Virtual Event | A Dissident’s View of Communist China

TRANSCRIPT

Discussion.........................................................................................................................................................2

• Wu’er Kaixi, Exiled Chinese Dissident
• Nury Turkel, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Disclaimer: This transcript is based off of a recorded video conference and breaks in the stream may have resulted in mistranscriptions in the text.

A video of the event is available: https://www.hudson.org/events/2018-virtual-event-a-dissident-s-view-of-communist-china102021

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Nu
ry Turkel:

Good afternoon. I am Nury Turkel, senior fellow here at Hudson Institute. I'm pleased to welcome my good friend and a leader of the pro-democracy movement in China, Wu’er Kaixi, who is also known by his Uyghur name, Uerkesh Davlet.

Wu’er Kaixi has fought against China's Communist Party's human rights abuses for most of his life. He began his lifetime of activism as a student leader of the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement in 1989.

Participating in a hunger strike, leading negotiations with officials, and ultimately making news when then-Premier Li Peng rebuked him on a national television. He became China's second most wanted student activist and was forced to flee the country.

Wu’er Kaixi settled in Taiwan, and has been advocating around the world, that Taiwan should be treated as a staunch democratic nation. He has been also working to promote human rights and democracy in China for those oppressed minority groups. He was recently appointed as the secretary-general of the Taiwan Parliamentary Human Rights Commission.

Thank you Wu’er Kaixi for coming to Hudson to have a conversation with me on authoritarianism in China, and how the international community should respond to Beijing’s repression at home, aggression abroad, and why it took so long for the international community to wake up to the brutal regime in Beijing, and the threat that the CCP is posing.

Wu’er Kaixi:

Thank you, my friend, thank you for this opportunity. And thanks to Hudson Institute. Yes. Your question is an excellent question. Why did it take so long for the world to come around, and realizing a simple fact that how evil a regime the Chinese Communist Party is.

I remember two years ago, I was here in the United States in the Capitol. I was in a hearing. That hearing was set to date on the 30th anniversary of Tiananmen massacre. I began that hearing by saying...

“I was here in the United States right after the massacre; right after the Chinese government sent in the military troops to suppress a peaceful demonstration in Beijing.”

And then I told some 40 members of the Congress in that hearing that day, I said, "It took me no pleasure. Come back 30 years later and say, 'I told you so.' I think the world have a tendency to say, "Okay. You guys are dissidents."

Of course you will criticize, or maybe even use the more stronger emotional words to say like, "You will be bad mouthing your government, because you are a dissident."

So they automatically think what we say, what we describe about our regime as a exaggeration. It’s unfortunate, that kind of mentality. So the world has failed to listen to what we have repeatedly said in the last three decades.

More than that, I think United States at that time made a crucial mistake of believing that, engaging with China will bring China into democracy. I think at that time the United States have led the Western world. Western democracy have adopted a wrong China policy.

I often described that policy as appeasement. That policy is under two assumptions. The first assumption is like I said, the economic engagement with China, cutting the slack for Chinese regime of massacring its own students, without adopting a universal value into China.

Sinking economic engagement will eventually nurture and give bursts to a large Chinese middle class, which will give birth to a civil society, which will then lead to democracy. This is the first assumption, and then we can call it naïve.
The second assumption is not at all so naïve. The second assumption is that, "Okay. We will by engaging with Chinese regime economically, nurture the regime of a totalitarian regime." By doing that, there will be consequences.

But the consequences were assumed to be within Chinese border. This assumption is not at all that naïve. It's quite selfish. Unfortunately, the world witnessed what happened as both assumptions, were wrong. Naïve or not, they were both wrong.

China did not, from the economic growth, give birth to a civil society. Let alone a democracy, rule of law, open society, open free media, free assembly. All these things we would expect to give birth to democracy, did not take place in China.

And then with the economic growth, Chinese regime becomes a direct threat to the world beyond its border. Of course, we know that has something to do with the technological advancement of internet, and the world financial system, all these things.

You can no longer confine a country within its own border. So, the Chinese influence goes beyond its borders. They want to insert their value to our daily life. So both assumptions that the China policy was frameworked right after Tiananmen, went wrong. Naïve or not, it was wrong assumption.

