

WEEK 29, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

# CHINA INSIDER



## WEAPONIZING FACEBOOK

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS REVEAL'S  
BEIJING'S PROPAGANDA PLAYBOOK

See Page 2



## PROPAGANDA

# Beijing Weaponizes Facebook to Push Taiwan Agenda: Leaked Documents

The Chinese regime has begun using Facebook to amplify its propaganda that Taiwan belongs to China, according to leaked documents obtained by The Epoch Times. Beijing claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory despite Taiwan having its own military, democratically-elected government, and currency.

Researchers and Taiwanese authorities have previously highlighted indirect attempts to sway Taiwan voters to elect pro-Beijing political candidates into office—including by spreading disinformation on Facebook—efforts that align with Beijing's goals of convincing Taiwanese people to accept unification with the mainland.

The documents are the first of its kind to confirm the Chinese regime's direct hand in creating and spreading such propaganda on Facebook, fanning pro-unification sentiments.

The documents from the Beijing city government, dated in early June and presented as reports to higher-ups to show off their "accomplishments," provide evidence that the regime is using various proxy Facebook pages to promote Beijing's claim of sovereignty and the idea of a military invasion of Taiwan.

From May 25 to June 8, the platforms posted at least 74 posts across four pages, designed to "deflate the insolent air of the pro-independence Taiwan groups and draw a contrast to the outbreak handling between

The documents are the first of its kind to confirm the Chinese regime's direct hand in creating and spreading such propaganda on Facebook, fanning pro-unification sentiments.

A screenshot of a June 2, 2020 video created by Beijing officials touting China's military preparedness against Taiwan.

China, U.S., and Taiwan, thereby to demonstrate the advantages of our system," according to the document. The term "pro-independence" has been a pro-forma accusation for Beijing to frame individuals and acts that demonstrate pride or solidarity for Taiwan identity—such as waving Taiwanese flags.

The pages have obscure names, with a modest following that vary from as low as a few hundred to more than 8,000 followers. But the effort has proved rewarding: Five of the best-performing videos from one page received more than 30,000 likes, shares, comments, and clicks during the two-week period, according to the document.

### Military Provocation

The top video, demonstrating a hypothetical military attack on Taiwan, drew more than 137,000 user reactions over a span of 13 days and was watched 1.02 million times in that period. The video claims Chinese soldiers are invincible and that Taiwan "must unify" with the mainland. The video's title read, "If war breaks out tomorrow, here is the answer from China's People's Liberation Army (PLA)."

The video currently has about 800 comments and close to 2,000 likes. It cost about \$400 to boost the post, according to the document.

Another video, posted on June 1, declared that advanced torpedoes that the United States sold to Taiwan

in May were "rubbish" and no match for the Chinese military.

Separately, Hu Guangqu, an editor and reporter for the Taiwan-focused, state-affiliated news site Huaxia Jingwei through the end of 2019, presented a summary of the "Facebook special promotion work" in a June 7 document, touting that the videos have made a "significant impact," and have "drawn widespread attention from overseas netizens and ignited spirited discussions."

Hu conceded, however, that "most of them [overseas netizens] think the PLA doesn't dare to use military force" against Taiwan. Furthermore, he found that within the Facebook comments, many Taiwanese said that the United States would also come to Taiwan's aid in the event of a military invasion, he wrote in the document. This represents the majority of Taiwan youths "who have an extremely low sense of identification with the motherland," he concluded, describing such youths as "radical" forces.

"Only a small number of Taiwan internet users have an introspective awareness," Hu said.

Facebook didn't immediately respond to a request by The Epoch Times for comment about the influence pages.

### State Ties

Huaxia Jingwei, established in Beijing, has played an active role in projecting regime-endorsed narratives about Taiwan.

The website describes itself as having received "an avid interest and strong support" from the Taiwan Affairs Office and the State Council Information Office, both working organs of China's central government.

The news site also boasted being listed as a key government project in 2006 as a part of the Chinese regime's five-year plan. Wang Daohan, former president of the state-run, pro-unification Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, penned the website name himself.

Zhu Ming, a China-affairs commentator based in New York, called the site Beijing's "pro-unification propaganda front" operating through multiple proxies.

