



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

Tiananmen at 30 Draws Bipartisan Leadership

This June the VOC Foundation hosted a vigil and rally on Capitol Hill commemorating the 30th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre. We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to the Tiananmen Mothers—parents of students killed during the 1989 protests, who continue to openly demand justice despite being routinely put under house arrest, jailed, and forbidden to publicly mourn the loss of their sons and daughters. The announcement of the award was broadcast to another Tiananmen vigil in Hong Kong attended by over 180,000 people.

Speakers included Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Co-Chair of the Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), Member of the Commission Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI), Chinese human rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng, Chinese democracy activist and former political prisoner Wei Jingsheng, President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and VOC Advisory Council Member Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, President of Women's Rights Without Frontiers Reggie Littlejohn, and Uyghur human rights activist Rushan Abbas.

The June 4 rally was co-hosted by 24 human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, China Aid, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights, and the World Uyghur Congress.



Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi gives remarks at a rally VOC hosted on Capitol Hill on June 4 to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.

“In honor of all those who died for democracy in Tiananmen Square and around the world, we pledge to preserve their memory and continue their fight.”

– Speaker Nancy Pelosi

That same day, VOC Executive Director Marion Smith also published two op-eds, one in the *Wall Street Journal* highlighting the Tiananmen Mothers as an archetypical target of the Chinese Communist Party's brutal oppression and historical revisionism, and another in *The Hill* challenging policymakers to hold the Chinese regime accountable for Tiananmen and ongoing human rights abuses today.

Later that week, Marion Smith spoke on a panel VOC co-hosted with the Hoover Institution exploring the legacy of Tiananmen Square and prospects for reform in China. The other panelists were Chinese democracy advocate and former political prisoner Wei Jingsheng, Hoover fellow Michael Auslin, student leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement Wang Dan, and Claremont McKenna College Professor Minxin Pei.

Tiananmen Square Massacre at 30: Its Meaning and Legacy



We awarded our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to the Tiananmen Mothers, who continue to demand justice in China despite being routinely jailed, harassed, and forbidden to mourn the loss of their sons and daughters.



VOC held a candlelight vigil on June 3 commemorating the students who fell at Tiananmen Square 30 years ago.



Our award of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to the Tiananmen Mothers was announced at a vigil in Hong Kong on June 4 attended by over 180,000 people.



Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) delivers remarks at our rally on Capitol Hill.

VOC Rally Co-hosts



VOC's Tiananmen Rally was co-hosted by 24 human rights organizations.



On June 6, VOC co-hosted a panel with the Hoover Institution on the legacy of Tiananmen Square and the possibilities for reform in China.

Taiwan Gathers Champions of Religious Freedom in China

From May 29 to June 1, VOC Director of Government Relations Kristina Olney represented VOC in Taiwan as co-host of the Taiwan International Religious Freedom Forum, an annual gathering of more than 80 parliamentarians, religious leaders, and human rights advocates from 27 countries to promote religious freedom around the world—and in particular, China. Other co-hosts included China Aid, Freedom House, The Heritage Foundation, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and the Taiwan Association for China Human Rights. Olney spoke on a panel about religious persecution and oppression of Tibetans and Uyghur Muslims. Other speakers included Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwanese Ambassador at Large for Religious Freedom Pusin Tali, US Ambassador at Large for International



Left to right: Pastor Bob Fu (China Aid), Dr. Yang Sen-hong (Taiwan Association for China Human Rights), Greg Mitchell (International Religious Freedom Roundtable), Chiu Ling-yao (Taiwan Association for China Human Rights), Kristina Olney (VOC), Olivia Enos (Heritage Foundation), Doug Robison (China Aid), Travis Weber (Family Research Council), Rev. Lyim Hong-Tiong (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan).

Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, and prominent human rights lawyer Kenneth Starr. Attendees discussed ways to promote religious freedom and human rights across the globe, issued a joint

declaration condemning the persecution of Uyghur Muslims, and called on all governments and the international human rights community to respond.

