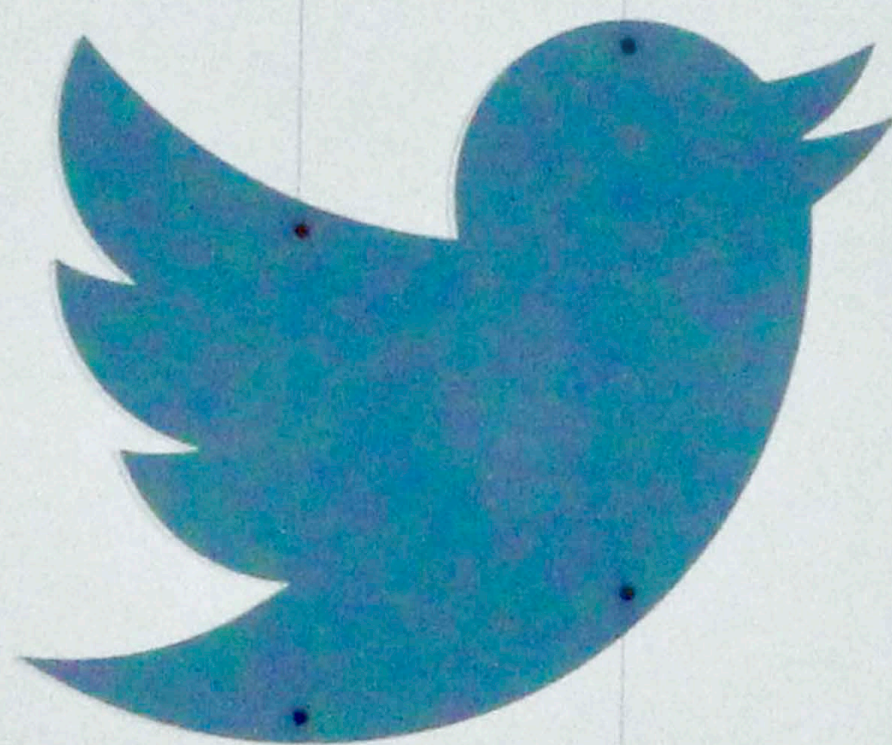


WEEK 20, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER



Beijing Blowback

Why countries are breaking with the Chinese regime **2**

BEIJING USING TWITTER BOTS

TO SPREAD PANDEMIC DISINFORMATION

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Chinese soldiers march at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on April 28, 2020.

The Beijing Blowback

Why countries are breaking with the Chinese regime and what it means

JAMES GORRIE

Commentary



One would think that Beijing would see that unleashing a pandemic is no way to gain favor with the world. Lying about doing so doesn't help, either; nor does blaming others for the outbreak.

And exporting tainted medical supplies to nations asking for help, while criticizing them for failing to protect their people from the pathogen doesn't make for an effective diplomatic strategy, either.

But that's the playbook, believe it or not, that Beijing is following in its global campaign to become the new leader of the world. Sure, vigorous propaganda blaming the United States, Italy, etc., is part of the plan, too. But few countries, if any, are buying it. There's just too much toxicity, in all its forms, coming from Beijing.

Is it any wonder that European countries, and others, are now breaking with China?

World Falls Out of Love With China

It's not that the world was in love with China before the pandemic. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had already made great strides toward alienating trading partners around the world.

They did so on a variety of levels, from technology and intellectual property theft to adversarial trading practices, currency manipulation, installing spyware in 5G networks, and much more.

Those are just a few of the reasons why the trend of redirecting supply chains out of China had already begun. President Donald Trump's massive tariffs on \$500 billion worth of Chinese products didn't help either. They only accelerated the trend, even if casting the United States in a negative light in many European capitals.

But China's horrific behavior at the beginning of the outbreak has made it—and the CCP—a global pariah. For many countries, the pandemic that the Party unleashed upon the world opened their eyes as to the true nature of the CCP's outlaw regime. It also showed them how relying on a single supply source has made their economies truly vulnerable.

Beijing's Bully Mindset Doesn't Travel Well

What is surprising, however, is how badly the CCP is behaving even after having caused the greatest global calamity since World War II. Or, perhaps not. The CCP isn't known for its surplus of empathy, compassion, openness, goodwill, or any other higher trait of human decency. Contrition, therefore, is not a factor in Beijing's foreign policy.

It's quite the opposite, in fact. China's new breed of diplomats are, with the CCP's blessing, aggressive, ultra-nationalistic, crude, and dismissive toward their trading partners.