For that, the world have put itself in a position to become more and more dependent on the Chinese market, Chinese economic drive force. The world is becoming dependent to an authoritarian regime, who pay no attention to universal value.

When it obtained the power, then it will do the eventual next thing. That they want to take advantage of their position. They did loot China, and then now they want to loot the world. I don't use that word lightly.

But this is what we are today. In the 21st century, we’re seeing a monstrous regime that not only suppresses their own people, they have been denying any demand from the civil society for a dialogue of emerging a civil society.

They imprisoned lawyers who want to fight for civil rights. When Hong Kong people took the street some seven years ago... Or even before that, after Tiananmen massacre, Hong Kong people took to the street almost every year. They wanted dialogue, and the Chinese regime denies that.

When his holiness Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people demand a dialogue, Chinese regime denies that. Let’s say, a very modest professor Ilham Tohti, ask for Chinese government to have a dialogue in organizing a more civilized ruling of the Chinese Communist Party to the Uyghur people.

Professor Ilham Tohti is so moderate. He is willing to accept the undeniable fact, but at least, "Let’s have a sit down and have a dialogue to talk about how we, Uyghur people accepting the Chinese communist rule, be in the most civil way." Even that kind of dialogue demand was denied by the Communist Party.

And then the world and United States-led Western democracy were in the position to strike a dialogue, because China also need the world for its economic purposes. The world passed down that opportunity.

Very, very unfortunately. Now, when the world say, "No. You cannot do all these things you are doing to Hong Kong people, to Uyghur people." Chinese government says, "We don't no longer need to listen to you. We no longer need to have the dialogue we never wanted in the first place. But we probably didn't have a chance to avoid earlier, but now we do." So the world is in a position, I think, finally realize what an evil regime we're dealing with, but a little too late.

Nury Turkel:
Very insightful. So some China observers and policymakers often say, "We had intention to change them, but instead of us changing them, they managed to change us." Would you agree with that assessment?

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
Yes. Unfortunately, yes. That's a very sad assessment. We're supposed to be the higher value holders. The world order’s infrastructure was created by the United States after World War II. We're talking about United Nation, all these kind of world orders, liberal democracy with capitalism, was designed to prevent World War III. It did.

It did prevent World War III, but it didn't in the last seven decades prevent regional [conflict], it didn't prevent genocide, it didn't prevent human rights abuses. Why? Because we're so focusing on preventing war. The world order decided to respect the borderline.

The by-product of respecting the borderline is that, you have to give in to the central regime within those borderlines. That lead to sovereignty solvent rights above human rights. That has to be changed.

**Nury Turkel:**
The hearing that you mentioned, I watched that important hearing in 2019. Not only did you tell the American lawmakers that the United States failed the students in 1989, where they risk their lives.

You also called out the business community for doing CCPs work, sidelining human rights in the U.S.-China engagement dialogue. And now we sing it again. They are lobbying against anti-Uyghur slavery bill in the United States Congress.

What can you tell us about the business community's role doing the work of CCP, particularly in the Western capitals here in the United States, and capitals of Europe?

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
Business community is a key and essential element of this world order, especially more and more today, in this shrinking global village. Business community take a major role. Let’s also not forget that when the world is shrinking, the world is paying attention to ethical issues more and more.

So the business community needs to think again. It's no longer the seventies or sixties to say, "It is my freedom to make a buck, make a profit." Pursuing profit itself was a merit. Not anymore.

Today, when you are pursuing a profit, you cannot enable human rights abuses. That's a clearly... It should not need any explanation. And then I think, this simple statement can be widely accepted. Also, it will be bad for business.

Come back if we know the product you're selling, has blood on it. And the world is coming to that. One of the biggest difference from today to, let’s say 30 years ago, is, we talk, we learn much more from interaction on internet, on modern media as beyond borders.

And then when we talk about them, we inserted basic human value in those. The concept like, "Civil society stay away from my making my profit." Is no longer accepted. It could be a merit in 1960s or fifties, but not anymore.

People when they spend money, they do care about if they are on the right side of this universal value or not. Business community grow more conscious than your drive for profit. That's my suggestion. You have to stop enabling human rights abusers.

**Nury Turkel:**
Follow-up on that. Do you see any role by the governments, perhaps assisting the business community in their dealing with the Chinese government? As you know, the Western business entities have told the consumers around the world, that they figured out how to do business in China.

