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House of Representatives

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July 1, 2024

Alan Garber
President (interim)
Harvard University
Massachusetts Hall
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear President Garber,

We write today to express concern regarding an incident on your campus. On April 20, 2024, Chinese Ambassador Xie Feng delivered a speech at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government China Conference 2024—an event sponsored by the Greater China Society at the Kennedy School. During Ambassador Xie’s speech, Cosette Wu, a Harvard undergraduate student, protested the Chinese government’s human rights abuses by shouting slogans. Subsequently, an individual in a dark suit, whom Wu later identified as a Harvard student from China, promptly dragged her out of the event. The video footage of Wu’s forcible removal from the event has been widely circulated on the internet and elicited an uproar in the Chinese community in the United States.¹

Additionally, Tsering Yangchen, another Harvard student protester removed from the event after Wu, later told Voice of America that a student from China, who appeared to be one of the event organizers, approached her and asked for the names of protestors. That individual then followed her, causing her to feel scared.²

This incident raises serious questions regarding possible transnational repression by the Chinese government and the involvement of international students from China at Harvard in acts of harassment and intimidation condoned by the Chinese government against its critics. Just weeks ago, a Boston court convicted and sentenced a former Berklee College of Music student from China for threatening and harassing a fellow Chinese student for posting pro-democracy fliers on campus. Repeated incidents involving some students from China infringing on their

¹ Voice of America, “当时我们害怕极了” 抗议谢锋的哈佛学生担忧人身安全 (Apr. 22, 2024), *available at* www.youtube.com/watch?v=aub3qKeSHBI.

² Voice of America, “当时我们害怕极了” 抗议谢锋的哈佛学生担忧人身安全 (Apr. 24, 2024), *available at* www.voachinese.com/a/7581054.html.

fellow students' freedom of expression also call into question whether our universities are doing enough to educate students about civil liberty and ensure students' safety for freedom of expression.

As the number of students from China skyrocketed in U.S. universities since 2009,³ so have efforts by the Chinese government to monitor, control, and manipulate them. The Chinese government often uses student organizations like Chinese Students and Scholars Associations (CSSAs) that are organized and collectively overseen by the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department.⁴ Chinese government-controlled student associations such as the CSSA appear on at least 150 U.S. university campuses.⁵ It has been reported that the CSSAs often receive funding and guidance for their activities from the Chinese diplomatic missions.⁶ Members of CSSAs have reportedly engaged in harassment and intimidation of Chinese students who are openly critical of the Chinese government.⁷

Some of the conduct of the CSSAs could amount to transnational repression. Amnesty International has recently published a report highlighting the Chinese government's systematic effort of transnational repression targeting Chinese students in Europe and North America in violation of the students' human rights.⁸ Congress takes such issues very seriously. The Select Committee conducted a hearing last November on transnational repression by the Chinese government and invited a victim of CSSA harassment to testify. Universities should be bastions of freedom, and prestigious institutions like Harvard should hold themselves to an even higher standard to ensure a safe environment for students' freedom of expression and push back against any foreign government effort to silence their critics on campus. With this in mind, we request that Harvard provide the Select Committee a briefing about the incident mentioned and respond to the following questions by July 26, 2024:

1. Did Harvard exercise sole responsibility for security at the event? If not, did Harvard partner with representatives of the Chinese government or any private agency? If so, were those representatives bound by Harvard's regulations, and if not what guidelines, if any, did they operate under?

³ Chris Mackie, *Still No. 1. But for How Long? The Future of Chinese Student Mobility to the U.S., Part I*, WORLD EDUCATION NEWS + REVIEWS (May 22, 2023) available at <https://wenr.wes.org/2023/05/still-no-1-but-for-how-long-the-future-of-chinese-student-mobility-to-the-u-s>.

⁴ Alex Joske, *The party speaks for you: Foreign interference and the Chinese Communist Party's united front system*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (June 9, 2020) available at www.aspi.org.au/report/party-speaks-you & Alexander Bowe, et. al., *China's Overseas United Front Work*, U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION (Aug. 24, 2018) available at www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China%27s%20Overseas%20United%20Front%20Work%20-%20Backgound%20and%20Implications%20for%20US_final_0.pdf.