But instead of drawing nations closer to it, China is alienating them, especially the rich Northern European countries:

Sweden has just shut the very last Confucius Institute there and has cut ties with sister cities in China; and the UK and Germany are both reexamining their decision to use Huawei for their nationwide 5G network systems and, along with Australia, are talking about seeking hundreds of billions in reparations from China.

Both the UK and Germany are also concerned about their dependence on China for critical medical supplies and pharmaceuticals; distrust of China is so deep in Germany that its entire China policy is under review; and France has been targeted by China's disinformation campaign charging French parliamentarians with issuing racial slurs.

Italy is named and blamed by China as a possible source of the virus; and Spain, Holland, and the Czech Republic publicized purchases of defective Chinese masks and testing kits.

Beijing's bully diplomacy also is backfiring in places such as Australia, which Beijing derogatorily referred to as "gum stuck to the bottom of China's shoe," for wanting an investigation into the origin of the CCP virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus. Fortunately, even with Beijing threatening to boycott their wine and beef, Australia hasn't backed down.

Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, and the African Union have all complained about the Chinese regime's racist treatment of Africans in Guangzhou province.

A High-Risk Divorce

But where's the United States on decoupling from China?

It's clear that today, the chances for any long-term cooperative partnership

between Washington and Beijing are virtually nil. China has shown that it is a strategic adversary to the United States, as well as to the West as a whole. Beijing seeks to reorder the world on its own terms, a plan that threatens the well-being of the rest of the world, and it's now a plain fact.

That is why the trade war against China was—and continues to be—a necessity. Changing the unbalanced terms was needed to save American manufacturing, U.S. strategic capabilities, its economy, America's global leadership, and the current international norms, as rickety as they may be. Most of Europe is beginning to agree.

And while Philadelphia's leadership still sees the need to raise the Chinese flag over City Hall in the name of "diversity," some American universities, similarly to Sweden, are closing Confucius Institutes on their campuses.

It's about time.

New China, Old Attitudes

But as the tariffs continue, and global demand continues to fall due to the CCP virus pandemic, economies around the world will suffer. That in itself may well lead to more conflict between the United States and China, as Beijing scrambles for resources, markets, and, of course, for the CCP's very survival at home.

China's new strain of "diplomacy" is what happens when a government starts to believe its own propaganda. But it's not really new at all. It's an officially sanctioned position based on old realities, that will make the immediate future more dangerous, not less.

As Zi Zhongyun, an expert on America at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, noted recently, Beijing's "new" aggression toward the West has its roots in the anti-Western Boxer Rebellion of the early 20th century. As long as that "mentality guides Beijing" policymakers, Zi says, "it will be impossible for China to take its place among the modern civilized nations of the world."

It would appear that the Beijing blowback goes both ways. Is the world ready to reap that whirlwind?

James Gorrie is the author of "The China Crisis" and the blog TheBananaRepublican.com. He is based in Southern California.

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

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In Rare Speech, Top Trump Adviser Calls for Greater Freedoms in China

EVA FU

A senior White House adviser decried the "shocking lack of diversity in voices" under the Chinese communist regime, in the first known speech given by a U.S. official in Mandarin Chinese.

Matthew Pottinger, the White House's deputy national security adviser on Asia, highlighted the regime's suppression of those who sought to speak the truth amid the CCP virus outbreak, including doctors and citizen journalists, and heralded them as "civic-minded citizens" who committed "big acts of bravery."

"The cliché that Chinese people can't be trusted with democracy was ... the most unpatriotic idea of all," Pottinger said in a speech given in Mandarin Chinese during a virtual panel event held by the University of Virginia's Miller Center on May 4.

Pottinger said he gave the speech in the Chinese language so he could open up a conversation with citizens in China and the Chinese diaspora.

Under China's Party-state system, he said that "it's sometimes difficult to cut through the noise, from whether its propaganda, from the wholly state-owned media in China, or the carefully curated social media ecosystem."

It takes courage to speak to a reporter—or to work as one—in today's China.

Matthew Pottinger, White House's deputy national security adviser on Asia

Pottinger studied the Chinese language 25 years ago in Beijing and went on to become a China correspondent for The Wall Street Journal. While reporting, he was once arrested by government agents. On another occasion, he was punched in the face by agents while investigating a Chinese company's illicit sales of nuclear fuel to foreign countries, according to his written account published in the Journal.

He said Beijing's lack of tolerance for critical voices has taken a turn for the worse in recent years.

"It takes courage to speak to a reporter—or to work as one—in today's China."

Despite the regime's iron-fist rule, sparks of free thought haven't ceased, Pottinger said.

