

WEEK 32, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES

# CHINA INSIDER



## TROJAN HORSE

HOW PRO-CHINA GROUPS USE WECHAT  
TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN POLITICS

See Page 4

China's infiltration of  
Taiwanese media 6



## NATIONAL SECURITY

# Chinese-Russian Military Cooperation Targets US Security

RICK FISHER

## Commentary

While some experts assume that China and Russia would never enter a formal military alliance against the United States and its friends and allies, the two nuclear neighbors are now actively increasing the depth and scope of their military cooperation in ways that are improving their joint capacity to threaten U.S. security.

In less than a year, China and Russia have engaged in ground force, naval, and aerial exercises, that while relatively small in scale, have established the basis for more sophisticated joint-force exercises in the future.

## Air Exercises

On July 23, two Russian Air Force Tupolev Tu-95MS cruise missile bombers and two People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) Xian H-6K cruise missile bombers conducted a joint exercise over the Sea of Japan. South Korean fighter jets responded by firing warning shots at a Tu-95MS flying over Dokdo Island.

The Tu-95MS and H-6K would usually be armed with land-attack cruise missiles (LACM). Both cruise missiles could be armed with nuclear warheads, and both bombers can also carry supersonic anti-ship missiles and precision-guided bombs.

These bombers were supported by two airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft. Inclusion of the AWACS enabled the bomber group to practice finding their own land- or sea-based targets, and it's likely that targeting data from respective Russian and Chinese space-based and land-based sensors was shared by the AWACS and bomber aircraft.

This small exercise represents an aerial "network" that, in future exercises, could grow to include a greater number of bombers and fighters, and then ships and submarines, to form larger battle formations.

## Naval and Army Exercises

From April 29 to May 4, following its 70th anniversary naval parade, the People's Liberation Army navy (PLAN) and the Russian navy held their "Joint Sea 2019" naval exercise, for the first time featuring joint "live fire" launching of surface-to-air mis-

**A potential danger is that China and Russia could engage in joint targeting of their nuclear forces to deter Washington from defending allies in Europe and Asia or partners such as Taiwan.**

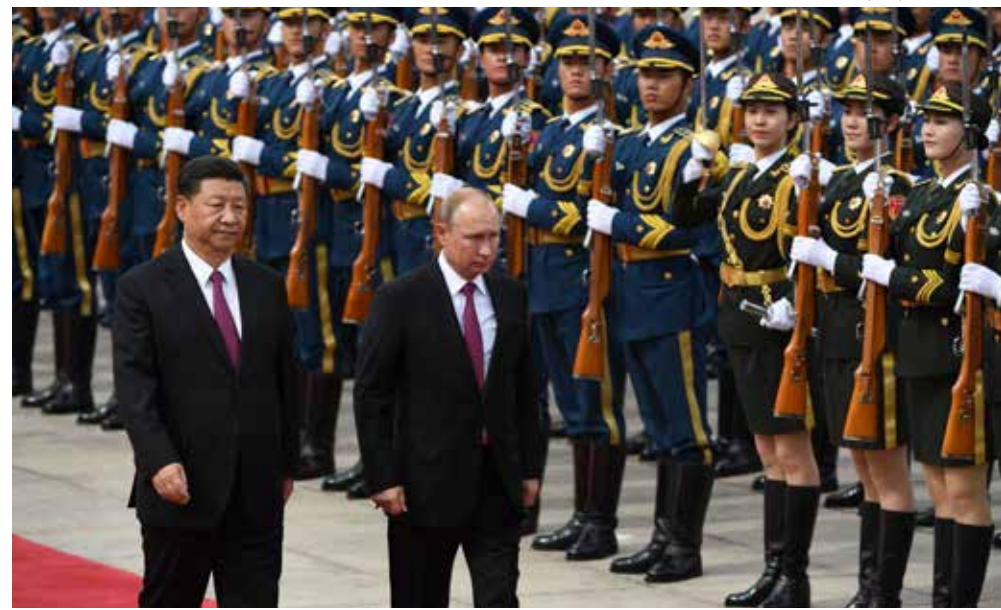
siles and complex anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises.

Russia sent its large Slava-class cruiser Varyag, armed with sixteen 550 km range P-500 nuclear-warhead capable anti-ship missiles, two ASW destroyers, and a Kilo-class conventional submarine. The PLAN sent its aging Type 052 destroyer Harbin, a newer Type 054A frigate, and a Type 039 conventional submarine.

But especially useful for the PLAN were complex ASW operations that included the Russian navy's large Tupolev Tu-142 ASW aircraft and the PLAN Air Force's new Shaanxi Y-8Q ASW aircraft. Future Russian-PLAN exercises can be expected to include aircraft carriers, land-based naval strike aircraft, and the firing of long-range cruise missiles.

From Sept. 11 to 18, 2018, the PLA Ground Forces (PLAGF) sent a brigade-size force into Russia to participate in Russia's large-scale "Vostok-18" combined-arms exercise.

The PLAGF sent about 3,200 troops, 900 pieces of armor, artillery, and support equipment, and 30 aircraft, joining a Russian force of 300,000 troops, 36,000 vehicles, and 100 aircraft. This was the largest ground force contingent that China has ever sent beyond its borders, giving the PLAGF valuable exposure to Russian modern large-scale combined-arms op-



Russian President Vladimir Putin reviews a military honor guard with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during a welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on June 8, 2018.