⁵ See House Foreign Affairs Committee, *Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Threat to American Universities*, available at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CCP-Threat-of-American-Universities-V3.pdf>.

⁶ Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, *China's Long Arm Reaches Into American Campuses*, FOREIGN POLICY (Mar. 7, 2018) available at www.foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/07/chinas-long-arm-reaches-into-american-campuses-chinese-students-scholars-association-university-communist-party/.

⁷ Jenny Tang, *Chinese police harass family of Washington, DC student activist*, RADIO FREE ASIA (Nov. 1, 2023) available at www.rfa.org/english/news/china/student-associations-georgetown-09282023111042.html.

⁸ "On my campus, I am afraid": China's targeting of overseas students stifles rights, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (May, 13, 2024) available at www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/8006/2024/en/.

2. Did any faculty members of the Harvard Kennedy School liaise with outside agencies and/or the Chinese government on security policies for the event? If so, were they present at the event, and did they approve of what transpired? If not, will there be an investigation?
3. Absent official written authority to engage in a security function, the individual's actions appears to constitute assault and battery under Massachusetts law.
 - a. Does Harvard have a written agreement with the individual that would make them a designated agent of Harvard for the purpose of providing security at the event?
 - i. If so, please promptly provide a copy of this written agreement.
 - b. Does Harvard have a policy for reporting criminal acts on its campus to the appropriate state and local authorities?
 - i. If so, please promptly provide a copy of this policy.
 - c. If Harvard has a policy for reporting crime on its campus and the individual was not a designated agent of Harvard for purposes of providing security at the event, did Harvard follow this policy in this instance by reporting this individual's actions to state and local law enforcement?
 - i. If so, please provide documentation showing that Harvard followed this policy.
4. Have any Harvard administrators reached out to the student protestors since the incident to understand what happened and provide possible security assistance?
5. Has any disciplinary investigation been initiated following the incident against the students involved in the incident?
6. If Harvard has initiated disciplinary proceedings against the students involved, will Harvard commit to consistently upholding its obligation to enforce its rules equally regardless of the students' viewpoints?
7. Was the person in a dark suit who forcibly removed Cosette Wu a Harvard student? If yes,
 - a. Was he a student from China on an F visa?
 - b. Was he a member of the CSSA at Harvard?
 - c. Was he a member of the Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society?
 - d. If he was a student, did his actions violate any university rules? What disciplinary consequences will he face in case of any violation?
8. Is the Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society a recognized student organization at Harvard? The Greater China Society shares the same logo with an older Kennedy School organization, "the China Society," whose Chinese name "哈佛大学肯尼迪政府学院中国学生学者联合会" indicates that it was a Chinese Students and

Scholars Association.⁹ So what is the relationship between Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society and Harvard's CSSA?

9. Does the Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society coordinate its activities with the Chinese government or the Chinese diplomatic missions?
10. Does the Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society or Harvard's CSSA receive any funding from Chinese diplomatic missions or other Chinese government entities?
11. Does Harvard utilize any federal funding to support the activities of the CSSA or Harvard Kennedy School's Greater China Society? If yes, how much per annum?
12. How does Harvard regulate foreign government-backed student organizations and ensure their activities do not infringe on the freedom of any students?
13. What is Harvard doing to educate and inform students, especially international students, about their obligations and rights for civil liberty?

The House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party has broad authority to "investigate and submit policy recommendations on the status of the Chinese Communist Party's economic, technological, and security progress and its competition with the United States" under H. Res. 11.

To make arrangements to deliver a response and organize a briefing, please contact Select Committee staff at (202) 226-9678.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and prompt reply.

Sincerely,



John Moolenaar
Chairman
House Select Committee on the CCP

⁹ See China Society at Harvard Kenney School, Facebook (June 26, 2024), *available at* www.facebook.com/ChinaSocietyatHKS/?locale=en_GB.