



**Remarks by Chen Guangcheng
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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening!

On May 19th, 2012, almost ten years ago, my family and I arrived in America. We were finally free from the claws of the Communist Party. On the eve of this anniversary, I am deeply moved to receive the Bradley Prize. To The Bradley Foundation, I extend my genuine gratitude. To my family and friends, my heartfelt thanks for your support and companionship over many years.

This award is not just about me and the other recipients. You all are witnesses. This award shows that human rights and democracy are important. The rule of law is important. As authoritarian regimes grow bolder, this message is vital. It encourages us all to stand up for universal values, to stand up for the principles underlying a just and peaceful society. As I have said before, human rights and democracy are like fresh air and clean water. Without them, humanity will perish.

Some of you may know my story, how I grew up blind in a poor village in Shandong. How I helped disabled people fight for their rights. How I exposed the forced abortions and sterilizations of the one-child policy. How I was persecuted for seven years, in detention, in prison, and under brutal house arrest. For twenty months, my village was surrounded by rings of guards. My family and I could not go out; no one was allowed in. We were beaten and left for dead. They built a private jail for us, with iron bars from the roof to the concrete floor.

Then, one spring day, maybe like this one, a miracle happened. I escaped. Alive.

Hiding from the authorities, in Beijing, my friends and I contacted the American embassy. I was sure that America would stand by its values and would help me. And they did. But my future was not secure. Some people in the U.S. government argued that my case must not harm U.S.-China relations -- in reality U.S.-CCP relations). Some argued that I should stay in China. But America is a place where oversight, debate, and the pursuit of justice are at the foundation of government. So,

with the help of the media, the U.S. Congress and administration, and with the help of regular people, my family and I finally came to America.

I always knew I made the right choice to go to the U.S. embassy. Truly, in the hearts of those who refuse to be enslaved, America is the land of the free and the home of the brave. It is a beacon of freedom and a model of democracy. America holds the hopes and dreams of humanity. The Constitution and the rule of law guarantee democracy, freedom, human rights, and social justice. With the three branches of government, power is limited, and freedom of speech and religion are protected. The people are free to pursue their dreams. So, America is the most dynamic nation on earth, not only a superpower in wealth and strength, but also in goodwill and potential.

Democracy is not perfect; it is not without flaws; but it is the least bad system humanity has developed. However, communist authoritarianism admits no error. And it is fundamentally opposed to democratic constitutionalism and rule of law. Like devil to angel, the two are not compatible. Like fire and water, they cannot coexist in the same vessel. Authoritarianism sees any opposition as the enemy. It will use any means possible to oppress, no matter how evil.

Indeed, the CCP expends vast resources to counter its two biggest enemies: the Chinese people and the United States. It spends more on monitoring and repressing the Chinese population than it does on its military. The CCP's party-state system controls everything. Anyone who criticizes will be harassed, persecuted. Anyone who exposes the truth — lawyers, journalists, netizens — risks being kidnapped, disappeared, tortured, imprisoned. It tears families and society apart, locking up millions in labor camps and disappearing individuals for years upon years. No one can feel safe under CCP rule. Even many Chinese people living outside of China are afraid to speak out.

The CCP's biggest enemy abroad is the United States. Everyone in mainland China knows this because the CCP has never ceased using its mouthpiece to inflame hatred of America. The regime uses huge resources to weaken the U.S. through propaganda and by stealing technology, infiltrating institutions, and trying to corrode civil society. The ultimate objectives of the CCP are to destroy universal values, civilized culture and individual freedoms of body and mind. The CCP wants to tear down the West's free market economy, its social ethics, and its veneration of a holy spirit.

This is the Chinese Communist Party. It not only hurts the Chinese people. It harms people around the world. The coronavirus is but one example of the damage the CCP is capable of inflicting.

We must be vigilant, even in times of peace. To protect democracy and freedom, America must raise up its spirit of exceptionalism and confront the evil of the CCP. This regime will not change through diplomacy, trade, or appeasement. To the contrary, the CCP has grown wealthy from trade with the West, and has become powerful by influencing the international order. Dictatorial authoritarianism is more dangerous than any weapon of mass destruction. While the CCP regime remains in power, the world will not be free from danger.

I believe that all people deserve to share the fruits of democracy and peace. I believe that, together, we can cast the tyrannical CCP regime — the enemy of humanity — into the wastes of history.

Even in my darkest hour, I never lost hope. I knew that each person — each of you — has boundless strength inside. Use it! I escaped the claws of the CCP and now stand before you. This is proof that nothing is impossible, so long as it is righteous. Do not fear hardship; do not fear danger. Go forth with passion and fortitude. Together we will make miracles!

Thank you.