"When small acts of bravery are stamped out by governments, big acts of bravery follow," he said.

Some recent acts of bravery he cited: Regular citizens who were punished for speaking their minds about the regime's early coverup of the virus outbreak; journalists who went missing after they filmed video footage of what was happening in Wuhan; and doctors punished for raising the alarm about the virus spreading.

Pottinger quoted a social media post by Li Wenliang, a whistleblower doctor who eventually died of the virus

he warned others about: "I think there should be more than one voice in a healthy society, and I don't approve of using public power for excessive interference."

The top adviser's speech comes as the United States escalates its calls for China to be held accountable for the pandemic.

"The U.S. isn't looking at punitive measures here," Pottinger said in response to a question about economic sanctions on Beijing.

"What President Trump is looking at doing is continuing with the policy that he ran on, the policy that he's implemented—which is to have a reciprocal and fair relationship with China, not one in which the U.S. allows ourselves to be taken advantage of in the hopes that somehow China will just automatically liberalize."

Speaking on the anniversary of the May 4 movement, a student-led protest in 1919 at Tiananmen Square that radicalized Chinese intellectual thinking, Pottinger said the event may serve as the philosophical underpinning for Chinese people to reclaim their freedoms.

The unfulfilled democratic aspirations from a century ago were a reminder for Chinese people to take fate into their own hands, he said.

"How China governs itself is going to be up to the Chinese people. It's not up to anyone else to decide."



Police officers patrol outside Beijing's Tiananmen Square on May 3, 2020.

OPINION

Pandemic Shows Pitfalls of Auto Industry's Reliance on China Market

FAN YU

The global auto industry is currently mired in a slump that's worse than the 2008 financial crisis.

J.D. Power & Associates, an industry research firm, estimates that since the outbreak of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, auto dealers have sold almost 800,000 fewer cars and trucks than its 2020 forecast.

Virtually every auto plant in the United States has been shut since the end of March because of the pandemic. This unprecedented measure has sent auto production plummeting to levels not seen since World War II. Industry analysts expect a gradual reopening of assembly plants over the next few months, but it may take months, if not years, for production to climb back to pre-pandemic levels.

The challenges faced by the auto industry are multifaceted.

Firstly, factories and assembly plants have been shut down. Secondly, car dealerships are closed to foot traffic in most states. Sales have moved online with curbside deliveries. But sales are just a fraction of normal levels, as unsold vehicle inventories are piling up at dealerships across the country.

"April auto sales took the biggest hit we've seen in decades," said Jessica Caldwell, executive director of insights at car-shopping website Edmunds, in a statement on April 30.

The pandemic has sidelined 10 million people in the U.S. auto industry, including those employed at manufacturers, parts suppliers, dealerships, and other businesses have been put out of work, according to a Bloomberg report. IHS Markit estimated that April's vehicle production in North America was only 4,300, the lowest total since 1945, during World War II.

While "fleet sales," or car sales to rental car agencies, make up a portion of total sales to automakers, that channel has all but dried up. Bloomberg reported that Avis Budget, Hertz, and Enterprise—three of the largest car rental agencies—have notified U.S. automakers to call off their planned purchases through the summer.

Every major automaker has seen its sales plummet in April. Hyundai Motor America posted a 39 percent sales decline in April from a year ago; Mazda North America announced a sales slump of 45 percent in April year-over-year; Toyota Motor North America saw its April sales drop 54 percent last month; and Honda's sales also fell 54 percent.

While the big three U.S. automakers—General Motors, Ford, and Fiat Chrysler—haven't yet disclosed April

Despite a relatively healthy U.S. auto sales market over the last few years, automakers have been moving jobs to countries such as China.



An employee works on an assembly line at a Dongfeng Honda auto plant, in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on April 7, 2020.

sales figures, they are believed to have similar year-over-year declines.

Historical Reliance on China

At a macro level, such widespread calamity within a single industry should bring some pause and introspection to executives and economists.

Ever since American Motors (shuttered after being acquired by Chrysler) formed the first foreign joint venture in China in 1984 to manufacture "Beijing Jeep" vehicles, automakers have been eyeing the potential of the Chinese market.

Vehicle manufacturing is an industry that the CCP mandates a domestic-foreign joint venture model. Foreign automakers must form a joint venture with a Chinese counterpart in order to manufacture and sell vehicles in China. The joint venture benefits from the know-how and technology of its foreign partner. For example, Ford is a 50 percent owner of Changan Ford, a joint venture between Ford and Changan Automobile. SAIC-GM is a joint venture between General Motors and SAIC Motor, which manufactures and sells GM-branded cars such as Buicks, Cadillacs, and Chevrolets.