Chinese troops parade at the end of the day of the Vostok-2018 (East-2018) military drills with Russia at Tsugol training ground in Siberia, Russia, on Sept. 13, 2018.

erations, skills that are now a top priority for the PLA.

## Strategic Exercises

In 2016 and 2017, China and Russia held "strategic forces" exercises to practice missile defense at a command-post level; there was no reported missile defense exercise in 2018.

While Russian and Chinese missile interceptors weren't fired, it's likely that missile detection and interception command and control procedures were part of these exercises. Since the 1960s, Russia has maintained an anti-ballistic missile defense network while the PLA's is now in a stage of advanced development.

This is troubling because missile "defense" exercises imply that China and Russia may

also be considering missile "offense" cooperation. While Russia has about 1,500 deployed nuclear warheads, China's number is unknown, but could approach the number of Russia's warheads.

A potential danger is that China and Russia could engage in joint targeting of their nuclear forces to deter Washington from defending allies in Europe and Asia or partners such as Taiwan.

Though currently at an early stage, China-Russia operational military cooperation could develop rapidly with increased sophistication, size, and frequency of exercises so that both become a greater force for global intimidation.

Despite historic Russian fears of a strong China, the Putin regime may go along with increased military cooperation to sustain

large-scale Chinese commodity and technology purchases that undergird the Russian economy.

China, however, wants Russia to become a more active military partner in conquering Taiwan and then very likely, for containing the democracies. Russian bombers, strike fighters, submarines, and ASW forces could help the PLA tie down Japanese forces or even to attack U.S. forces in Japan that would resist a Chinese attack.

Building a growing military alliance-like relationship with Russia also advances China's project of establishing global military networks to achieve global strategic hegemony by its 2049 deadline, as more countries may bandwagon with China.

Countering growing China-Russia military cooperation requires that Washington

sustain its military and military-technical superiority, and ensure that its alliances and friends are both well-armed and better coordinated. U.S. forces urgently require new tactical nuclear weapons to deter Russian and Chinese aggression. Furthermore, there should be no hesitation in arming front-line friends such as Taiwan and Japan with capabilities required to deter a combined China-Russia threat.

Rick Fisher is a senior fellow with the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

## CENSORSHIP

## China Jails 22-Year-Old for Drawing 'Insulting' Cartoons

EVA FU

In China, lacking a nationalist spirit has become the latest crime, as the story of a 22-year-old college graduate attests.

Zhang Dongning has taken to using Japanese-style caricatures to depict trending social issues. Over the past two years, the cartoonist from Anhui Province has produced a pig-themed series of more than 300 satirical cartoons, depicting trends such as the traditional Han couture craze, veterans demanding their unpaid retirement benefits, and Chinese tourists' Thailand buffet frenzy. All Chinese characters in the artworks appear pig-headed and she names them "piggle."

Ahead of New Year's Day, when China officially transitioned into the Year of the Pig, Zhang posted another pig-themed caricature "cele-

brating" the occasion: a map of China in the shape of a grim-faced, prostrated pig, vermilion in color, on which various pig-headed figures pop up protesting the recent scandals across China. Five yellow stars appear prominently on the top left corner, referencing the flag of communist China.

## Authorities Take Issue

On July 28, local authorities in Tianjia'an, a branch of the Huainan Public Security Bureau, announced that Zhang had been arrested for being "jingri" and insulting China. Literally translated as "Japanese in spirit," the term "jingri" became popular among mainland Chinese in 2018 as a somewhat derogatory reference to Chinese nationalists who identify themselves more with Japan than their own country.

The police accused Zhang of "insulting Chinese peo-

ple's image, intentionally distorting China's historical facts, and misinterpreting trending news in China and overseas," according to the statement.

"[The cartoons] had seriously hurt Chinese feelings and trampled on national dignity, the impact on society was very damaging," the statement read, adding that the officials decided to arrest Zhang to prevent "future criminal activities" and "clean up internet space."

The statement also said that the police had launched a probe in October 2018 after the "insulting-China" cartoon series came to their attention.

**The police accused Zhang of 'insulting Chinese people's image' and 'intentionally distorting China's historical facts.'**

## Netizens Speak Out

The jailing of the young cartoonist has sparked outrage across China's internet. Critics have attributed Zhang's arrest to an intensifying censorship campaign online and in the media being drummed up as the Chinese Communist Party prepares for the 70th anniversary of the regime's founding.

Nie Chenxi, the vice director of China's Publicity Department in charge of disseminating propaganda, has issued directives asking local offices to "stand on po-

edly col-luded with Zhang. Both had seen their accounts on Weibo, the Twitter-like platform where they circulated the cartoons, deactivated by the police.



Zhang Dongning's caricature titled Happy 2019 Year of the Pig.

Zhang Dongning, a 22-year-old cartoonist, was jailed for her "insulting" artwork.

litical high ground to modulate every television episode, every documentary, and every cartoon," and be watchful "every second" for anything that deviates from the "official main theme" or "sensitive topics," state media reported.

"What's wrong with Zhang Dongning doing a pig-themed cartoon series? It's the Year of the Pig, and many families have affectionately called their newborns 'baby piggy,'" investigative journalist Gao Yu said in Zhang's defense. A prominent dissident herself, Gao had once been detained for

seven years for her reporting on China's elite-circle politics.

Some internet users said that they identified with what Zhang portrayed and questioned the validity of the so-called crime.