VOC Experts Deliver Congressional Testimony



VOC China Studies Research Fellow
Peter Mattis

Committee: House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific

Topic: Chinese communist propaganda and global interference operations

Date: May 9, 2019



VOC China Studies Fellow
Dr. Samantha Hoffman

Committee: House Intelligence Committee

Topic: China's tech-enhanced authoritarianism, global surveillance, and methods of social coercion

Date: May 16, 2019



VOC Director of Latin America Programs
Dr. Carlos Ponce

Committee: House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere

Topic: The socialist crisis in Nicaragua; Ortega regime's persecution of dissidents

Date: June 11, 2019

12th Annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony &

On June 14 a record 19 embassies, 4 delegations, and 48 ethnic and human rights organizations joined VOC for the 12th Annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony & Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Presentation at the Victims of Communism Memorial statue on Capitol Hill. The purpose was to honor the memory of the more than 100 million victims of communism, celebrate liberty where it has triumphed, and further our pursuit of a world free from communism.

This year—the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and 70th anniversary of NATO—we announced an exciting new partnership with the American Cold War Veterans organization to educate young people on the lessons of the Cold War, and the sacrifices of veterans who stood watch around the globe for nearly five decades to keep the world safe and defend the cause of liberty. VOC will begin advocating to establish a long-overdue official service medal for our Cold War veterans.

We then presented our Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom to Col. Gail S. Halvorsen (known as “The Candy



A record 19 embassies, 4 delegations, and representatives from 48 ethnic and human rights organizations gathered at the Victims of Communism Memorial Statue in Washington, DC on June 14 to lay wreaths in honor of the more than 100 million victims of communism.



Left to right: Staff of the Interim Embassy of Venezuela, Gabriel Lugo, Gustavo Marciano, Francisco Marquez, and Brian Fincheltub.



Marion Smith delivers remarks prior to the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom presentation.



Left to right: Col. James R. Fisher, Executive Director of the Korean War Veterans Association; Michel AuBuchon of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation; Dr. Paul Cunningham, President of the Korean War Veterans Association.

Presentation of the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom



Bomber”), a retired officer and command pilot in the US Air Force who helped conduct the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49, which transported supplies into the Soviet communist-blockaded city of West Berlin.

During the 15-month airlift, American and British pilots delivered more than 2 million tons of supplies to those trapped in West Berlin. But it was Halvorsen’s decision to airdrop candy to the children that earned him the lasting affection of a free West Berlin. After the Berlin Airlift, he performed similar candy drops in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Japan, Guam, and Iraq.

Col. Halvorsen offered this statement: “I commend the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation for their commitment to the legacy of America’s Cold War veterans who stood their watch faithfully. I am grateful for all those who have helped with the cause of freedom throughout the world. We hope and pray that future generations will continue to value freedom and pay the price for it.”



Col. Gail S. Halvorsen, USAF (Ret.), known as “The Candy Bomber,” was a pilot during the Berlin Airlift.



Left to right: Chairman of the American Cold War Veterans The Very Rev. Charles H. Nalls, CH (Col.) (Ret.), VOC Chairman Dr. Lee Edwards, Mike Halvorson (accepting the award on his father’s behalf), and VOC Executive Director Marion Smith.



Mr. Boris Ruge, Germany’s Deputy Chief of Mission, lays a wreath for German victims of communism.

National 'Captive Nations' Summit Launches on Capitol Hill

Each July, VOC leads efforts to mark National Captive Nations Week, in fulfillment of the 1959 congressional resolution adopted during the Eisenhower administration to show American solidarity with nations subjugated by communism. This year, we hosted our first Captive Nations Week Summit

on Capitol Hill, conferred our Human Rights Award, hosted our National Seminar for Middle & High School Educators, published op-eds in major news outlets, and welcomed President Trump's Proclamation on Captive Nations Week.



VOC Trustee Amb. Paula Dobriansky speaks on the legacy of her father, Lev, who authored the Captive Nations Week Resolution signed into law by President Eisenhower in July 1959.