He noted that the web page uses traditional Chinese rather than the simplified script, the standardized characters in the mainland, suggesting their target audience are non-

mainland readers. Residents of Taiwan and Hong Kong predominantly use traditional characters.

### Propaganda Playbook

While the Chinese regime, through its ever-tightening internet censorship, has long blocked mainland users from accessing Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, it has also increasingly taken to these platforms to push its views to international audiences.

All major Chinese state-run media outlets have opened accounts on Twitter and Facebook. Some, such as China News Service and China Central Television, have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to boost their social media presence overseas.

In a public tender document on the Chinese central government's website dated Aug. 16, 2019, which has since been removed, China News Service sought 1.25 million yuan (\$176,461) from the government to boost its Twitter following by 580,000, and another 1.2 million yuan (\$169,403) for another 670,000 Facebook followers.

Chinese state media accounts were among four of the five fastest-growing media pages on Facebook from mid-November to mid-December 2019, the U.S.-based human rights watchdog Freedom House found. With each having tens of millions of followers, these accounts have a formidable online presence, making up three of the 10 largest media accounts on Facebook in 2019, according to social media marketing company Socialbakers.

Such covert influence led Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to suspend more than 1,000 accounts total in August 2019 in an effort to dismantle a Beijing-backed disinformation campaign that vilified Hong Kong protesters. A March study by investigative news site ProPublica also traced more than 10,000 suspended fake or hijacked Twitter accounts back to the Chinese regime, which carried out coordinated propaganda around Beijing's response to the virus outbreak.

In a March 2019 report titled "China's Pursuit of A New World Media Order," the international nonprofit Reporters Without Borders said the Chinese regime has been pouring as much as 10 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion) a year into promoting its image globally.

## OPINION

# Despite 'Decoupling' Narrative, Companies Still Flock to China

Lawmakers must do more to encourage shift in corporate behavior

FAN YU

"Decoupling" from China seems easier said than done.

Despite signals from U.S. political leaders to reduce economic and financial affiliation with the Chinese regime, in practice, U.S. financial institutions seem to be edging ever closer to Beijing.

On the ground, evidence suggests that there's more work to be done on the "decoupling" front. U.S. companies' investments in China continue at an elevated level, and financial firms are planning to expand their operational footprint within China.

President Donald Trump suggested in a mid-June tweet that "a complete decoupling from China" was on the table. Since then, administration officials have been careful to strike a more nuanced tone, given the precarious position of the phase one trade deal. Regardless, U.S. foreign policy has been trending toward cooler relations with Beijing on the economic front, with the administration barring federal pension funds from investing in Chinese companies, and ongoing investigations into Chinese companies listing their stock on U.S. markets.

Washington's recent sanctions of top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials over their involvement in persecuting Xinjiang Uyghur Muslims is just the latest policy action in that trend.

Reactions from China to date have been largely dismissive of decoupling, but Chinese commentators are increasingly preparing for the deterioration of economic relations. Zhou Li, a former deputy head of the Chinese Communist Party's International Liaison Department, recently caused a stir when he wrote an article warning that China must prepare for the consequences of economic decoupling, including shrinking foreign demand for Chinese goods, disruption of supply chains, and limited access to the U.S. dollar in foreign transactions.

Zhou's article appeared in a journal published by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University.

The increased willingness to open China's onshore financial markets to foreign companies may be one reason Beijing isn't budging on imposing the national security law over Hong Kong.

### Investment and Trade Realities

Despite the position of U.S. officials, on-the-ground investments and financial exchange are continuing unabated. With few legal or economic ramifications in place, it has been difficult to reverse the momentum of companies expanding into China.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) into China has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years. U.S. FDI into China was \$14 billion in 2019, slightly above 2018 levels, according to a recent report by the Rhodium Group.

"Much of the stability of U.S. investment into China was due to large multi-year greenfield projects geared towards meeting local demand in areas such as automotive and entertainment," Rhodium stated.

The year 2020 was shaping up to be a big one for U.S. corporate investments in China until the onset of the CCP virus pandemic. While China's outbound FDI into the United States halted in the first quarter, U.S. FDI into China continued with \$2.3 billion of announced projects, only slightly behind the \$2.9 billion quarterly pace from last year.