"What kind of crime is being 'Japanese in spirit,' can the officials please come out and give an explanation?" one person wrote on Weibo. "The criminal law needs to make space for dozens of blanks for the new criminal charges."

"What I eat is tainted food, what I drink is tainted water, what I breathe is tainted

air," another wrote. "Thank you for depicting the truth."

Several Chinese lawyers also wrote analyses further refuting the authorities' claims.

"For insulting charges, the target of the crimes can only be individuals and not a group, there need to be specific victims," Shandong lawyer Fu Wen wrote in an article on Weibo. "For this case, if there is any victim, it would be all Chinese people, but there's a question of whether every Chinese person would think that their personal dignity and reputation have been harmed."





## CHINESE INFLUENCE

# The Trojan Horse

## How WeChat Infiltrates Western Politics

Chinese Communist Party influences US elections via popular messaging app

LIN YAN

Chinese messaging app WeChat has become a major platform for political discussions among overseas Chinese, as well as a tool for Western politicians to engage in discourse with local Chinese communities.

This trend has taken hold since the 2016 U.S. elections and in Australia, during the 2019 Australian Federal elections.

U.S. think tanks and China experts worry that WeChat is a sort of Trojan Horse to the West as the app—censored according to Beijing standards—could be used to influence Western politics abroad.

WeChat, developed by Chinese technology giant Tencent Holdings Limited, has rapidly expanded overseas as more Chinese expats are using the app for communication. Specifically, WeChat is a communication vehicle between Western elected officials and political candidates and voters of Chinese descent.

But its prevalence means far more than just another competitor in the social media market: It is enabling the Chinese-ization, or rather, Communist-ization of local communities and could nudge local politics toward alignment with the goals of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The CCP controls political views, news flow, and permitted discourse on WeChat to benefit pro-CCP political parties and politicians. On the other hand, some Western politicians choose to self-censor using the CCP's criteria on WeChat in order to reach and appeal to Chinese voters.

What's worse, the politicians who stand up against the CCP's policies are being gagged on WeChat with their postings removed or their account closed. In this way, WeChat stands apart from all other social media apps in the West.

### Suppression of House Candidate in North Carolina

"I've seen WeChat deleting articles from my public WeChat account, and locking and then unlocking my personal account," 2016 North Carolina Congressional candidate Sue Google told the Epoch Times.

Born in China's southern Hainan Province, Google immigrated to the United States and became a U.S. citizen in 2010. She is a programmer, real estate agent, and had never worked in politics.

As a Republican, Google was running for office in North Carolina's 4th District, where Asian-Americans account for 5 percent of the population, with 1 percent being those of Chinese descent.

Google said it takes incredible effort to win over the 1 percent. "(In any other ethnic communities) I'd just need to speak my mind and I'll gain approval," she said. "But it's the hardest in the Chinese community."

Google began using WeChat in 2014 to introduce her political viewpoints to the Chinese in her community. She once had several WeChat supporter groups that contained over a thousand people.

What she didn't expect was that WeChat "brought her enemies along with friends." The turning point for Google was in March 2016 after she questioned the Chinese Embassy's infiltration of local Chinese commerce and social associations in her WeChat post. Some WeChat members began to spread her post, and she was subsequently labeled and accused as "anti-China" by other Chinese users. In some cases, she was even verbally assaulted.

She told U.S. Chinese language media ACLiving in 2016, "I'm straightforward, and always speak my mind without glib rhetoric. So I've caused some debates, and were kicked out of some WeChat groups."

"As soon as I'm on WeChat, I get in trouble. When I'm off WeChat, everything is smooth and fine. When I'm on WeChat, embarrassing things happen." Google said. "I'm against the anti-U.S. sentiments in China, or the 'anti-China' labels put on Americans. 'Anti-China' is too heavy a label to carry."

Google told the Epoch Times that during the 2016 election, some articles were removed from her public accounts, and her personal account was temporarily closed

by WeChat.

WeChat uses human inspection, user reports and other methods to censor sensitive content and close accounts. Such censorship is neither transparent, nor following consistent principles.

"We created content policies for individuals and organizations who use our platform," Tencent, the parent company of WeChat, stated in an official response. "As part of the inspection, we will close or suspend accounts that post contents with hatred, erroneous information, inappropriate content, or any other content banned on our platform."

It is said that accounts may be automatically reactivated after the poster deletes content that WeChat considers inappropriate. However, accounts that regularly post sensitive contents would be frozen or permanently removed.

Among the 40 Asians candidates in the congressional election in 2016, 33 ran for U.S. Congress, and 7 for the Senate. As a political newbie, Google has gone the farthest.

When asked if she would do anything differently if she were to run again, Google said, "I will absolutely stick to my principles and will never draw back."

"The political environment changes in China in the past year have fully validated my comment that the CCP is an unscrupulous dictatorship," she added. "Wearing suits doesn't make them civilized."