Carlos Vecchio, Ambassador of Venezuela to the United States of the US-recognized interim government of Juan Guaidó, delivers remarks at the Captive Nations Week Summit.



VOC Director of Latin America Programs Dr. Carlos Ponce answers questions from the audience during a discussion on Latin America.



Benedict Rogers, Chairman of Hong Kong Watch, delivers keynote remarks on the systematic human rights abuses in China.



Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam, gives keynote remarks.

Capitol Hill Summit

On July 15, in conjunction with the second annual Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom hosted by the State Department, VOC convened the first Captive Nations Week Summit on Capitol Hill, where policymakers and human rights advocates heard firsthand of human suffering under communism from witnesses of the captive nations of China, Cuba, Hong Kong, Laos, Nicaragua, North Korea, Venezuela, and Vietnam. The Summit also included a special VOC photography exhibit documenting the human cost of socialism in Venezuela. Speakers included Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX); Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-SC), co-chair of the Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus; Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam; Luis Almagro, secretary general of the Organization of American States; Venezuelan Amb. Carlos Vecchio of the US-recognized interim government of Juan Guaidó; Amb. Paula Dobriansky, VOC Trustee; Benedict Rogers, chairman of Hong Kong Watch; and exiled Vietnamese blogger Mother Mushroom.



The Captive Nations Summit included a special VOC photography exhibit documenting the human cost of socialism in Venezuela.

Human Rights Award

This year we gave our Victims of Communism Human Rights Award to Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh, known as “Mother Mushroom,” for her brave advocacy for human rights in Vietnam. Quỳnh began blogging about social issues in Vietnam in 2006 and was soon targeted by communist authorities for exposing corruption and human rights abuses. Arrested then released in 2009, she defied the authorities and continued to write. In late 2016 she was given a 10-year jail sentence for “propagandizing against the state.” Denied legal representation, she went on a hunger strike. On October 17, 2018, after a two-year campaign of international pressure, she was released to the United States, where she was reunited with her two children and elderly mother.



National Teachers Seminar

On July 13-20, VOC convened our fourth annual National Seminar for Middle & High School Educators at the Elliott School of International Affairs in Washington, DC. Our expert faculty trained 50 new teachers from 24 states on the history and legacy of communism blending scholarly lectures, peer discussions, and pedagogical sessions with our *Witness Project* videos and in-person testimonials from dissidents and witnesses of communism.

Publications

VOC Executive Director Marion Smith published op-eds highlighting the importance of Captive Nations Week and bringing greater public attention to nations still held captive by collectivist regimes such as Cuba, North Korea and Venezuela.

**Communism is Making a Comeback;
So Should Captive Nations Week**
Miami Herald • July 12, 2019

**This Captive Nations Week, America Must Stand
with Those Struggling for Freedom**
National Review • July 15, 2019

The Miami Herald

NATIONAL REVIEW



Presidential Proclamation

Every year the President is required to issue a proclamation on the third week of July to mark Captive Nations Week, a tradition dating back to 1959 under President Eisenhower.

“During Captive Nations Week, we reaffirm our Nation’s unwavering support for those who strive to be free from oppression. We condemn repressive regimes that deny people their God-given rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” – President Donald Trump

NATO at 70: Forging Bonds to Strengthen a Key Alliance

On April 4, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation partnered with the Atlantic Council, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the Munich Security Conference to convene “NATO Engages: The Alliance at 70” in Washington, DC.

The event commemorated the 70th anniversary of NATO, bringing together members of Congress, foreign dignitaries, US policy experts, leading business representatives, and other key international leaders, including Vice President Mike Pence and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, to discuss NATO’s history, current challenges, and future.

Panels featured discussions on the need to adapt to new threats in the 21st century, NATO’s expansion into eastern Europe and the Balkans, and its aid for the US mission in Afghanistan following the 9/11 terror attacks.

Vice President Pence’s speech reaffirmed America’s commitment to the alliance and quoted President Trump’s Warsaw speech: “Our freedom, our civilization, and our survival depend on these bonds of history, culture, and memory.”