The data supports an April survey conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, with a majority (70 percent) of respondents stating that there are currently no plans to move supply chains out of China. Having said that, 52 percent of respondents said it was too early to tell whether they will do so in the future, while 8 percent said they would move out of China.

So as of April 2020, most businesses were either on the fence or weren't ready to commit.

### China's Market 'Liberalization' Tempts US Financial Firms

For financial institutions, the siren call of China's market is a huge hurdle. Financial institutions, unlike companies in other industries, were mostly locked out of the mainland Chinese market until recently.

Last year, Beijing loosened longstanding restrictions on foreign ownership of the Chinese financial sector, including brokerages, secu-

rities firms, and insurance companies. This recently has led to a huge increase in the number of U.S. companies flocking into China to take majority ownership of their local joint ventures.

Wall Street investment bank Goldman Sachs received approval in March to take majority ownership of its Chinese joint venture, Goldman Sachs Gao Hua Securities Co. It previously had only a 33 percent stake. JPMorgan Chase received permission from Beijing regulators in June to begin operating a fully foreign-owned Chinese subsidiary.

On the payments front, credit card issuer American Express in June received approval to operate a Chinese credit card clearing operation, becoming the first U.S. credit card issuer to enter the Chinese market. Competitors MasterCard and Visa have also applied and are awaiting permission.

PayPal last year became the first foreign digital payments provider to receive permission to operate in China, a market currently dominated by Chinese technology giants Tencent and Alibaba.

One area that was massively holding back China's onshore capital markets was the quality of its rating agencies. Earlier this year, Fitch Ratings received a license to start a Chinese subsidiary to rate bonds in China, following the footsteps of S&P Global last year.

The increased willingness to open China's onshore financial markets to foreign companies may be one reason Beijing isn't budging on imposing the national security law over Hong Kong. With enough foreign banks, investment firms, and payment providers in its fold, Beijing has less need for Hong Kong to act as a financial pipeline between China and the West.

The reality is, U.S. officials and lawmakers have much work to do to keep U.S. companies home. If the administration is serious about reversing this ongoing trend, legislation and economic incentives—beyond rhetoric or moral obligation—must be established. And quickly.

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



The office of a locally incorporated JPMorgan Chase Bank in Beijing on Oct. 11, 2007.



SCREENSHOT VIA FACEBOOK

SAMIRA BOUADU/THE EPOCH TIMES



Falun Gong practitioners take part in a candlelight vigil commemorating the 20th anniversary of the persecution of Falun Gong in China, on the West Lawn of Capitol Hill in Washington, on July 18, 2019.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

## Chinese Officials Sanctioned by US for Xinjiang Abuses Have History of Human Rights Crimes

EVA FU

Persecuting Uyghur Muslims in China's far-western region of Xinjiang is but one of a slew of human rights abuses by four Chinese officials who were recently sanctioned by the U.S. administration.

The sanctions, imposed under the Global Magnitsky Act on July 9, barred four Chinese officials, as well as their immediate family members, from entering the United States. The sanctions will also block U.S. properties that are under the individuals' names and prohibit U.S. transactions with them, the U.S. Treasury Department said.

In Xinjiang, home to roughly 11 million Uyghurs, at least 1 million Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslim minorities have been detained within internment camps and subjected to torture and political indoctrination in an effort to coerce them into giving up their faith. But such persecution is not confined to Xinjiang.

Human rights reports and Chinese government records have revealed a string of human rights abuses carried out under the officials' watch, targeting human rights defenders and faith groups, including adherents of Falun Gong.

Also known as Falun Dafa, the mind and body meditation based on moral principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance has faced brutal persecution since 1999. Millions have likely been detained over the past two decades, with hundreds of thousands tortured, according to estimates by the Falun Dafa Information Center.

Minghui.org, a U.S.-based website that serves as a clearinghouse for information about the persecution in China, has confirmed the deaths of at least 4,500 adherents, though it is difficult to transmit sensitive information out of China. The true numbers are likely to be much higher.

Human rights experts say that the Chinese regime's experience with suppressing Falun Gong became a template for authorities in Xinjiang to suppress Uyghur and other Muslim minorities.

**The Anti-Falun Gong Playbook**  
Chen Quanguo, Xinjiang's Chinese

Police and neighborhood committee officials in Xinjiang frequently break into local Falun Gong practitioners' homes and photograph them to update the government's facial recognition database.

