

The Chair: Now we'll go to additional questions from Mr. Anderson. If other members wish to ask any additional questions, indicate to the chair.

Mr. David Anderson: Thank you, Madam Chair.

You said the government has not spoken out on these issues. Does it go further than that? Are you aware of any situations where Turkish Muslim refugees or immigrants have been returned to China from Canada?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: So far, I don't know. There is one Uighur girl who received a deportation order. After it became known, I immediately visited the department of foreign affairs and I requested help. I asked my MP, Mr. Omar Alghabra, and said, listen this is going to be a scandal for Canada if we send this Uighur girl, who just turned 18, to China. Her parents are here in Canada. So, there is one girl, who is 18, who received a deportation order. That order is still there, and enforceable.

• (1350)

Mr. David Anderson: Thank you for that.

You're talking about Magnitsky and applying that. Have you identified officials who should be included in that? The U.S. is speaking about that. Are there people who are already on the list that you are suggesting—you don't need to name them now—and could you provide that list if you have it?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: Yes. I was a member of the team that worked on those names, so I know the names on that list. I was part of the team to identify them. The actions related to the crimes happened on the ground, so I can provide that list for you.

Mr. David Anderson: You mentioned Mr. Huseyin Jelil earlier, and I didn't realize we would get a second round here. Can you tell us a little bit about his situation and what that is today?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: Unless there is urgent action by the international community... We regretted not taking action or not accepting the Jewish people in the 1950s. We regretted and we issued an apology. Some countries like Communist China are dangerous. Some dangerous policies are still going on, such as killing people indiscriminately, or holding them in concentration camps.

As a world community, we have a responsibility not only to speak up but also to take action to prevent that kind of large-scale mass murder. It happened under our watch with the Rohingyas not that long ago. That was a couple of years ago and it's still going on. So we have to be very forceful and speak up.

Mr. David Anderson: Can you tell me a bit more about this forced separation? Who are the people who are being taken from their community? You talked about organ harvesting being a potential end for that. Communities are being broken up. Is it the younger people who are being taken away? Are families just randomly being separated? Who is being removed from the district and shipped across China?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: You might be surprised. Fifty-four professors from the so-called Xinjiang University, Uighurs, were taken to a concentration camp. Rahile Dawut, a well-known anthropologist who graduated from a U.S. university, disappeared nine months ago and it is now confirmed that she is in a concentration camp. Four of my teachers in Kashgar University, Uighurs, are in the concentration camp. Singers, soccer players, dancers—people from every walk of life have been taken into a concentration camp.

Mr. David Anderson: I think my time may be up.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

If you would like to ask one more question, we have a little bit of time.

Mr. David Sweet: For over five decades the Burmese military had no evidence at all that the Rohingya had ever touched or made any kind of violent act toward anyone. Recently there was a trumped-up event in which apparently 30 of them had bats and clubs and went into some police stations, and for that reason half a million more Rohingya were driven out of the country to Bangladesh. Is there any evidence at all that the People's Republic of China uses to say that the Uighurs are a threat to their security?

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: There's no evidence that Uighurs are a security threat to China. This is number one. If Uighurs are a security threat for China, then how about the scholars? Even the senior-level government official who served as the top energy minister, whose name is Nur Bekri, is under investigation. On July 5, 2009, during the Urumqi massacre, Nur Bekri was the governor of the Uighur Autonomous Region. So China is not discriminating depending on whether you are security threat or not. China is always trumping up charges. Before 9/11 it was separatism. After 9/11 it was terrorism. Now it is vocational training.

If there is a security threat, the Chinese government should tell us what it is.

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you.

The Chair: We have two or three minutes remaining, Mr. Tohti, if there's anything we didn't get a chance to address or if you have anything you'd like to say in closing.

Mr. Mehmet Tohti: I would like to appeal to each member here. We are in Canada. We are proudly Canadian. We always speak up and promote human rights globally. The Canadian position when it comes to this issue is a little disappointing for every member of our community. We can issue a public statement. Those people behind me, and many others who are working on it and who could not make it here, are frustrated because their family members are in concentration camps. They cannot talk with them. They cannot say, "How are you, my dad?" It is really frustrating, so Canada should speak up.

Second, there are some spousal sponsor applications already approved by the Canadian mission and the visas are ready, but because the spouses are in China and their passports have been confiscated they cannot go to the embassy and pick up their visa. The Canadian mission set the deadline at 30 days or 60 days. Otherwise you have to start the whole process again. At least we can ask the government to extend that. Because this is a special situation,

it requires special measures. This is just a request from our community.

● (1355)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your compelling testimony.

Thank you to members of the committee for your interventions and questions.

Also, thank you to the members of the public who have shown such interest in this meeting.

Our next committee meeting will be on Thursday to discuss committee business. The next meeting will be in camera, and I would ask that you bring your ideas and suggestions for future studies to that meeting.

With that, I adjourn the meeting.

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