WEEK 39, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

GINA INSIDER

A researcher works in a lab at the Yisheng Biopharma company in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China, on June 10, 2020. The company is one of a number in China trying to develop a vaccine for COVID-19.

BEIJING'S

ACCESS TO THE VACCINE COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

See Page 2

OPINION

China's Cynical 'Pandemic Diplomacy'

Beijing targets strategic nations, regions with vaccine access but it comes with strings attached, unanswered questions



A worker tests an experimental vaccine for the COVID-19 at the Sinovac Biotech facilities in Beijing on April 29, 2020.

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JAMES GORRIE



Is China leveraging its pandemic in new ways? It appears that Beijing is taking a page out of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

debt-trap strategy and applying it to countries victimized by the CCP virus (novel coronavirus). It's viral pandemic diplomacy at its

Another Debt Trap?

China's BRI strategy has been to loan poorer nations money that they can't pay back. China then collects on the debt by taking ownership of ports and parking its navy there, and perhaps build a sprawling military base on the nations' soil, whether it's wanted or not.

Could Beijing's vaccine diplomacy be just as simple?

Could the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have hatched the idea to initiate a global pandemic and then sell or even give the vaccine to the poorer countries it wishes to exploit or dominate militarily?

For those nations that can't afford the billion-dollar price tag, you offer to loan them the money for the vaccine that you know they can't repay. Then, when the poor countries default on the debt, China ends up owning infrastructure, utilities, or

farmland in the host countries. To paraphrase "The Godfather," it sounds a lot like, "an offer they can't refuse."

Strategic Vaccine Offers

This latest twist in the CCP's power calculus is, in many cases, aimed at countries aligned with the United States or of strategic importance to China, or both.

A big target, for example, is Latin American and Caribbean nations. According to the Mexican foreign affairs ministry, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi conducted a virtual meeting with Latin American and Caribbean national leaders. In that meeting, China offered a \$1 billion loan for access to its vaccine. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador publicly thanked China after the loan and for other medical supplies that China has sent Mexico.

Undoubtedly, China plans to leverage this assistance for future expansion plans in America's geopolitical backyard and gain further influence at the expense of the United States. And it's no coincidence that neighboring Mexico would be a target. What could Mexico offer in return?

The opportunity for China to open

factories in Mexico? That would certainly nullify some of effectiveness of the tariffs against China,

much closer to home. Indonesia, for instance, which has challenged China's territorial claims in the South China Sea for years, now is singing a different tune. It wants

and needs a vaccine to the CCP virus, and knows that the CCP has a vaccine. Or, at least, the Indonesian government believes Beijing's claim that it has one.

In either case, a personal phone call between Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Indonesian President Joko Widodo has resulted in a promise by China to get the vaccine to Indonesia. What is uncertain is what Indonesia promised in return.

Perhaps one of the most important countries from a strategic point of view is the Philippines. That nation is located in the South China Sea and will be key to China's military dominance in the region. In fact, it's quite plausible that Beijing will eventually come to rule over it one way or another.

As in Latin America and the Caribbean, the target of China's pandemic policy with the Philippines is the U.S.-Philippines strategic relationship. Its proximity to China allows U.S. naval and ground forces a key staging area from which to counter Chinese military moves. From that perspective, China sees a major opportunity to end that threat.

That's because even though the U.S.-Philippine alliance goes back to 1951, the relationship has become much more tenuous over the past two decades. The closure of U.S. military bases in the late 1990s was followed up with a subsequent Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). The VFA replaced the former military treaties and lightened the Philippines' commitment to their alliance with the United States.

Duterte Having Second Thoughts? Then, in February, President Philippine Rodrigo Duterte notified Washington that it was terminating the VFA with the United States within 180

days. It's likely that Duterte's aim was to cut ties with Washington and move closer to Beijing. Undoubtedly, he saw a potential payoff in doing so, even if it's at the expense of his country's national security and sovereignty.

At the same time, it gave him room to negotiate with the United States as well as with China. Apparently, wouldn't it? We'll have to wait and see. however, Duterte has realized that On the other hand, it should be to a closer relationship with Beijing no one's surprise that Beijing is also comes with risks. China's militar pushing its pandemic diplomacy zation of the South China Sea, its treatment of Hong Kong, and growing belligerence toward Taiwan may have given the Philippine president second thoughts.