Communist Party boss and the highest-ranking Chinese official to be hit with U.S. sanctions, began persecuting Falun Gong practitioners as a senior official in his hometown in Henan Province.

From 2000 to 2005, he rose through the ranks by participating in the persecution, eventually becoming vice Party secretary of Henan's standing committee. Chen had oversight over the destruction of Falun Gong flyers, books, and CDs, as well as ousting government officials who practiced Falun Gong. The Wall Street Journal reported in 2019, citing provincial records. The government reports appear to have been deleted since.

After Chen became Party boss of Xinjiang in 2016, the period marked "the most severe persecution" for Falun Gong practitioners in the region, who risked getting arrested while taking public transport, reporting to work, or visiting government offices for personal affairs, according to Minghui.org.

Before and after the Party's key convocation, the 19th National Congress, in 2017, Xinjiang police questioned all local Falun Gong adherents, detaining those who refused to give up their beliefs or put down their names on a wanted list. Some were also placed under house arrest, according to a 2018 Minghui report. Practitioners from other areas who were passing through Xinjiang security checkpoints were also arrested, it noted.

In 2017, the region ramped up its security spending by more than 27.5 billion yuan (\$3.93 billion)—nearly double the figure of the year prior, government budgets show. While the Xinjiang government didn't specify where the funding went, the region has since seen a surge in surveillance camera policing, phone monitoring, and DNA data collection.

Over the past three years, Falun Gong practitioners in Xinjiang also faced arrests for reasons including having "incorrect thoughts," refusing to open the door for the police, or using other mobile apps than WeChat, the ubiquitous, government-supported Chinese messaging app—which researchers say has been gathering data from users both in mainland China and abroad to refine its censorship mechanisms.

Among the arrestees was 90-year-old Yan Yixue, who has been held incommunicado since shortly before the Party convened its annual Two Sessions in late May. In 2018, she was detained for a year in a brainwashing center, where police beat her for practicing Falun Gong exercises while incarcerated. She was cuffed onto an iron stool, unable to move, for nearly half a month. She staged a hunger strike in protest, according to Minghui.org.

Police and neighborhood committee officials in Xinjiang also frequently break into local Falun Gong practitioners' homes and photograph them to update the government's facial recognition database, according to Minghui.org.

Sarah Cook, a China analyst at the human rights group Freedom House, has previously written essays analyzing the similar patterns in persecution of Falun Gong practitioners versus Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, stating that authorities are following an "anti-Falun Gong playbook in Xinjiang."

"It's like any kind of project management. Once you've done it before, it goes that much faster the second time," Cook told The Epoch Times in a previous interview. "They know exactly what they're doing."

Two other officials on the U.S. sanctions list, Zhu Hailun, the former deputy Party boss in Xinjiang, and Wang Mingshan, head of the region's public security bureau (akin to police), were also involved in the persecution of Falun Gong, according to research by the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong, a U.S.-based nonprofit.

The organization linked at least one death to Wang: 77-year-old Sheng Kezhi, a Falun Gong practitioner in the Xinjiang capital of Urumqi. His wife and daughter, also Falun Gong adherents, suffered years of extrajudicial detention. After his wife was again detained in 2012, Sheng died from the stress.

"What the Chinese Communist Party is doing to their own people is sickening," Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) said in a press release following news of the sanctions, adding, "We need to do more to highlight the CCP's atrocities until they are held fully to account for their abuses."

# The Legacy of a Failing Campaign of Evil

How the persecution of Falun Gong is changing China—and the world

THOMAS STERLING

Commentary

People of the future will remember the date of July 20 with respect and admiration.

That's the date on which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began a violent, far-reaching persecution campaign against the practitioners of Falun Gong, and their response to this persecution is changing China and the world for the better.

Why is the persecution of Falun Gong so memorable?

First, the number of people targeted was 70 million to 100 million, by the Chinese regime's own reckoning. In 1999, that's how many people were practicing Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, a traditional Chinese practice of meditation, gentle exercises, and teachings that emphasize the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.