### WeChat Helped CCP-Backed Politicians Win House Election

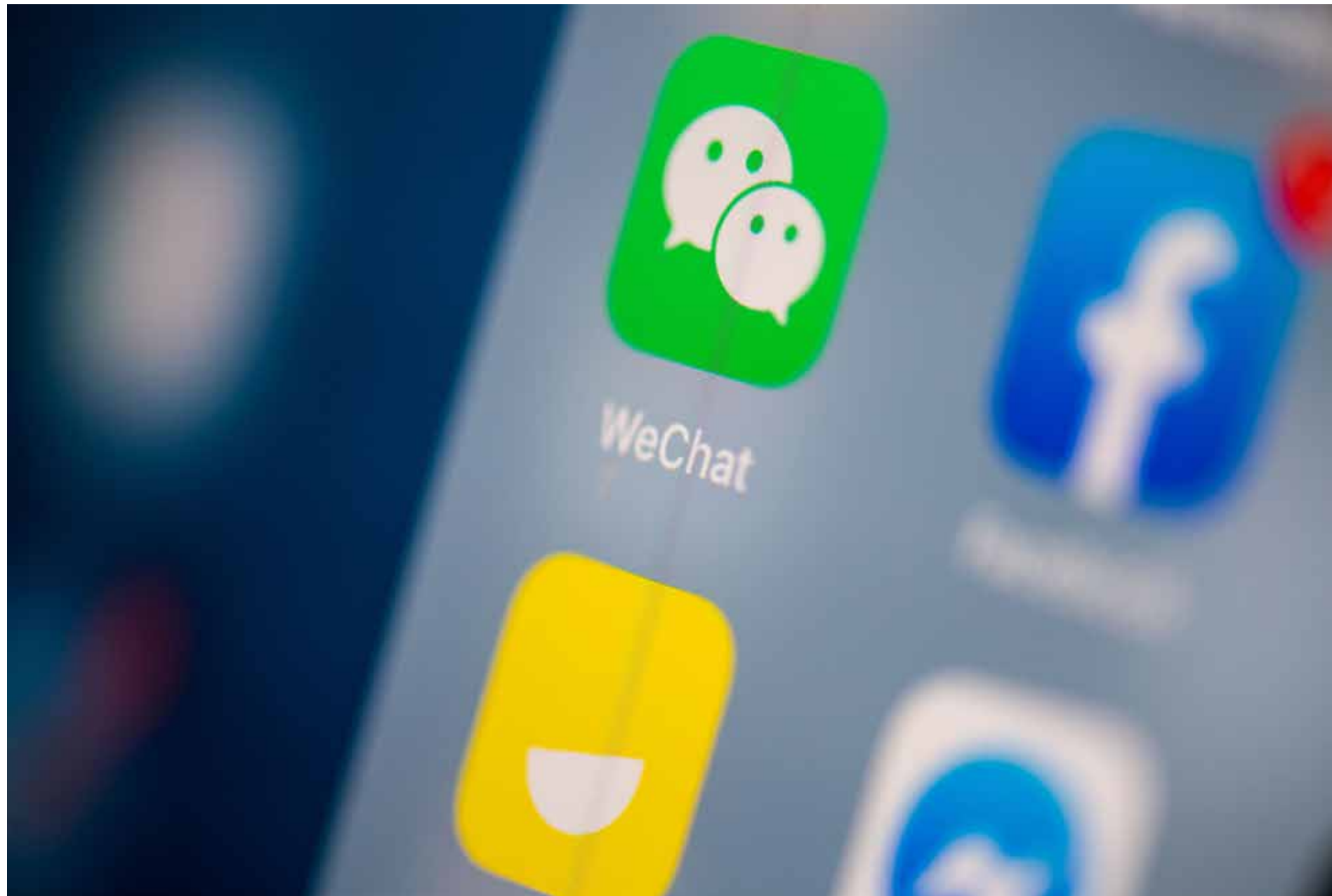
For U.S. politicians backed by the CCP, however, WeChat is a powerful campaign tool.

The Washington Post reported in November 2018 how Chinese immigrant Lily Qi used WeChat to help her election as a state delegate of the 15th District of Maryland. Qi is the first first-generation Chinese immigrant in the state legislature.

Previously Qi was the Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett's chief administrator overseeing economic and workforce development. Without much support from the local Democratic Party, she turned her eyes to the large Asian community in the district. In addition to writing on American political system for local Chinese newspapers, she also communicated her political agenda with hundreds of local Chinese voters on WeChat.

In a 2019 interview with Chinese state-run media The Paper, Qi said she contacted unregistered and non-partisan voters through WeChat and made efforts to change their political opinions. She also said that her campaign doubled the number of Chinese Democrats during the primary election, and encourage many Chinese to make their first donation to political elections.

These new Chinese voters didn't suddenly become patriotic. The reality is this: the surge of Chinese voters was largely driven by



MARTIN BUREAU/ AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the close ties between the Chinese embassy and local pro-communist Chinese groups. During the year-end meeting of the Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations (CCCCA) of Washington D.C., Chinese Minister Counselor and Consul General Tang Li said in a public speech that he hoped the overseas Chinese would contribute to Qi's election campaign.

Qi also spoke at the same meeting. After her speech, the audience chanted "Lily! Lily! Lily!" to show support.

The Washington D.C. CCCC is one of the most active Chinese interest groups in the area. It has organized training for Chinese voters and has set up voter registration booths in many Chinese community events and encouraged Chinese expats to vote.

CCCCA said in a press release published on June 26, 2018, "Lily Qi has the full support of the Chinese groups and industry associations. She has 500 volunteers to amass, motivate, and mobilize the Chinese community on WeChat, to secure votes person by person, wave by wave."

The CCCC is known as a preliminary organization of the CCP, and an important tool for

the CCP's "united frontline" work overseas.

In the same document, the DCCCCA said that what's most important about Qi's victory is that "all Chinese media and social media collaborated to refute crooked opinions, and to truthfully build a positive public image of the candidate."