As the case of H&M, Nike, we now know they have managed to cut off in the crossfire between, let's say, Washington and Beijing. Do you think that the governments should support business communities, encouraging them to do the right thing-

_Wu’er Kaixi:_
I think it's-

_Nury Turkel:_
... or adding additional legal tools, for example?

_Wu’er Kaixi:_

Before we go to the legal tools, I think the United States government, and then the U.S. led Western democracy, have to learn one thing. Not to get in a debate with Chinese regime and their Chinese rhetoric.

For instance, the spokespersons of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, they often come, and then they are quite boring, and then their statements are quite repetitive.

And then they keep saying, "You cannot interfere with China’s domestic issue." When they say that, the United States government say, "We will." That's how you should answer. Because, why “we will?” Because it's a universal value. It affects our life.

When your domestic matters affects our life, we have a right to interfere. That is how United States should respond to the spokespersons of wolf diplomacy. That's the word that describes this spokesperson’s mentality.

Wolf diplomacy, its their rhetoric, their narratives. We should respond to them too. We should stop their narratives by introducing new United States or Western democracy's narratives. When they say, "What you are doing hurts Chinese people's feeling."

Let's be honest. When did Chinese regime ever care the feeling of Chinese people? But when they say, "What you’re doing hurts Chinese people's feeling." When NBA player criticize about Chinese human rights situation, they boycott the NBAs play in China. That hurts. And then there's the claim that hurts Chinese people’s feelings.

The right response from the United States government should be, "What you’re doing hurts our feelings. Hurts feelings of the United States." And then, I want to remind the world on this one, Chinese people's feeling were never really in the agenda of Chinese regime.

The feeling of the peoples of the United States affect next election, affect next China policy. And then that showed how the United States government officials see this, and then, standing in the right position.

_Nury Turkel:_
The one thing that the Chinese officials, the apologists around the world, are missing, that is something you explained so eloquently.

_Wu’er Kaixi:_
Thank you.

Nury Turkel:
It's about value; American values. This is what Americans do when they see something wrong on that scale, they speak out. That's exactly how Americans think.

There's a public demand to go hard on China, specifically on human rights. There's a recent polling shows, more than 70% of American public wants tougher China policy with respect to human rights.

Speaking of a wolf diplomacy, there's a new term, the hostage diplomacy. I'd like to get your comments on the recent events involving Meng Wanzhou, and [Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig].

It seems that Beijing gets away with impunity for its behavior, taking hostage of Westerners in China. What is the potential fallout of China's hostage diplomacy to circumvent law and order?

Wu'er Kaixi:
You actually asked a very good question, and it'd be better to be answered by a criminologist. Because you add the term hostage, law, and order. Although it seems like we're talking about an international relation issue.

But the principle of law and order, principle of criminal analogy, does apply here. You cannot let hostage takers keeps threatening to kill the hostage. Again and again, to keep giving in.

Any criminologists in this country or in the world, will tell you the same. There is a way to deal with someone who take hostages. Of course, when there's a hostage, you want to be careful. But then you should immediately learn, these are criminals.

They have no code of honor. They take hostage for their own benefits. And Chinese do that all the time, not just arresting foreign citizens in exchange of whoever they want to get back, with or without crime.

They also use their visas, their border controls, as their hostage. Especially, they take Chinese people as their hostage. For instance, right after 2016 election in Taiwan, the Democratic Progressive Party won that election. Madam Tsai Ing-wen became the president for Taiwan.

The election took place January, 2016, and she is to be inaugurated in May. There's about four months’ time. So Chinese government immediately introduced a sanction on Taiwan, to stop Chinese tourists going to Taiwan.

Before 2016, Taiwan has developed a big tourist industry to welcome Chinese tourists. So this sanction prohibiting Chinese tourists going to Taiwan, hits Taiwan's economy. So they're using their own people as a hostage to imply their political ideology.

What is their political ideology? According to Chinese regime to say, "Okay. If President Tsai Ing-wen do not go on a route to support Taiwan independence, that's what the punishment is going to be." But then, let's think about it. Look at the picture clearly.