> That may explain why, in June, Duterte suspended—at least temporarily—the termination of the VFA with the United States.

Giving the Devil His Due?

There are several outcomes that remain to be seen from China's pandemic diplomacy, however.

To begin with, what political or military considerations will China manage to extract from the nations it has vaccinated? In what way will they threaten the United States? What potential U.S. response could there be? Perhaps just as critical, how will it be determined that China's vaccine is effective or if it is safe?

And, given China's record, why would the leaders in all of these countries trust China for a vaccine that, somehow, they have suddenly developed?

Furthermore, why would any leader trust the Chinese regime after it deceived the world about the existence of the pathogen to begin with, denied the source of it, and its human transmissibility?

Are these leaders living in denial? Or are they facing reality?

Is their willingness to believe China's claim to have a vaccine to the virus an acknowledgment of the likelihood that whoever created the virus would best know how to cure it? Give the Devil his due.

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

OPINION

When 'WeChat,' the Chinese Regime Listens

BOB FU

isney's remake of "Mulan" drew waves of criticism for filming near the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) mass internment camps for Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, a region in China's far west.

There, under increasing surveillance and repression, the predominantly Muslim, Turkic-speaking ethnic minority struggles to survive.

In the movie's credits, Disney thanked the very entities responsible for persecuting the Uyghurs, including the police bureau in Turpan, an ancient Silk Road city in eastern Xinjiang, home to the persecuted Uyghur population. U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) wrote on Twitter, "While the CCP is committing crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, Disney thanked four Xinjiang propaganda departments."

Trump's

proposed ban

on the CCP's

surveillance

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communist

citizens to

These CCP entities habitually lie to the world about human rights violations and threats to freedom of speech.

China's assaults on basic human rights aren't contained to the hapless Uyghurs in Xinjiang. CCP security agencies routinely suppress freedom of speech, both on and offline, through many invasive surveillance techniques, including their state-controlled social media tools, WeChat and TikTok. Several years ago, Gabriel, an

American friend with a heart for the Chinese people, personally experienced this threat when he traveled to China to help host a summer football camp for children. On the third day of camp, a group of Chinese agents from China's State Security (MSS), approached Gabriel. Officials confiscated his passport and transported him to a secret location for interrogation. There, they began bombarding my friend with a series of unscrupulous questions. "What is your relation to Bob

"Why would this Bob Fu guy promote your summer camp program on his WeChat site?" The MSS agents displayed a stack of printed documents.

These papers revealed all the WeChat group messages I had posted in Texas, endorsing Gabriel's summer football camps The CCP's public records show that Tencent Global, the parent company of WeChat, employs

more than 11,000 CCP mem-

bers. Inside as well as outside of China, these workers manage surveillance contents and control every WeChat user's data. In a sense, "made-in-China" social media apps such as We-Chat and Tiktok may be considered "quarterbacks"—the CCP's star players to advance their agenda in the expansive, critical, challenging technological standoff between China and the United States. As the CCP implements its integral surveillance in international strategic plays, this positions China as one of the

security threats. In response, President Donald Trump has threatened to completely ban WeChat and TikTok from the United States.

United States' primary national

Critics of Trump's proposed ban on WeChat and TikTok claim that this sanction would create an inconvenience for users inside the United States, violate American freedom of speech; and negatively affect U.S. corporations in China such as Apple, Ford, Walmart, and Disney.

These concerns can be easily answered. Instead of sacrificing America's security for convenience's sake, it would be wiser to utilize safer, more secure methods of communication such as WhatsApp.

As to freedom of speech, CCP officials through its "Great Firewall," have banned all U.S. so-

cial media platforms. The CCP is support and assistance to public the government repressing free speech, and they do so through state-controlled platforms such

> as WeChat and TikTok. American corporations with profits in China often work harder at cultivating their relationship with the CCP than at promoting American principles. For instance, they spend little time pressuring the CCP to lift the ban on popular social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google.

A U.S. ban on CCP-controlled social media would incentivize these corporations to advance freedom of speech globally. Trump's proposed ban on the CCP's surveillance tools on U.S. soil could ultimately help enable a billion Chinese citizens to access Google or Facebook accounts free from communist control.