In the fiscal first quarter of 2020, GM reported a net profit of \$294 million, a whopping 87 percent decline from a year ago. GM issued \$4 billion in new bonds last week to shore up its financial position.

But GM's China operations have already been under pressure before the CCP virus hit, due to the country's slowing auto market and the trade war. Profitability had declined and GM has lost market share. CFO Dhivya Suryadevara said during a February conference call with Wall Street analysts. In addition, the CCP's restrictive policies also mandate a one-year delay in dividend payments to the parent company.

At GM, for instance, China sales

have exceeded those in the United States. In 2019, SAIC-GM vehicle sales totaled 3.1 million, exceeding the 2.9 million cars and trucks sold by GM in the United States, according to an SEC filing.

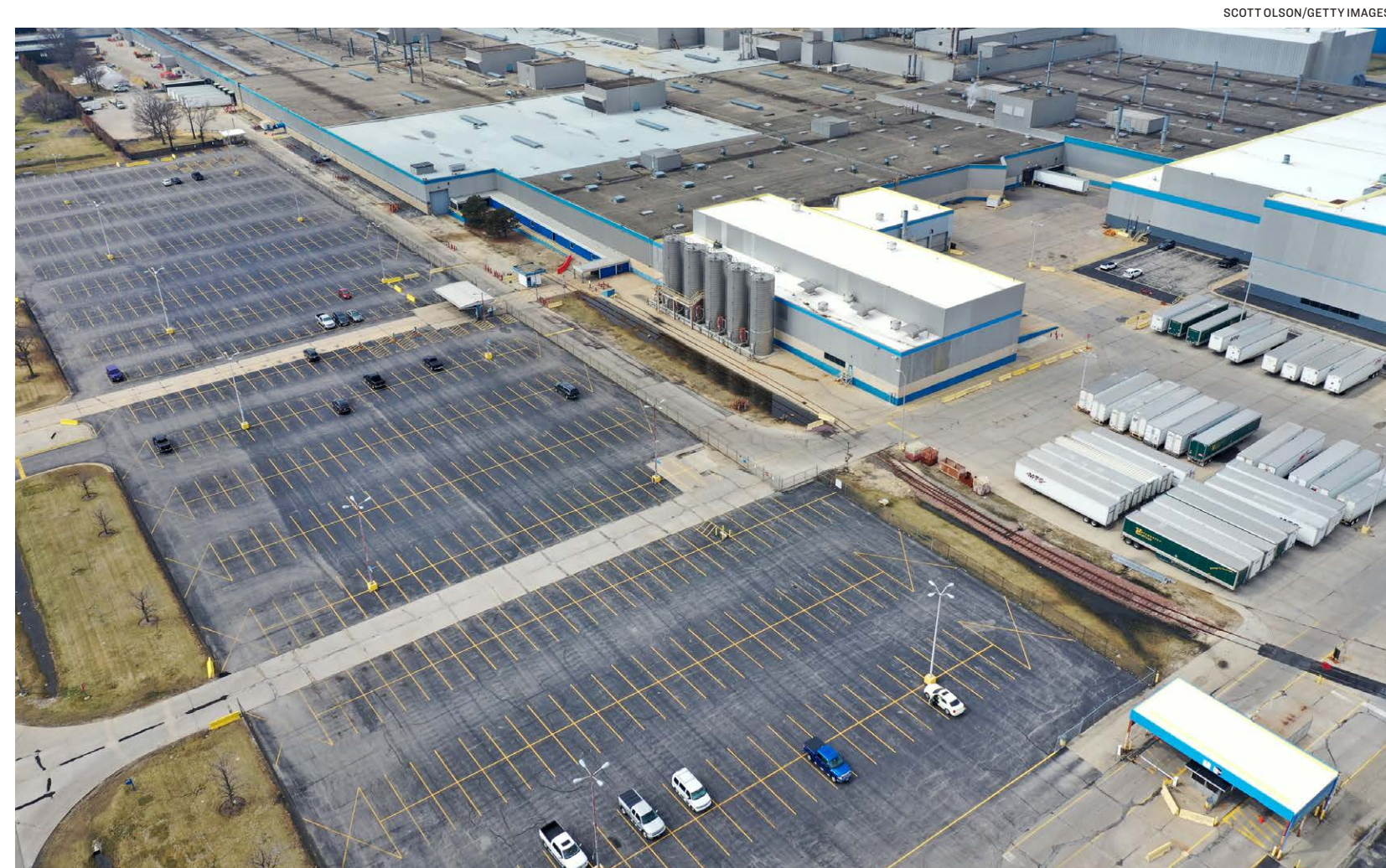
Despite U.S. government support during the financial crisis and a relatively healthy U.S. auto sales market over the last few years, automakers have been moving jobs away from the United States and to countries such as China. Ford is building its Focus compact car in China, not in Mexico or Michigan. GM employs 58,000 workers in China, as of mid-2019, which is almost 20 percent more than the 49,000 union workers it has in the United States.