The impunitive sanction applied right after the election, not after the inauguration, not at the time when President Tsai Ing-wen become president of Taiwan, and then to announce her China policy.

So basically, Chinese government is punishing Taiwanese voters for voting against Beijing's will. Taiwanese people immediately realized. The government of Beijing can only take one position. Even when it come to Taiwan’s relation to Hong Kong, it's total submission, and anything against that.
They also control visas for foreign journalists to go into China, to report on what was happening. China is a big country, they also need foreign journalists to report on what's happening. But if that journalist does not report on the guideline of Chinese regime, then they won't get the visa. That's another example of hostage diplomacy.

You and I, we both have our parents being blocked in China, prohibited from traveling. And then also, hundreds of thousands of Uyghur people. That is also the Chinese government’s hostage diplomacy. And then it’s a typical behavior of a criminal group.

So the world really needs to come and understand, their China policy has to be based on fighting of crimes. So that's what exactly Chinese regimes are, a criminal group.

_Nury Turkel:_

What kind of message does the Westerners doing business, with traveling, or residing in China, should get from this episode?

_Wu’er Kaixi:_

The first message; the idea, I think they have already gotten is that, the Western world is caving in to the Chinese regime. They're on their own. They want to do business. We have a Chinese saying and says, "There's a leak blood from the edge of a knife." It's a dangerous business to do business in China.

I'm pretty sure that is the message they got in the last many decades, and then that is a desperate message they want to get out to the world. And then I hope the world gets it. It's the world's governments responsibility to stop that.

The world should be in the economic prosperity with these businessmen doing their businesses without worrying government interference. That has been the world order in the West, in the Free World.

And then the government should protect that when it come to China, by dealing with Chinese government and make sure that happens. Not just bringing China into WTO, you have to also ask the Chinese regime to obey the rule of WTO.

_Nury Turkel:_

Let’s talk about the Uyghur genocide. The Uyghur issue is not just an isolated issue as you know. Uyghur reflects the fundamental essence of the CCPs character, which demands total submission, as you have been telling the world for so many years.

I have two questions. Why do you think that CCP has decided to choose the acts of genocide to advance its political objectives, and the world is watching and we'll just watch?

And then, do you think that the Chinese leadership miscalculated the costs imposed by the U.S.-led Western democracies in policy legislative front as significant as calling a genocide? Do you think that they got off guard or miscalculated that level of response from the West?

_Wu’er Kaixi:_

Did they really miscalculate? Uyghur genocide situation took the world by shock, but they didn't really change. Today we're still watching. We don't know. Chinese governments thinks they can get away with anything. That's when they decided to implement this Uyghur policy.

It's not about race, it's not about ethnicity, it's not about religion. And a lot of people think that's because of the religion differences that Chinese are attacking Muslim. No.
And then also not about, we are different races, we are different languages, cultures, background history. It’s just because Uyghur people are not giving in. You just said, I've been repeating that sentences. Let me do it again. The Chinese regime can only take one kind of relation when come before them, that is total submission.

When 10 million Uyghur people under People's Republic of China did not give in, did not totally submit to the Communist Party, that's what they came out to. And then, did they miscalculate? Yeah. They probably didn't realize they can cut so much attention.

In the 21st century, you put more than a million people in internment camp, of course you'll get attention. But the Chinese communist regime really miscalculated when they think, "We can probably get away with it."

The attention they didn't calculate it, but the response. You know what? I am not 100% positive to say they miscalculated. Because the world has coming around a little, but a little too slow. I don't know how long our fellow Uyghur people can survive in those internment camp.

And knowing Communist Party, there is no other way out, other than... I don't know. ... total extermination. What are they going to do with those millions of Uyghur people? They're going to let them go back to the street, to their cities, to their villages, and then basically give birth of millions of resistant forces.

I don’t think Communist Party is going to do that. What are they going to do with those Uyghur people? It took the world by shock, but did it really give the world a shock strong enough for the world to come up with a new China policy? We’re yet to observe.

**Nury Turkel:**

I agree with you on that. One common question that often comes up through my public speaking discussions. Is there's any regret we'll revisit within the Chinese leadership about the reaction?

For example, the United States government imposed more than 90 punitive sanctions, including going after this paramilitary unit called Xinjiang Production and Construction, XPCC. And recent sanctions involve four solar panel entities. That is huge.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**

Yes.