Of course, the persecution indirectly targeted far more people, including family members, co-workers, neighbors, and friends of practitioners. We might even find that all of Chinese society has been affected when it's the case that everyone sees and feels widespread mistreatment and killing of innocent people among them. The early barrage of negative propaganda in Chinese media made sure that everyone knew about the persecution, albeit with "alternate facts" designed to turn people against Falun Gong.

Second, the length of time of the persecution and its attendant peaceful resistance by practitioners is 21 years and counting. Jiang Zemin, the jealous leader of the CCP in 1999, proclaimed that the Party would wipe out Falun Gong in 90 days.

It hasn't turned out quite as he planned.

Falun Gong practitioners have endured and persisted. While many have been detained and silenced, many other Falun Gong practitioners both inside and outside China have tenaciously worked to tell the true facts about the practice and the CCP's persecution, wherever and whenever they can.

Efforts range from handing out flyers in Chinese villages, to holding large colorful parades in many nations, to founding media companies—The Epoch Times was founded by Chinese-American Falun Gong practitioners wanting to give the world truthful news about China.

Third, the extraordinary peacefulness of practitioners in the face of extremely violent treatment is remarkable, if not unprecedented, in human history. Practitioners are taught, "Don't hit back when hit; don't curse back when cursed at," and they have upheld this when encountering the beatings, torture, solitary confinement, sexual abuse, force-feedings with human waste, killing of family members, and more.

In protests outside China that are directed at visiting CCP officials, when other groups may be shouting with anger, practitioners stand stock still and hold banners or meditate. Police officers on mounted horses have noted how their steeds calm down when they near the peaceful energy emanating from groups of Falun Gong practitioners on the streets.

Fourth, the nature of the violence

Falun Gong practitioners have modeled and lived out courage, independence of thought, and adherence to traditional moral principles, and they are inspiring others to follow suit. They have stood up, not only for their own rights, but also for the dignity of all human beings.

inflicted on Falun Gong practitioners in China has no precedent. The CCP's dark institutions wield torture methods from those of ancient times (water torture, fingernail tortures) to those of modern-day (electric shock batons) to damage the body. They use a range of psychological techniques to destroy the spirit. The number killed is unknown and unknowable.

Forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners was first reported in early 2006 by The Epoch Times, and has been confirmed by researchers, and has been denounced by governments of many nations. It has been described as a "cold genocide."

The CCP has honed a method for extracting vital organs from Falun Gong practitioners while they are still alive on the operating table so that waiting transplant recipients have the freshest organs possible. The recipients pay for the privilege, and everyone involved gets a cut, while the unwilling donors die a horrible death.

Organ harvesting is the systematic killing of human beings for profit, using their bodies as commodities. The CCP has built entire hospital wings dedicated to this ghoulish commerce. And it has extended the pool of donors to other persecuted groups in China, such as Uyghurs and Christians.

Fifth, the international reach of the persecution has taken global the CCP's gross violations of human rights. Falun Gong practitioners in any country outside China are monitored and surveilled, and if they have family in China, the family members are visited and threatened by security officials.

Chinese embassies and consulates worldwide have been enlisted to viciously defame Falun Gong. They have threatened small-town mayors and congresspersons alike not to issue proclamations supporting celebrations of the May 13 World Falun Dafa Day. They have organized (and paid) vocal and sometimes violent protesters to disrupt Falun Gong public activities.

By coercing major corporations and national governments to stay silent on Falun Gong if they want to do business with China,

they have damaged public morality and induced many people to sell out their own and their organizations' principles. The CCP has bought tacit consent to such a large-scale human rights abuse, but the higher price is paid by those who compromise their respect for human life.

**Hope for the Future**

In the 70 years that the CCP has ruled over China, no one has ever resisted its soul-killing rule in the way that Falun Gong has. Falun Gong practitioners have maintained their integrity and their beliefs, and have grown in collective strength even as many individuals have been slaughtered.

Falun Gong practitioners have never sought political influence or changes (their activism against the CCP uses civil disobedience to end an evil persecution), but by their conduct, they have pointed a way to peaceful, positive change in China. Numerous human rights lawyers in China and elsewhere, inspired by the righteousness and dignity of Falun Gong practitioners, have taken up their cases despite long odds of winning in Chinese courts.