German auto giant Volkswagen's first-quarter 2020 sales fell 23 percent globally, and its operating profit declined 81 percent from year-earlier results. Volkswagen, whose FAW-Volkswagen joint-venture is one of the biggest foreign automakers in China with 3.2 million vehicle deliveries in 2019, has restarted production in China this month.

While global economies hope for a V-shaped economic recovery and healthy communities, there is great uncertainty. While sales and profits could ebb and flow on a monthly or quarterly basis, the virus and the associated public health crisis could loom longer and cripple the long-term outlook and health of companies and economies.

Investors, board members, and company executives must take a long-term view regarding the well-being of the companies they steward. Reassessing their relationships with the CCP could well be part of the antidote.

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



The almost empty employee parking lots at the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Belvidere Assembly Plant in Belvidere, Ill., on March 24, 2020.

PETAR KUJUNOZIC/REUTERS



Icons of WeChat and Weibo apps on a smartphone in this picture illustration taken on Dec. 5, 2013.

SURVEILLANCE

China's WeChat Monitors Overseas Users to Bolster Censorship at Home, Report Says

EVA FU

International users of Chinese messaging app WeChat could be helping the platform tighten its censorship system for users inside China, according to the latest report by digital watchdog Citizen Lab.

The app, with over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide, is known to censor its users in China to ensure content falls within topics deemed acceptable by the Chinese Communist Party.

The report, however, found that communications between users outside of China are also monitored to help refine the app's censorship algorithm for its users in China.

The findings revealed that overseas users are subject to "pervasive content surveillance that was previously thought to be exclusively reserved for China-registered accounts," Citizen Lab said.

Around 100 million people hold WeChat accounts registered outside of China, according to Munich firm Messenger People.

Inside China, the app offers a multitude of services ranging from chatting, shopping, marketing, banking to booking movie tickets and taxis.

Feeding a Censorship Apparatus

The report found that WeChat will screen images and documents that overseas users share with each other to build up a database it uses to censor its China-based accounts.

The researchers reached these findings based on experiments conducted between November 2019 and January. They set up two group chats: one containing only overseas users, and another containing overseas users and one China-registered account.

They found that when they sent politically sensitive images and documents in the chat solely containing overseas users, shortly after those files would be censored for China-registered users.

WeChat also retains data of the files that users delete in the app and therefore never received by the other party, the researchers found.

The report found that WeChat will screen images and documents that overseas users share with each other to build up a database it uses to censor its China-based accounts.

"[N]one of the information WeChat makes available to users explains the rationales for such surveillance," the report concluded, noting that WeChat's data protection staff never fully addressed the researchers' questions regarding the company's data handling practices.

Tencent, Shenzhen-based tech giant that owns the app, said in a statement on Friday that "with regard to the suggestion that we engage in content surveillance of international users, we can confirm that all content shared among international users of WeChat is private."

While further technical analysis is necessary to determine if the same red flags are present among other Chinese firms, it's "plausible that other platforms use surveillance similarly," according to Jeffrey Knockel, a postdoctoral fellow at the institute who co-authored the report.

He suggested that privacy regulators could issue fines to companies for misleading users. In Canada, residents could also complain to federal privacy regulators who could "provide non-binding recommendations for how the company must modify its services," Knockel told The Epoch Times.

Concerns Around Chinese Apps

The report adds to a growing chorus of criticism over the censorship and data handling practices by Chinese social media platforms.

In a March report, Citizen Lab found that WeChat in China actively censored discussion on the outbreak from January. It identified 516 keyword combinations directly related to the virus on a WeChat blacklist, including references to the whistleblower doctor Li Wenliang, who died of the disease.

In late April, Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) introduced a bill, titled "Countering Chinese Attempts at Snooping", which aims to ban federal employees from using tech platforms that are subject to control of the Chinese Communist Party. Tencent is one of the Chinese companies on the list.

"Companies like Tencent and Hua-

wei are espionage operations for the Chinese Communist Party, masquerading as telecom companies for the 21st century," Cruz said in a press release. He added that stopping taxpayers dollars from contributing to these platforms are "common sense measures to protect American national security."

