

Text of the Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting Executive Director Ann Noonan's speech at the Conference on Family Planning Policy and Population Development in the People's Republic of China which was held on May 29, 2012 in Flushing, NY

On behalf of CUSIB -- the Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting -- and Free Church for China, I congratulate my friend, Jing Zhang, President of Women's Rights in China for organizing this event. I also applaud the ongoing efforts of another CUSIB Board Member Reggie Littlejohn, President of Women's Rights Without Frontiers, for co-sponsoring the event and participating today with a video.

If we could find a snap shot of a Chinese family from one, two, three, or four generations ago, it would include a mother and father, sisters and brothers, aunts and uncles, and cousins.

If we could compare that photo to a photo of a Chinese family from today, it would likely include a mother and a father, one child - probably a boy, no sisters and brothers, maybe an aunt or uncle, and maybe a cousin. We might ask ourselves, what happened?

The one-child policy has not only destroyed the lives of millions and millions of children, but it has completely changed the Chinese family.

China's one-child policy is simple: No permit, no child. All pregnancies must be authorized by the government. Unauthorized pregnancies must be terminated.

China's one-child policy is brutal. Women are forcibly aborted and forcibly sterilized when they are found to be pregnant illegally. They are also heavily fined, their houses destroyed, and their property seized.

China's one-child policy is not a secret. Neither is gendercide. Since women in China, if given permission to have only one child, find they are expecting a girl, they often abort their child because she may be a girl. Gendercide has been going on for so long that the ratio of males to females in China is at a huge disproportion.

China's one-child policy causes extreme anguish for women and their families. They are not even allowed to discuss the pain they endure and their families endure because of this horrific policy. China's suicide rate among women is extremely high.

It is a human right to bear life. China's one-child policy is a violation of human rights. China's governmental authority over women to coerce and force women into abortion and forcibly sterilize women is the worst human rights atrocity against women in today's world.

I cannot imagine any work place in the United States where the employer would monitor female employees to be sure they are not pregnant. No women would tolerate this oppression.

It's the bottom of a very slippery slope.

The world knows about these atrocities and we have no right to sit back and ignore the suffering especially, when we are asked to help.

Along with other forms of assistance, women and their families in China who are victims of human rights abuses need Voice of America Radio. Good and accurate information is vital for these women, as is the knowledge that they are not alone, that America and the world have not forgotten them. These broadcasts are a source of not only uncensored news but also hope -- through them Americans who pay for these broadcasts show their solidarity with victims of human rights abuses in China.

As you know, the Committee for U.S. International Broadcasting is an independent and nonpartisan organization that supports Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) broadcasts to China that provide vital news and information to women and other victims of human rights abuses.

These broadcast media offer an essential resource about news and events that are otherwise censored.

Recently, Chen Guangcheng told the world that he listened to Voice of America radio while he was in prison in China. This announcement completely undermines any findings by past or present staff of the Broadcasting Board of Governors who sought to minimize the importance of short wave radio broadcasts by insisting that almost no one in China listens to short wave radio and that ending VOA China radio broadcasts is "politically smart."

While he was in the hospital after seeking help from the US Embassy in China, Mr. Chen called in to Voice of America while Reggie Littlejohn was on the air, expressing his deep appreciation for her efforts to promote justice for China's women who were victimized by the one-child policy. What an affirmation for both Reggie Littlejohn and Voice of America.

We are relieved that for the second year in a row, the U.S. Congress has publicly rebuked the Broadcasting Board of Governors for trying to silence broadcasts to places like China. We are delighted that the U.S. Congress has assured the American taxpayer that programs like Voice of America Mandarin, Cantonese and Tibetan radio broadcasts will remain in place.

I'm going to take a moment to publicly mention CUSIB's deep appreciation for the efforts of Broadcasting Board of Governors Member Victor Ashe, former US Ambassador to Poland and former mayor of Knoxville, who has fought against the tide for Voice of America Mandarin, Cantonese and Tibetans services - especially the radio broadcasts - to remain intact, and for the journalists who work in these areas to keep their jobs.

I'd also like to publicly applaud the efforts of Michael Meehan and Susan McCue who also serve as Presidential appointees to the bipartisan BBG. They both worked to support the restoration of funding for Voice of America Tibetan radio broadcasts. Their courage to break from the goals of the BBG and IBB management made all the difference.

In September, New York Archbishop, now Cardinal Timothy Dolan encouraged us to offer our prayerful support for China's Catholics. In an article, he wrote "What if one of your brothers or sisters told you they were being harassed just because of their faith? Wouldn't you want to help?" As a Catholic, I have to say yes.

Catholics believe that religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person. Human dignity is respect for the value of each person as we are all made in the image and likeness of God. Human dignity is inviolable. It is inalienable and it is our inheritance as humans.

The human dignity of each person needs to be respected - whether it is in the person on death row or the unborn child. It requires that we treat each other like brothers and sisters.

Last week, Pope Benedict XVI reminded all to join in prayer along with all the Catholics in China.

In his 2007 letter to the faithful in China, Pope Benedict XVI established May 24 as a special day of prayer for the Chinese Church, declaring that on that day "the Catholics of the whole world - in particular those who are of Chinese origin - will demonstrate their fraternal solidarity and solicitude for [Chinese Catholics], asking the Lord of history for the gift of perseverance in witness, in the certainty that your sufferings past and present for the Holy Name of Jesus and your intrepid loyalty to his Vicar on earth will be rewarded, even if at times everything can seem a failure."

News reports last week included mention of an underground priest in China who said: "I especially prayed for the all the bishops and pastors in China, especially those who are under detention. May the Lord strengthen their faith. We feel lonely in this struggle for the freedom of faith."

Our message to that priest and to all of the people in China is: You are not alone. We are with you, and we will continue to bear witness.

Americans are not going to wash our hands of the blood of the countless innocent victims of China's oppressive one-child policy. Instead, we will keep our prayers and our actions with the people in China who deserve the freedoms we enjoy here in the US.

In closing, I'd like to encourage everyone to remain vigilant. Stay informed. And have hope - because women like Jing Zhang and Reggie Littlejohn, and men like those here today on this panel will make a difference. As Pope John Paul II reminded us, "Be not afraid!"