The people of Hong Kong have watched Falun Gong practitioners' upright resistance to tyranny, observing at close range the actions of local practitioners for two decades. And the people of Hong Kong now understand, as the CCP moves to snatch away their freedoms, what practitioners were talking about all those years, and are embracing the slogan, "Heaven Destroys the Communist Party."

Falun Gong practitioners have modeled and lived out courage, independence of thought, and adherence to traditional moral principles, and they are inspiring others to follow suit. They have stood up, not only for their own rights, but also for the dignity of all human beings.

**Reckoning for the CCP**

The CCP has expended vast resources in 21 years of persecuting Falun Gong. In the beginning, they thought it would be a quick, decisive, and inexpensive process of elimination. But Falun Gong prac-

tioners, with few tangible resources, have done things with their hearts. As they remain unwavering in their beliefs, people can see, and will eventually see even more clearly, what tips the scales.

The CCP is the preeminent force for evil in the world today. By resisting this evil force, Falun Gong practitioners are showing that righteousness can overcome evil.

Since 2004, Falun Gong practitioners have walked every city street and traveled to every village and every populated hill and vale in China, distributing the book "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," published by The Epoch Times. The book carries the inscriptions, "A book that has shocked all Chinese around the world" and "A book that is disintegrating the Communist Party."

Thanks to the book, and the efforts of Falun Gong practitioners to explain to Chinese people the deceit, mass killings, and other destructive aspects of the CCP, more than 350 million people have quit the party and/or the Communist Youth League and Young Pioneers.

The CCP has been quietly hollowed out from the inside. Those who remain in the party, as well as those who stand with it or offer it moral support, will suffer the consequences of being part of its fabric as it comes apart.

With all the internal pressures (more and bigger natural disasters, the CCP virus, protests, Hong Kong) and external pressures (growing opposition from other national governments, diminishing trade income, public awareness), it does not take a great deal of foresight to see the picture: the CCP is not long for this earth.

As the CCP collapses, the righteous, courageous, positive actions of Falun Gong practitioners since July 20, 1999, will inspire the world's good people. So will Falun Gong's beliefs, including the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.

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

COURTESY OF TUIDANG CENTER



## ENVIRONMENT

# Disasters Rage Across China, Affecting 10s of Millions

EVA FU

China, still grappling with the CCP virus pandemic, has been hit with wave after wave of natural disasters.

Weeks of torrential rainfall has sparked some of the worst flooding in decades, wreaking havoc in 26 provinces across central and southern China and disrupting the lives of more than 19 million people, according to authorities.

In recent weeks, hailstorms and earthquakes have also struck parts of the country, and swarming locusts and animal-borne diseases have only added to the country's woes.

Close to 50 million Chinese have been affected by some form of natural catastrophe in the first half of the year, according to China's emergency management authorities. Official tallies stated that the disasters have left 271 dead or missing, and displaced another 914,000 but the true numbers are likely far higher, given officials' tendency to cover up information.

## 'Come See the Ocean'

Almost daily rainfall across large swaths of China since June has caused around 300 rivers to exceed warning levels and prompted dozens of cities to send emergency alerts. Citizens have recounted houses and cars being washed away in the stormwater.

Hubei, the central Chinese province where the capital, Wuhan, was ground zero of the virus outbreak, was particularly hard-hit by the downpours. Unprecedented amounts of rainfall have paralyzed hundreds of roads, overwhelmed five major lakes in the region, and caused nearly 1,100 reservoirs to overflow, according to local authorities.

"Come see the ocean in Wuhan," one local said, in a video showing knee-high water in the road.

In Shanghai, a trio of torrential rains, battering wind, and roaring thunder shook residents wide awake early on July 6. The accumu-

lated rainwater on the rooftop of a shopping mall began to spill over, while water gushed from a man-hole cover, according to accounts from locals and videos shared online. In the megacity of Chongqing in southwestern China, muddy water spilled from a third-floor window of a residential building, forming an artificial waterfall.

If the trend continues, locals and experts worry that the Three Gorges Dam, one of the world's largest, may burst because of increasing water pressure, putting hundreds of millions who live along the Yangtze River at risk.

Severe flooding in a county in the eastern province of Anhui has caused the national college entrance exam—already postponed for a month due to the virus—to be further delayed, after only a quarter of the 2,000 registered students managed to show up, some of them by boat.