Maryland Chinese are in two camps of opinions towards Qi's campaign: One camp believes Chinese voters should support Chinese candidates, while the other camp wants to look beyond skin color to focus on political advocacy.

The latter group's voice, however, has been stifled in the entire process as WeChat posts with such viewpoints are drowned by criticism that they're internally weakening the Chinese community and demands that "solidarity leads victory."

Qi's victory was reported by almost all overseas Chinese media and China's official state media. But that was not her first appearance in CCP propaganda. As early as in 2012, the Chinese state-owned overseas media U.S. China Press interviewed Qi, and the full transcript was published on CCP mouthpiece People's Daily.

(Top) U.S. think tanks and China experts worry that WeChat is a sort of Trojan Horse to the West as the app—censored according to Beijing standards—could be used to influence Western politics abroad.

(Bottom Left) Members of the Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations in Washington D.C. canvass local Chinese voters for Chinese Communist Party-backed candidate Lily Qi's Maryland state delegate campaign in this file photo.

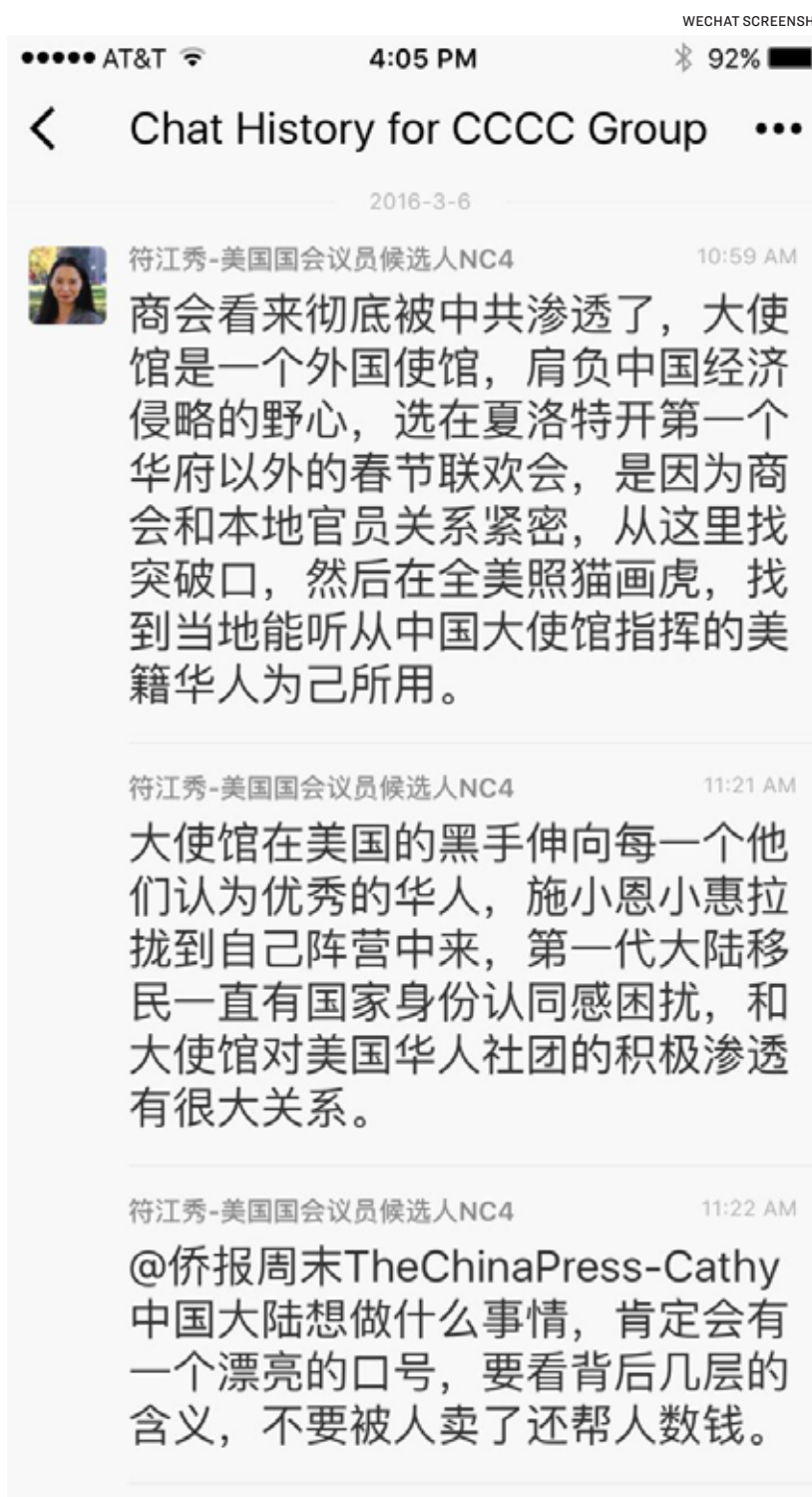
(Bottom Right) 2016 North Carolina Republican Congressional candidate Sue Google's March 2016 WeChat post became a turning point for her relationship within the Chinese community.

I've seen WeChat deleting articles from my public WeChat account, and locking and then unlocking my personal account.