Rep Jim Banks (R-Ind.) recently also introduced a resolution to warn about the national security threats posed by popular Chinese video-sharing app TikTok, saying "Americans should know which is which before they hit the download button." The U.S. military has banned its personnel from using the mobile app on government-issued phones in January.

Zoom, which exploded in popularity as a convenient conferencing tool as millions of Americans work from home, has also drawn scrutiny over privacy and security concerns in recent weeks. The company is based in the United States, but owns three companies in China that develop its software.

On April 3, a group of 19 House lawmakers collectively signed a letter raising concerns over the company's data collection practices. Zoom also faces a class-action lawsuit from its shareholder for overstating its privacy standards and failing to disclose its lack of end-to-end encryption.

During multiple test calls in North America in April, Citizen Lab researchers also observed the app to be sending data to servers in Beijing, raising security concerns about whether such data might fall into the hands of nation-state attackers such as the Chinese regime, the report noted. The company, however, said the data was mistakenly routed through China.

"Beijing theoretically could demand that the encryption keys for those calls be handed over for decryption by Chinese authorities, allowing them full access to the contents of those calls and the ability to listen in on supposedly private conversations," Attila Tomaschek, data privacy expert at ProPrivacy, told The Epoch Times in a recent interview.

DISINFORMATION

China Using Bot Network on Twitter to Spread Pandemic Disinformation, State Department Says

CATHY HE

The U.S. State Department has discovered a “coordinated” bot campaign on Twitter designed to disseminate Chinese Communist Party (CCP) disinformation, forming part of Beijing’s campaign to deflect blame over its role in causing the global COVID-19 pandemic.

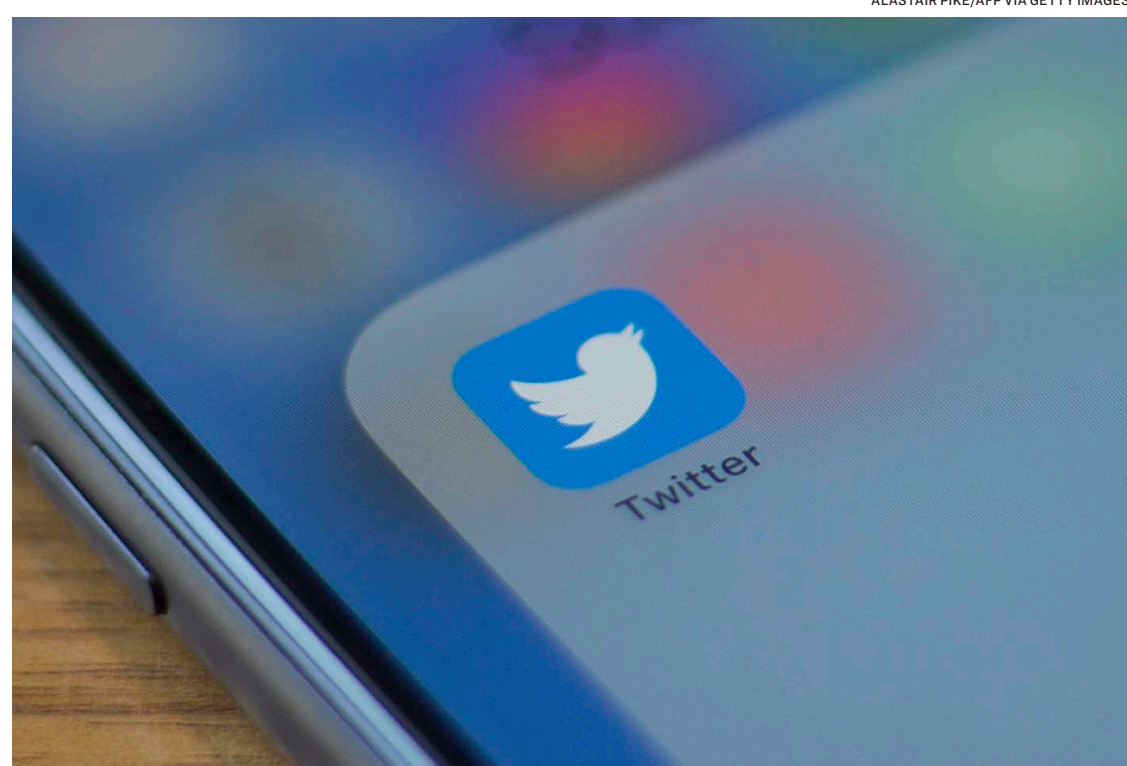
The department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC), which works to expose foreign disinformation efforts, recently identified thousands of “inauthentic” Twitter accounts used to help Chinese embassies and diplomats spread disinformation.