"Our home could be in danger any time," said Ms. Deng, a resident from Huangshan city, a mountainous tourist attraction in Anhui. Afraid that floodwaters could pour into her house, she has been unable to sleep at night, she told The Epoch Times. Local floodwaters caused a road to the tourist site to collapse and crushed a tunnel underneath, creating a gaping hole of more than seven meters (23 feet).

She says she's closely watching for any signs of water.

"The rain is too mighty. If you lose attention for even just 10 minutes, the house will be drowned," she said, noting that more rain is forecast for the coming days.

## Other Crises

Swarms of locusts have laid waste to crops in multiple agricultural provinces since June—some of which were already battered by flooding.

In Quanzhou, a southern agricultural county in flood-hit city of Guilin, 10 days of locust invasions have destroyed corn and grain fields, as well as orange and willow

trees that were planted along river banks to prevent flooding, according to villagers.

"Even the leaves were not spared," Mr. Zhao, a local farmer, told The Epoch Times. In early June, a locust invasion in Hunan Province caused residents to hide at home and tightly shut their windows, as the insects swarmed.

While critics and locals have raised concerns about the possibility of a food crisis due to the recent disasters, China's top agricultural expert Yuan Longping rejects the assertion. Officials from Chengdu city in Sichuan have issued a notice encouraging villagers to convert fruit orchards into rice paddies, which suggests such a food shortage.

Meanwhile, the African swine fever, which first broke out among China's hog population in August 2018, has again emerged in nine Chinese provinces, including Hubei, Yunnan, and Jiangsu. According to a June 29 study published in the U.S.-based "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" journal, Chinese researchers also identified a swine flu virus named G4, which can be transmitted among humans.

The virus evolved from the H1N1 strain, which caused a global flu pandemic in 2009, and has been detected in over 30,000 hogs in 10 provinces in recent years.

Authorities in Inner Mongolia have issued a warning after a person was hospitalized, and suspected of contracting the bubonic plague, the cause for the Black Death pandemic more than 670 years ago.

A city in southwestern Guizhou Province, which also recorded heavy rainfall, experienced two small-scale earthquakes on July 2, while northern cities including Beijing and Baoding in neighboring Hebei Province saw hailstones carpeting the ground on July 1 and 5. And in late June, a hailstorm in Beijing continued for seven hours, sending down hail the size of eggs that resembled the shape of a virus.

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Almost daily rainfall across large swaths of China since last month has caused around 300 rivers to exceed warning levels.



A pavilion partially submerged in floodwaters on the banks of the Yangtze River after heavy rain in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on July 6, 2020.

SAMIRA BOUJAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES



Political commentator and China analyst Gordon Chang speaks during a discussion hosted by The Committee on the Present Danger: China, at the CPAC convention in National Harbor, Md., on Feb. 27, 2020.

## Chinese Regime 'Lashing Out' at the World China Analyst Gordon Chang

JAN JEKIELEK &amp; IRENE LUO

"What we're seeing right now is a China which is lashing out at everybody," said China analyst Gordon Chang.

In addition to its encroachments on Hong Kong and the first fatal border clash with India in 45 years, "you've got the boat bumping and other incidents in the South China Sea, East China Sea; the increased tempo of dangerous intercepts of the U.S. Navy in the global commons; the repeated threats to invade Taiwan; all of these hostile words, these disinformation campaigns directed against the United States and others," Chang said.

The Chinese communist regime has become increasingly belligerent globally, and it "believes it can do what it wants," Chang said, in an interview with The Epoch Times for the "American Thought Leaders" program.

"We have to teach China for the first time that our warnings actually mean something," Chang said.

To him, the current situation resembles the late 1930s, when Nazi Germany became increasingly brazen, remilitarizing its Rhineland border with France in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, annexing Austria, taking over Czechoslovakia, and demanding territory from Lithuania and Poland.

"We get to the summer of 1939. Hitler is threatening to invade Poland," while Britain and France warn that they would declare war on Germany. "We know from the German archives that Hitler didn't believe London and Paris. And why should he?" Chang said. "They were issuing these series of warnings and not doing anything about it."

Similarly, "the risk of miscalculation on the part of China is extremely high, especially because they have an aggressive leader," Chang said. "This is an exceedingly dangerous time."