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg extolled the alliance as the most successful in history, describing how its members are cooperating more than ever, increasing their strength on NATO’s eastern flank, and committing to spend \$100 billion more on collective defense. He also praised President Donald Trump’s push to make NATO’s European members spend more on defense, citing the president’s statement that “to be a strong alliance, NATO must be a fair alliance.”

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spoke of her experience growing up in Czechoslovakia, escaping Nazi tyranny, and watching her country fall to communist control in 1948. She said the communist takeover awakened the world to the need to found an alliance of democratic states, and that throughout the Cold War, NATO “preserved hope in the West while keeping hope alive in the East.”



Vice President Mike Pence highlights NATO’s track record as a force for good, standing firm as a bulwark against communism throughout the Cold War.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg chronicles the alliance’s successful history and outlines its future endeavors to strengthen eastern Europe and commit more to collective defense.



VOC’s Director of Government Relations Kristina Olney with Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, prior to her speech describing her childhood in former Czechoslovakia, escaping Nazi tyranny, and watching her country fall to communist control in 1948.

Photo Exhibit Premieres at Organization for American States

On July 8, in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the arts-based human rights organization Un Mundo Sin Mordaza, VOC co-hosted an invitation-only photography exhibit called *Victims of Venezuela's Dictatorship* at the OAS Main Building in Washington, DC. The exhibit exposed the human cost of socialism in Venezuela for top policy makers and leaders of the human rights community.

It featured 50 photos by award-winning Venezuelan photographers, laying bare the horrors of Nicolás Maduro's regime, including food shortages, malnutrition, the migration crisis, torture of dissidents, and police brutality against protesters. Speakers were OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, Venezuelan Special Representative to the OAS Ambassador Gustavo Tarre, and VOC Executive Director Marion Smith.

A few days earlier, on June 24-28, the exhibit was displayed in Latin America as part of the 49th regular session of the OAS General Assembly at the Plaza Mayor Convention and Exhibition Center in Medellín, Colombia. More than 2,000 people saw the exhibit, which was widely covered in international media, including EFE, Telemundo, *La Vanguardia*, *El Nacional*, and *Venezuela Al Día*.



The Victims of Venezuela's Dictatorship photography exhibit premiered on July 8 at a special event in the Organization of American States Main Building in Washington, DC.



OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro (left) delivers remarks ahead of Ambassador Gustavo Tarre, Venezuelan Special Representative to the OAS (right).



VOC Executive Director Marion Smith speaks on the need for the United States to support the Venezuelan people in their struggle against the socialist Maduro regime.



The VOC exhibit featured 50 photos by award-winning Venezuelan photographers, laying bare the horrors of Nicolás Maduro's socialist regime, including food shortages, malnutrition, the migration crisis, torture of dissidents, and police brutality against protesters.

Allies Mark 30th Anniversary of ‘Baltic Way’ Protest

On a rainy August 23, VOC joined with Baltic diaspora leaders; the embassies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; the Delegation of the European Union to the United States; Estonian American National Council; Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC); and Lithuanian American Council to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Baltic Way—the day in 1989 when two million Balts joined hands in a 370-mile-long human chain to protest Soviet occupation.

Speakers included VOC Executive Director Marion Smith; the State Department’s Director of Nordic, Baltic, and Arctic Security Affairs Erika Olson; Estonian Ambassador Jonatan Veseiov; the Latvian Embassy’s Third Secretary Artūrs Saburovs; JBANC Managing Director and former VOC Trustee Karl Altai; and Counselor of the Lithuanian Embassy Kęstutis Vaškelevičius. A statement of support was read from Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), a member of the Victims of Communism Congressional Caucus.



VOC Executive Director Marion Smith delivers remarks at the protest on its 30th anniversary re-enactment of the Baltic Way.



Hundreds of people gathered, despite the rain, in front of Capitol Hill on August 23 to re-enact the iconic Baltic Way protest of 1989, when two million Balts joined hands in a 370-mile-long human chain between the capitals of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in protest against Soviet occupation.