**Nury Turkel:**

In order to get China's attention, you needed to call them out and cause economic costs. Even with that, we’re not seeing much change. Instead, they are putting out something, "we need to work on our narrative. We need to project lovable image of China." Do you think that they will eventually realize that this is creating backlash, isolating PRC, making it costly operation for them?

**Wu’er Kaixi:**

A very good question. It has certainly already caused some backlash. But let's not forget what the true character of the Chinese Communist Party. They're criminal groups, basically. I keep using the word looting. They’re bandits.

So they have a mentality of a bandit. When come to the core is greed. They cannot stop their greed. Yeah, there are back lashes. So immediate next question is, can we survive it?
They're not like a responsive Western modern country to say, "This is not what we want. The world is not going to like us for what we're doing. And then we are proud modern nations. So we have to adopt to that."

No, that's not how the Chinese Communist Party thinks. "These things. Okay. We did this, there is a backlash, but can we survive it?" You know what? I don't know the answer. Probably they can.

Until the world realizes that they are dealing with a bandit regime, and then really treat them like that. Speaking the language they understand, really hit them where it hurts. Until that happens, their question of, "Can we survive this?" Maybe have a positive answer.

**Nury Turkel:**

One of the common questions that often comes up, will there be internal resistance? If there will be any potential allies in China that would speak out against the concentration camps in the Uyghur homeland and the ongoing genocide?

Do you see any hope? Is there any reason for hope in China, that change might be happening and we might be having a strong Chinese opposition to the ongoing acts of those atrocity crimes?

**Wu'er Kaixi:**

When you introduced me in the beginning of our session, you said, "In the last 30 some years, I have never stopped." And then think about it, yes. Took off more than half of my life that I have been fighting against Communist Party.

And then I can probably report this, that in the country of China, there has always been resistance. There have always been force for freedom and democracy.

Unfortunately, when the world took the wrong side of that confrontation between Chinese democracy forces and Chinese regime, the world helped nurture a much, much stronger totalitarian regime.

I would say without hesitancy that, the Chinese communist regime is by far the most powerful totalitarian regime this world have seen. Not only just by the size, but also with the modern technology, and then with the world's appeasement policy that has nurtured it.

Actually, yes, there is resistance in China. And then, we should always bear hope in that. Let's say five, 10 years ago, I go around the world and talk to the world and media, or when I talk to a world leader, I often say, "Please, don't take the wrong side of this very, very difficult battle that we're fighting."

But in the last few years, about the last decade, I have changed my narrative a little. I said, "With your help, Chinese Communist Party became what it is today." Which is, a direct threat to the civilization we're living in.

And then to the civilization we have achieved in the past many decades, past many centuries. And you not only bear a moral responsibility, when I say you, I'm pointing my finger to the world, actually, Western world especially.

Not only you bear responsibility for this, but it's also in your benefit to stand up and defend your way of life, the universal values, and fight against Communist Party. So yes, there are hopes within China. But I at this time asking the world, give that hope some support, some nutrition, some tap on the shoulder.

Otherwise, you will see a monstrous party, easily crushing any part of the flame that resembles that hope. I used to say, "Don't take the wrong side." Now I'm saying, "No, help us fighting the direct threat to the civilization we're all living in today."

**Nury Turkel:**
You recently visited Europe, and you've been traveling to European capitals previously. And you're encouraging them to be strong on human rights and democracy in China.

In the last couple of years in particular, it's quite disturbing. In light of Europe's history with fascism, nazism, and communism, they still have not figured out what to say. Some countries have shown tepid meandering responses. But most of them, I still don't get it.

Why they're not joining in the effort led by U.S., for example, to address, perhaps one of the worst humanitarian crises in a modern era, namely the Uyghur genocide? Italy, as we speak, is the largest export destination for tainted consumer products made by enslaved Uyghurs.

**Wu'er Kaixi:**

Yes. It's painful to see that. And it's also painful to see that some countries... I'll give you, I'll name names. Italy, for instance, one time I visited there. I was on media and then in a panel, and then there was a discussion.

And then there are people saying that we, either Italy in the Europe or in the economic crisis these days, perhaps we should learn from China, using their governance, their success in fighting off the financial tsunami after 2008.