## A 'Draconian' National Security Law

On June 30, Beijing's rubber-stamp parliament pushed through a national security law criminalizing secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces in Hong Kong. In effect, it "gives Beijing the right to do anything it wants," Chang said.

"People say—and I think they're right—that this is not just a law. This is the end of law," Chang said.

After the law was passed, Beijing swiftly converted a skyscraper hotel into the headquarters of a powerful new state

CHINA  
PresentDangerChina.org

COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER: CHINA  
PresentDangerChina.org

COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER: CHINA  
PresentDangerChina.org

security agency, which can operate free of any constraints from Hong Kong law or local authorities. Some critics have likened it to the Gestapo.

It has issued new rules giving Hong Kong police broad new powers to implement the national security law, including "warrantless searches, freezing of assets; they can demand that internet companies remove content; they can demand that organizations outside of Hong Kong actually turn over material—though I don't know how they're going to enforce that. But nonetheless, its powers are extremely broad," Chang said.

"And as we're going to find out, its powers are going to get broader and broader over time."

## Relentless Attacks

While it stamps down on freedoms in Hong Kong, the Chinese regime is also engaging in a sustained campaign of espionage and subversion of the United States, Chang noted.

"Every single day, we're subject to an existential challenge from China," Chang said.

In a July 7 speech, FBI Director Christopher Wray revealed that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) opens a new China-related investigation about once every ten hours. Almost half of the FBI's nearly 5,000 counterintelligence investigations are connected to China, he added, as the FBI counters the Chinese regime's efforts to steal U.S. technology and influence U.S. policymakers.

Chinese IP theft costs the U.S. economy over \$225 billion annually, and may amount to as much as \$600 billion, according to a report by The Commission on the Theft of American Intellectual Property.

Chinese-owned apps like TikTok are facing increased scrutiny globally, as experts say they can be used to collect data for the Chinese Communist Party. According to Chinese law, all Chinese companies are obligated to cooperate with Chinese intelligence operations and hand over information if asked.

Security researchers have found TikTok secretly accessing the clipboard on Apple phones. This means TikTok is able to see any text a user copied onto the clipboard, including potentially sensitive information.

"All of this data that TikTok and other Chinese apps accumulate is then fed into China's artificial intelligence systems," Chang said. "The more data you put into an AI system, the better it will operate."

Such information is also likely used by the regime to identify potential

targets and vulnerabilities to exploit, Chang said.

In 2015, Chinese state-sponsored hackers stole 21.5 million background checks from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management on current and former employees. That same year, Chinese hackers breached the systems of healthcare giant Anthem, stealing the personal medical information of nearly 80 million Americans.

"China is relentlessly attacking American society," Chang said. And "the only way to protect ourselves is to decouple."

## A Two-Faced Regime

On July 9, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi called for "peaceful coexistence" with the United States and said "China never intends to challenge or replace the U.S. and has no intention to engage in an all-out confrontation with the U.S."

Chang wasn't convinced. "This is always China's line: That they want to cooperate. They believe in a shared humanity, all the rest of it." But actions speak far louder than words, Chang said.

"We have seen unrelenting attacks on the American Republic and indeed on the international community as a whole," Chang said.

Besides its aggression globally, the Chinese Communist Party is committing crimes against humanity against its own populace, from the Tibetans to the Uyghurs, Chang said. In Xinjiang, the regime has forced Uyghurs into abortion or sterilization procedures and imprisoned at least one million Uyghurs—atrocities that amount to genocide in Chang's view.

"It's important that the United States and other countries start to cut their relations with China because we cannot afford to deal with a regime like that," Chang said.

The regime's multi-week coverup of the coronavirus outbreak, which facilitated the spread of a devastating global pandemic, is further evidence that the Chinese authorities can never be trusted, in Chang's view.

"I think the only way that China can regain the trust of the United States and the international community is to get rid of communism, and establish a multi-party democracy and a free economy," Chang said.

"We want to work with China. We want to see China succeed and prosper. But we don't want to see a militant regime take over the world."

American Thought Leaders is an Epoch Times show available on Facebook, YouTube, and The Epoch Times website.

We have to teach China for the first time that our warnings actually mean something.

Gordon Chang, China expert



# Bring Home the Magic of Shen Yun!