To our supporters...

Thank you! Every event, every meeting, every counter-challenge we make to communism’s heinous influence, every boost to dissident truth-telling—every bit of VOC’s work as reported in this newsletter—is made possible by the generosity of our donors who value our mission: *To educate future generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism.* We are grateful for your support.

Educating and Engaging Citizens Nationally



Falun Gong: Forum and Rally

On July 18, VOC Executive Director Marion Smith spoke at a rally on the US Capitol West Lawn, where thousands gathered to mark the 20th anniversary of CCP’s Campaign to Eradicate the Falun Gong—a state-sanctioned human rights atrocity that continues to this day. Other speakers included Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and Steve Chabot (R-OH) and former Canadian Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) David Kilgour. Earlier, on April 25, VOC Director of Academic Programs Dr. Murray Bessette spoke at a forum on Capitol Hill to mark the 20th anniversary of the Falun Gong Appeal—the day when 10,000 Chinese citizens held a peaceful sit-in at Communist Party headquarters in Beijing to protest the beating and jailing of dozens of Falun Gong practitioners. Other speakers included US Commissioner on International Religious Freedom Gary L. Bauer and blind human rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng.



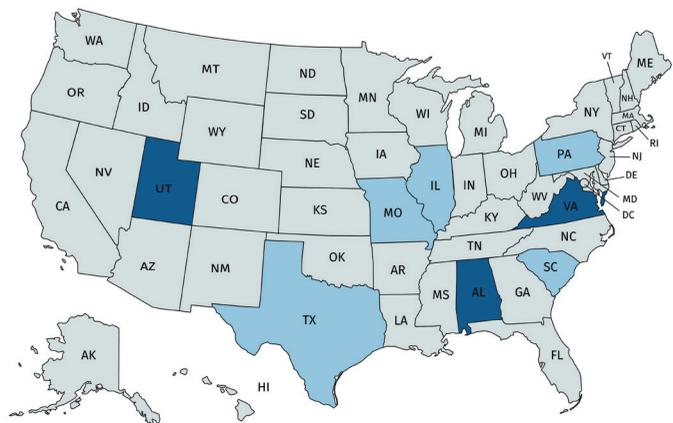
Polish Studies Conference in Chicago

On May 2-3 at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago, VOC hosted a conference called “Towards Freedom: Celebrating Central and Eastern European Independence,” highlighting episodes in Polish history to show how competing totalitarian movements sought to crush the free individual and how free government can be reestablished in their wake. Topics included political prisoners in communist Poland, civil society’s role in bringing down the Iron Curtain, and daily life under communism. Keynote speakers were Dr. Padraic Kenney, professor of history at Indiana University, and Dr. Mark Kramer, Director of the Cold War Studies Program at Harvard University’s Davis Center and editor of *The Black Book of Communism*.



Teacher Workshop at Harvard University

On June 8, VOC hosted a teacher workshop and screening of the film *Ashes in the Snow* in Harvard’s Tsai Auditorium, in partnership with Harvard University’s Davis Center for Russia and Eurasian Studies and Dr. Mark Kramer, editor of *The Black Book of Communism* and member of VOC’s Academic Council. Dr. Murray Bessette and Dr. Włodzimierz Batóg, VOC Senior Research Fellow in Polish Studies, presented our new curriculum focused on the Baltic Deportations and lectured on the impacts of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to an engaged audience of teachers and community members, who requested we screen the film for students next academic year.



■ Legislation passed ■ Legislation introduced

VOC Memorial Day Update

Last year, we reported that Virginia became the first state to join the federal government in officially recognizing November 7 as “Victims of Communism Memorial Day.” Since then, Alabama and Utah have joined Virginia as a result of VOC’s work, having passed legislation informed by our government relations team. VOC’s bill language was adopted as official model policy by the American Legislative Exchange Council. Similar resolutions have been introduced in Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas. Our goal is to see VOC Memorial Day recognized by all 50 states.