When I heard that I was quite surprised. And then I raised my eyebrows, and I guess the host of the TV talk show realized and said, "You have something to say."

I said, "Yes. My response to this gentleman is that you don't really have to learn from China from the other side of globe, you have your own example, which is perfect. Resemblance of what China is doing today. His name is Mussolini."

I took the video recording by a little shock. It's like, "How Mussolini get into this conversation?"

Basically, what China is doing today is what Mussolini or even Hitler was doing in the thirties.

Within the country is total fascist ruling and suppressing or dissent. When is comes to the Uyghur issue, is even more familiar with home resembling. And economically, they were doing pretty well.

Italy and Mussolini ended with all the government involvement in controlling every factor of the society. Also in Nusayriyah in Japan, also created some major economic growth.

So the resemblance is amazing, but I'll also said in Italy. I said, "Italy in the 20th century had two major economic leaps forward. The first time was under Mussolini. The second time was under the flag of democracy, after World War II. Italy drawing the camp of democracy."

It had his second economic forward. You are having a reset now, but then basically you are still in that leap forward. Italy becoming a world industrial country was because of democracy, not because of fascism. So learn the lesson from that."

And then I'm hoping the world, the European countries more, and more. This time I visited Paris, and then I met with senior officials in their administration and parliament. I think the world is coming around.

I would like to quote Senator Marco Rubio, when he gave a speech in a public hearing, I organized in the Taiwan parliament for Uyghur genocide. Senator Rubio says, "The world is coming around and realizing what an evil state that Chinese communist regime is." Is coming along, but a big boat turns slow. We have that saying.

And then United States, bear some responsibility for the wrong policy in the first-time riot after Tiananmen, I think also bear a stronger policy, being the world leader today to turn that boat around.
So I believe European country will eventually come along. Japan will come along, Korea will come along, India will come along. And then in the very front line, Taiwan is also serving as a beacon for these big boats to turn around.

**Nury Turkel:**
You mentioned the dictators, Hitler and Mussolini. It reminds me of the 1936 Olympics.

**Wu'er Kaixi:**
Yes.

**Nury Turkel:**
When he was planning for the summer Olympics, he already had camps, he was already engaging in forced labor, he was subjecting a Jewish woman to various types of torture. And when you tell the story, the Uyghur people will respond like, "This is exactly what has happened to Uyghurs."

So with that background now we have this winter Olympics coming up next year, the international community has not made up its mind yet, particularly on the government levels. What should we do with this upcoming? Why would people think that it's okay for a genocidal regime to hold the Olympics?

**Wu'er Kaixi:**
The answer also is history resemble itself, remarkably. The time when Berlin Olympics did manage to go through, is because the world holds an appeasement policy to say, "Okay. Maybe, maybe we just need to learn. We just need to learn how to deal with a new rising power." That's the same mentality the world is having today. It's not a new rising power. It's a new rising evil power.

If you give this kind of response to a new evil power, the only conclusion they can come to is, "I can get away with everything. I can do all these things. I can put the Jewish people in the camp and forcing labors, and still get the world to agree with me in this Berlin Olympics.

And then I can just switch a few words to say the same about Beijing." The world need to come to a very clear position, that we cannot accept. Only maybe then if the world united in one voice and giving Beijing a big, no. Maybe only then.

With their greediness, they can still come to some senses to say, "Okay. Maybe we play by the rule of the game of the world, we can loot more. Because we can stay in position longer because the world will let us."

That is a remote hope, but still is much better than the world caving in. The opposite will be Beijing says, "Don't worry about them." They will raise the question of human rights. They have been doing that in the last 30 years. They have done that before Berlin Olympics, but they never expect us to give them a real answer.

They will trade with us anyway. So basically, economic sanction, or some talking, some dressing down in the international media means nothing. Because we're bandits, were not after glory, we are after money.

It's to make them not that much different from apathy's thieves. The world really, really needs to come to see. But the unfortunate, is also that comparison. Whenever we compare Chinese regime with Hitler, the world come to this call, "No, you cannot do that." Kind of a response.
It took me by shock, actually the first few times when I make the comparison. And then somebody tapped on my shoulder in UK and says, "You know what? We have a saying here in UK, whoever mentioned Hitler in a debate, loses it."