Sue Google, 2016 North Carolina Congressional candidate



CCCCA PR



## IP THEFT

# Sen. Cotton: Stop Giving Visas to Chinese Army-Affiliated Students



SAMIRA BOUADU/ THE EPOCH TIMES

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) at a border security discussion hosted by Center for Immigration Studies in Washington on July 30, 2019.

## CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON

WASHINGTON—The Chinese regime purposely infiltrates America's universities and research laboratories with agents to try to steal national security secrets, according to Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.).

"We shouldn't be naive about that threat. And we should always err on the side of national security as opposed to beneficence on behalf of foreign students," Cotton said during an event hosted by the Center for Immigration Studies on July 30.

FBI Director Christopher Wray told senators at a congressional hearing on July 23 that the agency has more than 1,000 active investigations into theft of U.S. intellectual property, "almost all leading back to China."

Cotton, along with five other Republican senators, introduced a bill in May to revoke F and J visas to individuals who are employed, funded, or otherwise sponsored by the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The bill, S. 1451, also suggests that the other "Five Eyes" countries—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom—take similar measures.

The F-1 student visa allows foreign nationals to study full time at an accredited institute, while F-2 visas are issued to their spouses and dependents.

The J-1 visa is for individuals approved to participate in work- and study-based exchange visitor programs. J-2 is for their spouses and dependents.

Both are nonimmigrant visas, meaning they are not pathways to citizenship.

Twenty years ago, in fiscal year 1999, the total number of F and J visas issued to Chinese nationals was 31,000. The number jumped up to almost 115,000 in fiscal year 2009 and continued to climb during the Obama-era to reach a high of 332,000 in fiscal 2015.

The numbers have since dropped to 151,000 visas issued in fiscal 2018.

More than 2,500 Chinese military scientists and engineers have studied abroad, often by masking their military ties, between 2007 and 2017, according to a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), a think tank partially funded by Australia's Department of Defense.

The main destinations were the Five Eyes alliance countries, as well as Singapore, Germany, and Norway.

Some methods that students and scholars used to hide their military affiliation, according to the report, were to use names of nonexistent research institutions; create LinkedIn profiles with fake academic affiliations; or claim affiliation with civilian institutions in the same regions as their military units.

Cotton said more thorough background checks are required, as well as more scrutiny into the types of programs that should be made available to Chinese students.

"Chinese students at National Laboratory or affiliated institutes and Chinese students at major research universities studying in advanced scientific and engineering programs that do major contract work for the Department of Defense or the intelligence community—no," Cotton said.

Chinese students at National Laboratory or affiliated institutes and Chinese students at major research universities studying in advanced scientific and engineering programs that do major contract work for the Department of Defense or the intelligence community—no.

Sen. Tom Cotton

"If Chinese students want to come here and study the great books of the Western tradition so they can learn more about constitutional democracy and individual liberty, I can support that."

Cotton also said too many American universities have become too reliant on money from Chinese students.

"Again, that's part of China's deliberate policy," he said. "Even if you're not an agent of the Chinese government, still sending Chinese students to places like MIT or Cal-Tech... to study artificial intelligence or quantum computing and just [returning] to China and working in Chinese industry, is much better for China than it is for the United States."

The bill co-sponsors are Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.).



## MEDIA INFILTRATION

# China's Infiltration of Taiwanese Media: The Communist Party's 4 Means of Bribing Local Outlets

EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Recently, 23 Taiwanese online media outlets simultaneously published a critical article of Tsai Ing-wen's government. The report originated from the Taiwan Affairs Office of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), arousing public concern regarding the CCP's infiltration into Taiwanese media.

The infiltration tactics, which is at once both secretive and open, can be broadly divided into four categories. Among them, the most threatening is to construct an information supply chain through PR companies' united front business for Taiwanese media.

Reporters Without Borders, an international NGO, has released its 2019 ranking of press freedom, ranking Taiwan as having the second-best press freedom in Asia only behind South Korea. In recent years however, taking advantage of Taiwan's press freedom, the CCP has influenced the direction of media coverage in Taiwan through various channels, thus affecting the public perception of the CCP regime among Taiwanese residents.

In addition to the well-known methods of bribing media with advertisements and inviting journalists to visit China, the CCP has also used PR companies in recent years to comprehensively influence Taiwan media and strengthen the scale of its united front work. It also controlled channels in Taiwan's public entities through special means to directly influence the people.

## Method 1: Direct Control of the Media and Bribe Through Advertising

Yu Yingshi, a researcher at Taiwan's Academia Sinica, said in a statement that the CCP's campaign to influence public sentiment in Taiwan through the acquisition of media by Taiwanese businessmen has reached a blatant level.

In an interview with The Epoch Times, Zhang Jinhua, a professor at The Graduate

A crowd gathers in front of the Taiwan presidential palace for a "reject the communist media, protect Taiwan's democracy" protest in Taipei, Taiwan, on June 23, 2019.



Institute of Journalism at National Taiwan University, said the ways the CCP controls Taiwan's media include direct control, ownership acquisition, and control of editorial staff, all in an effort to make them pro-communist. The CCP has leveraged pro-communist businesspeople in Taiwan, making them its agents in Taiwan. "Under such circumstances, even if they are not CCP officials or members, they may be forced to act as their agents."

In addition, after more than half a year's investigation, the Control Yuan (one of the five branches of Taiwanese government) issued a report confirming that the communist government had purchased spots in Taiwanese newspapers by embedding news stories. Wu Fengshan, a member of the council, has a copy of a contract detailing

how China Times' Beijing-based company specializes in soliciting advertisements from the CCP, and subcontracting them to other Taiwanese media, often with prices more than twice the market rate.