“The GEC has uncovered a new network of inauthentic Twitter accounts, which we assess were created with the intent to amplify Chinese propaganda and disinformation,” Lea Gabrielle, head of the GEC, said during a May 8 press briefing.

“It’s our assessment that this network could be deployed to allow the CCP to rapidly amplify and spread messages around the world, skewing the conversation to its benefit.”

Gabrielle said it was “highly probable” that the effort was linked to the CCP, which is currently “engaged in an aggressive information campaign to try and reshape the global narrative around COVID.” This campaign, she said, involves attempting to paint the regime “as a global leader in the response rather than the source of the pandemic.”

In recent months, Chinese diplomats have increasingly taken to Twitter—a platform banned in China—to laud the regime’s efforts in combating the pandemic, criticize other countries’ handling of the outbreak, and promote unfounded theories that



The Twitter logo on a smartphone, in this photo illustration.

It’s our assessment that this network could be deployed to allow the CCP to rapidly amplify and spread messages around the world.

Lea Gabrielle, head, Global Engagement Center

the virus originated from outside of China, such as the United States.

In one case, a spokesperson for China’s foreign ministry shared a video that claimed that the Chinese national anthem was played in the streets when Chinese doctors arrived in Italy—which was later debunked as a fake, Gabrielle said. The video appeared to show Italians saying, “Thank you, China,” when, in fact, they were thanking their own health care workers.

“But PRC diplomats and party-state media changed the context of the video in Beijing’s favor and then shared it widely,” she said, adding that in this case, the video was amplified by Russian-linked social media accounts.

Bot Networks

Analysis from the GEC showed a surge in new followers of Chinese diplomatic Twitter accounts from March—when the regime escalated its global disinformation

push. New followers per day rose from a historical average of 30 per day to over 720 per day—a 22-fold increase, Gabrielle said. In addition, many of these followers were newly made accounts.

“Both the sudden increase of followers and the very recent creation of many of these accounts point to an artificial network being established to follow and to amplify narratives from Chinese diplomats and foreign ministry officials,” she said.

Other indicators pointing to the accounts being part of a bot network were the fact that many of these accounts follow multiple Chinese embassies in different countries and multiple Chinese officials, and that most were created during Beijing hours, Gabrielle said.

For instance, the accounts of Chinese foreign ministry spokespersons Zhao Lijian and Hua Chunying share 3,423 of their most recent 10,000 followers, she said. Almost 40 percent of

the most recent followers were created in a six-week period from March 1 to April 25.

Twitter “will continue its zero-tolerance approach to platform manipulation and any other attempts to undermine the integrity of our service,” a company spokesperson said. “When we identify information operation campaigns that we can reliably attribute to state-backed activity—either domestic or foreign—we disclose them to the public.”

According to Twitter, the platform recently received 5,000 accounts from the department and has conducted an initial review that didn’t find the accounts to be supportive of Chinese regime positions. Many of the accounts also belonged to Western government entities, rights organizations, and journalists. The review was ongoing, the company noted, adding that it planned to share its findings with the GEC.

In response, a State Department spokesperson said that the accounts provided to Twitter represented a small sample of a dataset of nearly 250,000 accounts.

“It is not surprising that there are authentic accounts in any sample,” the spokesperson said. “Our overall analysis is based on a confluence of factors that drive our assessment, which we stand by.”

A March study identified 10,000 fake and hijacked Twitter accounts that were part of a Chinese-linked coordinated influence campaign surrounding the pandemic.

“The true scale of the influence campaign is likely much bigger; our tracking suggests that the accounts we identified comprise only a portion of the operation,” the report by nonprofit media organization ProPublica said.

MILITARY

China Needs More Nukes to Counter the US: Editor of Chinese State-Run Newspaper



Chinese military vehicles carrying DF-41 ballistic missiles roll during a parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of Communist China in Beijing, Oct. 1, 2019.

ALEXANDER ZHANG

China should expand its stock of nuclear warheads to 1,000 to counter the challenges posed by the United States, chief editor of the Chinese state-run Global Times newspaper argued in a May 8 social media post.

The communist regime’s nuclear arsenal should include “at least 100 DF-41 strategic missiles,” said Hu Xijin, who is known for his hawkish stance on foreign relations.

The DF-41, unveiled in mid-2019 by the rocket force of China’s military, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), is estimated to have a 12,000- to 15,000-kilometer range, the longest nuclear operating range in the world, and is capable of striking the continental United States.