So, the world have been traumatized by Hitler, that come to a point cannot think of comparing anybody with Hitler. I remember I was talking on a BBC HARDtalk, when Stephen Sackur gave me that long no. "No, you cannot compare Xi Jinping with Hitler." I immediately remember, "Yeah. That's a taboo." Especially in Europe, especially in UK.

So I changed my narrative and I said, "Okay, if I don't compare Hitler with Xi Jinping, can I compare United Kingdom today with United Kingdom in 1930s? This is a sensible comparison. You are also facing a rising nation's direct threat. And then at this time, did you learn from your lesson? You know the appeasement policy has a story of a United Kingdom, but it is certainly not just the lesson for United Kingdom."

Nury Turkel:
We're so pleased to hear that we have a strong ally in the Taiwanese parliament to advance human rights and democracy. I want to congratulate your in your new role that you've been appointed. Can you tell us more about this commission that you are serving as a general secretary?

Wu’er Kaixi:
Thank you. Yes, I am the general secretary of the Taiwan Parliamentary Human Rights Commission. Taiwan is in a very difficult, unfair, and unique position. It's in the front role of the Chinese threat.

We thank you very much for attending our hearing for Uyghur genocide. We are also organizing for Hong Kong peoples. A lot of people would say like, "Why are you doing this? Why Taiwan is doing this? Where's the common factor between Taiwan and Uyghur?"

The common factor is, we have a common enemy. And only Taiwan is a democracy. And particularly for that reason, Taiwan is under much bigger a threat from Chinese Communist Party. Geographic location also makes it difficult for us. There are more than a thousand warhead pointing at Taiwan.

I wear this different hat, but the Taiwanese is a hat I am proud to wear. When we Taiwanese says we are under threat, we mean it quite literally. The threat is military. But still the democracy in Taiwan is one of strong character.

The majority of 23 million Taiwanese people, enjoy it and are extremely proud of it. We earned our democracy on our own. It was not handed down. We're not drafted our own constitution by American general, like Japan. We earned our own democracy.

We know how sweet it is to be a citizen of a democracy. We know how sweet freedom taste. Although, it sometimes give us a ring to fight against each other over idea of exercising our own freedom, but we love it. And then we earned it, we're going to defend it.

When people ask about Taiwan and the relation between Taiwan and the Uyghur, Hong Kong, Tibetan people, that's what I told them, "We have a common enemy." And then also when I go around the world.

The common factor between Taiwan and say, United States, and United Kingdom, Europe, Japan, is our shared value; freedom, human rights, rule of law. And then Taiwan has been exemplary member of democracies. I often say this, "In Taiwan, we breathe in and out freedom." We know it.

Nury Turkel:
That's powerful.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
I don’t think in older democracies people realize that every day, because you have been almost privileged towards it. But Taiwanese people breathe in and out freedom, and we know it. Therefore will defend that.

And then therefore, I think Taiwan deserve a seat in the club of democracy. And then we deserve to be treated more fairly by democracies. And then, the Taiwan Parliamentary Human Rights Commission, because of its unique position being a parliamentary body, we have a slightly more access than the administration, than the president of the country.

So we can come here easily to... I met with Madam Speaker Pelosi, and then also members of [Congress] easier. That easiness, a tiny little, is unfair. Our president should be able to be as free like this. We know how to use a little freedom to fight for more freedom. So that's what I'm hoping to achieve with this new position.

**Nury Turkel:**
Thank you. I could talk to you for hours about these issues, but we have to conclude the program. Thank you for taking the time to visit us and have this conversation with me, sharing your valuable insights on these important issues. As always, I enjoy having in conversation with you.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
Same here.

**Nury Turkel:**
Despite the grim and almost depressing nature of the topic and issues involved. Congratulations again on your new role.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
Thank you very much.

**Nury Turkel:**
It's terrific. And I was so pleased to be part of that hearing that you organized in the Taiwanese Parliament. I hope you can continue this conversation. Please come back to visit us again.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
I look forward. And then, I appreciate the channel that Hudson Institute provide for our voices. Voices of a Chinese dissident to be heard.

**Nury Turkel:**
Thank you very much.

**Wu’er Kaixi:**
Thank you.