Zhang also said the CCP controls Taiwanese media with advertising interests. Many Taiwanese TV stations have difficulty marketing their programs. Many are afraid to offend the CCP in reporting due to their Beijing-funded advertisements. Political talk shows are also affected, not daring to criticize the CCP due to monetary pressure. Some programs even replaced staff who hold anti-communist views.

Zhang said that some TV stations had changed the hosts of political talk shows to please the CCP, which shows that its influence was not only over editorial content, but

also personnel.

Xu Qinhuang, a senior media professional who's long appeared as a commentator on financial and economic programs, confirmed that there are popular talk shows being threatened by their pro-communist advertisers. The shows' advertisers have threatened to pull their ads should they continue their anti-communist editorial slant.

Xu said, in Taiwan this phenomenon of withdrawing advertisements has existed for a long time, but their scope has always been limited. Clients who withdrew advertisements were mostly large corporations doing business in China. However, in recent years, this phenomenon has become more prevalent. Many Taiwanese companies which have Chinese ownership have all threatened the media with withdrawing advertisements. The sales departments within such media put pressure on news departments, requiring their reporting to be free of unfavorable content to the CCP.

## Method 2: Hosting Taiwanese Journalists in China and Influencing Them With Monetary Rewards

Columbia Journalism Review, an American research publication, recently published an article by journalist Andrew McCormick, who interviewed several American journalists that had traveled to China for training.

McCormick said about 50 journalists from 49 Asian and African countries attended a training camp in China. Over the course of 10 months, these journalists were placed on internships in select Chinese media and received monthly financial subsidies for food, entertainment, and other expenses.

According to "Intelligence Organizations and Espionage Activities of the CCP," a book by Weng Yanqing, the lieutenant general and former Deputy Director of Taiwan's Military Intelligence Bureau, the CCP considers media and journalists specifically as "spies." Weng said agents from the CCP's Ministry of

In this system, the Party can control all elements to control Taiwan's information, not only through media and Internet, but also through PR companies in a coordinated way, handling all aspects like agents do.

Insider

State Security tried to recruit foreign journalists living in China, often by contacting them using their personal names, offering to "provide classified information," and then arresting them on charges of stealing state intelligence when they came to meet, coercing them to cooperate with the Ministry. The Ministry used these journalists to set up Chinese-language media outlets in Taiwan, or to conduct intelligence work of propaganda and covering up for the CCP.

Xu Qinhuang disclosed that there are indeed Taiwanese media professionals invited to China. According to his knowledge, their travel itineraries include attending seminars hosted by mainland Chinese companies, and the cost is covered by China. "This is the CCP's united front work in Taiwan," he said.

Zhang Jinhua said journalists are invited to China by the CCP in the name of professional exchange, but there may be direct and indirect motives behind such travels. Many cross-straits media exchange platforms in Taiwan have been summoned to the other side for training. The CCP uses this channel to offer soft inducements.

It's widely known that the CCP's united front in Taiwan is divided into three categories: blue (online public opinion), gold (money) and yellow (sex). Xu said that "gold" is enough for most Taiwanese media because the entire industry is in a downturn. As long as journalists are given a stable income and career, their media coverage can be influenced.

## Method 3: Construct United Front Information Supply Chain Through PR Companies

The CCP's methods of bribing Taiwan media have become even less visible in recent years. An insider pointed out that some Taiwan PR firms have in recent years contracted cases from private Chinese companies. Although the source of these cases is not official departments like the CCP's Taiwan Affairs Office, but according to what he knows, these private Chinese enterprises are proxies for the CCP. The Party can use these enterprises to invest money in Taiwan's advertising companies, and indirectly, use these funds to influence Taiwanese media.

The insider disclosed that the cases contracted from China by these PR firms range from traditional TV media, print media, to online and social media like PTT and Facebook. PR firms advertise on traditional media for the CCP and help it host media visits to China, asking them to assist in publicizing the Party's position in their reports. At the same time, these PR firms also help review the positions of media outlets. In case a media has poor re-

lationship with the CCP, they'll ask their partners not to give the media advertising business. On the Internet, these PR firms set up various fan groups and fake accounts to write positive articles and comments on behalf of the CCP.

"I call this the industrial chain of the CCP's information united front work in Taiwan," said the insider. "In this system, the Party can control all elements to control Taiwan's information, not only through media and Internet, but also through PR companies in a coordinated way, handling all aspects like agents do."

"The biggest threat posed by Taiwan's communist-aligned media to the public lies in its presence of both tangible and intangible form," said the insider. "These are only hints, but they show that the CCP is blatantly and openly using Taiwan's freedom of speech to subvert Taiwan and force Taiwan to reunify with the Party."

## Method 4: Controlling Broadcast Content in Public Establishments

Hong Boxue, the former editor-in-chief of a newspaper, published an article on Taiwan People News disclosing that in certain areas of Taiwan, TVs in public establishments such as snack bars, restaurants, small clinics, hotels, and other gathering locations often lock into a pro-communist local TV station. The owners of these stores told him that an unidentified group was paying them \$500 a month to lock their channels onto this pro-CCP station.

Hong further explained in an interview with The Epoch Times that he had investigated countless such shops, finding that the group which pays the snack bars mostly targets the south-central region of Taiwan, and it chooses affordable restaurants rather than upscale ones.