“We love peace and promise not to use nuclear weapons first, but we need a bigger nuclear arsenal to suppress U.S. strategic ambition and impulse against China,” Hu wrote in a post on Weibo, China’s Twitter-like social media platform. He posted a similar message, written in English, on Twitter, which is banned inside China.

“Don’t think that nuclear warheads are useless during peacetime. We are using every one of them, silently, to shape the attitudes of American elites toward us,” he said on Weibo.

Official Position?

The Global Times is a controversial newspaper published by the People’s Daily, the Communist Party’s main mouthpiece. It often focuses on international issues, and regularly stirs up nationalist sentiment with inflammatory editorials.

At a news briefing on Friday, China’s foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying refused to confirm if Hu’s remarks reflected the official line.

Asked about Hu’s post, Hua said, “I think you should ask him directly. In China, there is freedom of speech.”

But Hu’s latest comments have been given prominent coverage in Chinese state media.

The Global Times published an editorial on Friday afternoon in both Chinese and English, doubling down on the issue of nuclear armament.

“China needs to prepare for a long-

The CCP’s lying and lack of remorse for the China Virus should remind us that the CCP ... may have little regard for using nuclear or biological weapons on its enemies.

Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center

term challenge,” said the English-language editorial, adding that “we should strengthen and enhance our core scientific technology and military strategic power.”

“Although the U.S. advantage in terms of conventional military strength in China’s offshore waters is dwindling, its superiority in nuclear weapons remains overwhelming, which is the biggest pillar that bolsters U.S. military arrogance toward China,” it said.

“Therefore, it’s an urgent task for China to expand its nuclear arsenal and strengthen its strategic strike capacities,” concluded the editorial, which was widely re-posted on other mainland Chinese news portals.

The paper’s English-language edition also published a full translation of Hu’s Weibo post, and an article quoting Chinese military experts as saying that “it is possible that China and the U.S. might engage in a regional conflict,” and that “If a nuclear weapon is dropped on China, Chinese nuclear weapons must be sufficient to wipe out the enemy in retaliation.”

Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, told The Epoch Times that these actions were likely indicative of the Party’s intentions. “Global Times editor-in-chief Hu Xijin’s Weibo posting, the Global Times verbatim reprint, then an expanded Global Times article on the need for China to significantly expand its nuclear arsenal is about as close to a Chinese Communist Party press release on this subject we will ever get,” he said in an email.

Nuclear Threats

Hu’s aggressive remarks came after U.S. President Donald Trump called for “effective arms control” that includes China and Russia, during a phone call on Thursday with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

Trump has repeatedly argued for China to join the United States and Russia in an arms control accord to replace the 2010 New START treaty between Washington and Moscow that will expire in February 2021.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimated last June that China might have about

290 nuclear warheads. But Joseph Bosco, a former China country desk officer at the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, said the regime may have well over 1,000 nuclear weapons already.

“As Russia and the U.S. have been reducing their numbers (at least Washington has, we can never be sure of Moscow’s cheating either), China has been building up its arsenal, with the apparent goal of meeting or surpassing their nuclear competitors,” Bosco wrote in an email to The Epoch Times.

The Chinese regime has repeatedly rejected Trump’s arms control proposal, arguing that its nuclear force is “defensive” and “poses no threat.”

But senior PLA officers have previously issued threats that Beijing may launch nuclear attacks on the United States.

Zhu Chenghu, a PLA major general and dean of the Defense Affairs Institute for China’s National Defense University, told the Wall Street Journal in 2005, “If the Americans draw their missiles and position-guided ammunition on to the target zone on China’s territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons.”

He added that the Chinese “will prepare ourselves for the destruction of all of the cities east of Xi’an. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds ... of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese.”

In 1995, PLA general Xiong Guangkai told Chas Freeman, who was previously an assistant secretary of defense at the U.S. Department of Defense, that China would attack the United States—possibly with nuclear weapons—if a war over Taiwan broke out.

These were not just empty threats, according to Rick Fisher.

“The CCP’s lying and lack of remorse for the China Virus [commonly known as novel coronavirus] should remind us that the CCP ... may have little regard for using nuclear or biological weapons on its enemies,” Fisher told The Epoch Times.

“Right now, the main enemies of the CCP are the nations now uniting to deny the CCP what it wants most: global hegemony, control of global prosperity and sovereignty,” he said.

Reuters contributed to this report.



A mobile device store in Shanghai on Sept. 25, 2013.



TRUTH *and* TRADITION

COVERING IMPORTANT NEWS OTHER MEDIA IGNORE

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THE CHINESE COMMUNIST THREAT
FOR THE PAST 18 YEARS

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