What's more, the political stance of shop owners is also a key point of the unidentified group's consideration. It usually contacts shop owners who have little to no existing political stance. There are a lot of such people in Taiwan who have no pre-existing views regarding the Taiwan Strait relationship and thus are considered easier to influence.

"It's like drugs. If you don't sell them to people, no one will want it." According to Hong, the logic behind "paying people" watch the TV station is very simple. Channels which have been labeled as communist media won't take hold if no one watches. Their purpose is to attract viewers, establish a certain viewership, and ultimately achieving its propaganda goals. "The money must be worth it. The effect of this collective penetration is very good. The CCP regards it quite effective, and it is."

## CHINESE INFLUENCE

# China Expands Influence Over Zimbabwe Natural Resources

ANDREW MAMBONDIYANI

MUTARE, Zimbabwe—Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa is courting Chinese investors as China's Zhejiang Province commits to a partnering arrangement with two Zimbabwean provinces.

Experts, however, are worried that the Zimbabwean government is giving China too much control over the country's natural resources.

Mnangagwa told a Chinese business delegation, which was in Zimbabwe for a three-day tour in July, that he was delighted that the Chinese officials' interest in the country had extended beyond investing in the traditional urban areas.

The Chinese delegation was led by Ge Huijun, who chairs the Zhejiang provincial committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Mnangagwa said, "Twinning [of Zhejiang Province] with several provinces in our country will go a long way towards expediting the development of all areas of our country." The provinces

are Mashonaland West and Matabeleland North, to the north and west of the country, respectively.

But experts are sounding alarms over China's potential exploitation and colonization of Africa through what has been called "debt-trap diplomacy."

## Bad Loans

A report by Green World Warriors—a network of environmental activists—reveals that China has become "not only the largest trading partner in Africa, but also one of the largest lenders," giving loans for railroads, roads, and stadiums. But many of these loans are not expected to be profitable for China.

"When these projects fail to meet the terms of the loan, China will then be able to control and use those projects for their own interests outright. This tactic, known as debt trap diplomacy, has been used across the world [by China]," the report states.

And according to online newspaper New Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe's govern-

ment has also offered 1,200 hectares of land in Victoria Falls—one of the natural wonders of the world—in an effort to lure Chinese investors into the country's tourism sector.

Tongoona Chitando, a corporate affairs official with the Zimbabwe Special Economic Zones Authority, told the Chinese delegation that the country had land reserved for hotels, golf courses, financial services, and tourism hubs.

However, Linda Masarira, president of the Labor, Economists, and African Democrats (LEAD), a newly formed political party in Zimbabwe, said that the twinning arrangement between the provinces was not a good idea, as it will not benefit ordinary Zimbabweans.

"There is need to know the motive behind the arrangement. Taking into consideration that the Zimbabwean government is desperate, the motive might be harmful to Zimbabweans."

Linda Masarira, president, LEAD party



The arrangement are is the most important question to ask. Basically, this is selling Zimbabwe and our inheritance."

## Mutual Benefit?

The Zimbabwean government is offering incentives to Chinese investors, which include five-year tax holidays, no import duty on

Linda Masarira, president of the Labor, Economists, and African Democrats (LEAD), a newly formed political party in Zimbabwe.

capital equipment, and easy registration procedures in the country's Special Economic Zones.

But Masarira questioned whether Zimbabwe has the financial and physical capacity to explore opportunities in China—and whether Chinese officials would even allow Zimbabweans to explore the Asian country in the same way that the Chinese will be capitalizing on Zimbabwe's resources.

She said China would benefit from ivory, diamonds, and gold from Matabeleland North Province, and gold and diamonds in Mashonaland West Province, whereas Zimbabweans will get nothing of equal value from China.

"How will Zimbabwe control the Chinese? Given the current situation where Zimbabwean authorities have failed to control the Chinese, with more diplomatic ties now involved, [the] Zimbabwean government will not control the Chinese," she said.

Ge, the leader of the Chinese delegation, was quoted in the Zimbabwean state-owned newspaper The Herald as saying Zimbabwe was an important partner of China in Africa, as the two countries enjoy a historical friendship.

"Currently, the relationship is at its best period. Guided by the ambition and political leadership of President Xi Jinping and His Excellency President

Mnangagwa, the exchange between Zhejiang Province and Zimbabwe is increasingly deepened," Ge said.

But Masarira said some Chinese businesses operating in Zimbabwe were already evading taxes and the banking system.

"How will Zimbabwe control them in these provinces?" she asked. "Partnerships should be sincere from a position of strength and not of begging, and there must be no threat to our sovereignty as a nation and no individual or local group should be prejudiced."

In Zimbabwe, some Chinese companies have gained notoriety for violating local laws, mostly labor and environmental laws.

An expert on China-Zimbabwe relations, Francis Danha, earlier this year told The Epoch Times that journalists should gather evidence of Chinese influence and dishonest activities in the country and expose them.

"We need active journalism which clearly outlines [Chinese company] activities as well as exposes the rot. As modern China is now self-conscious and publicity sensitive, they are quick to regress on the dirty moves which are clearly exposed," said Danha, who also leads an opposition political party, the 1980 Freedom Movement.

"Chinese hypocrisy needs extensive investigative journalism."



A miner carries a load of ore at Manzou Farm in Mazowe, Zimbabwe, on April 5, 2018.

JEKESAI NJIKIZANA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES





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