Two years ago, CCP authorities arrested, prosecuted, and charged Liu Meiting and Han Lifang, a husband and wife from Shaanxi Province, with "inciting subversion of CCP State power." As "evidence" of this couple's "crimes," officials presented a message they each posted on their WeChat accounts. The Ministry of Public Security directly ordered officers to arrest the couple for sending a public letter to a U.S. diplomat via WeChat. The court ultimately sentenced Liu and Han to four and three years in prison, respectively Chinese national security-re-

lated laws compel WeChat employees to spy on others—even if they are unwilling to do so. Article 7 of China's National Intelligence Law states, "Any organization or citizen shall support, assist, and cooperate with state intelligence work in accordance with the law, and maintain the secrecy of all knowledge of state intelligence work."

Article 28 of China's Cybersecurity Law directs, "Network operators shall provide technical

security organs and national security organs that are safeguarding national security and investigating criminal activities in accordance with the law."

Article 11 of China's National Security Law states, "All citizens of the People's Republic of China ... shall have the responsibility and obligation to maintain national security."

Do you want all of your private conversations and personal data stored in the Communist Party's security agencies in Beijing? Is it right for the regime to imprison citizens like Liu and Han for simply expressing their opinions about the CCP's corruption on WeChat groups? Do you condone the kind of arbitrary detention and harassment of Americans that my friend Gabriel experienced?

If your answer is no to these questions, then you should applaud the courageous decision of the Trump administration to ban WeChat and other CCP spyware from America.

Instead of permitting the CCP to score another touchdown against Americans, it's time to sack their quarterback. The personal fouls of the CCP's egregious violations of international norms must be called out. They need to be tackled with the strictest enforcement possible, even if that means penalizing them with ejection from the U.S. playing field.

As long as WeChat operates in the United States under the repressive control of the CCP's dictatorship, neither we, our data, nor our country's national security will be safe.

Bob Fu, Ph.D., is a senior fellow for International Religious Freedom at Family Research Council and president of China Aid.

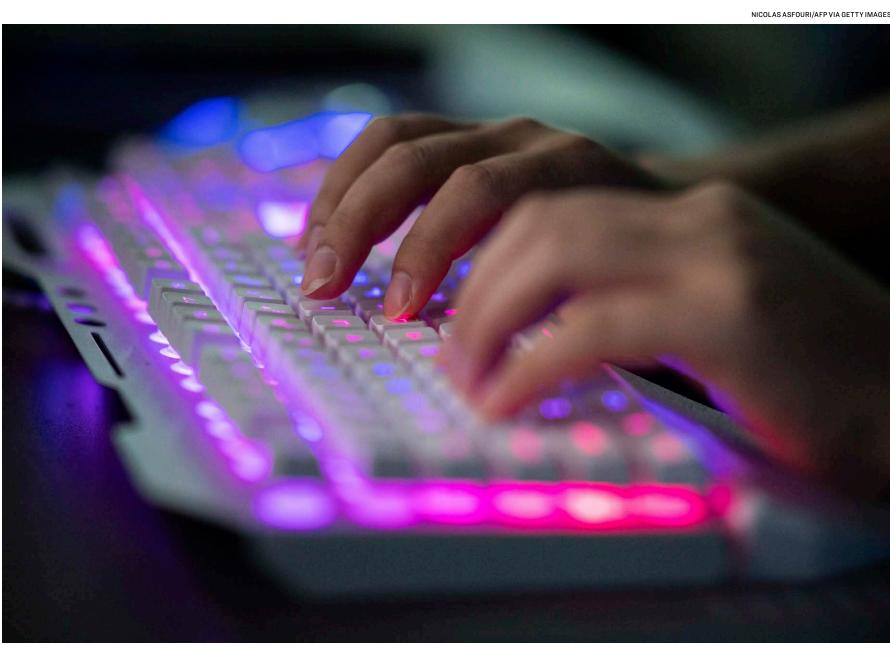
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The WeChat app is displayed in the App Store on an Apple iPhone in Washington on Aug. 7, 2020.

SURVEILLANCE

How Chinese Data Trove on 2 Million People Serves Beijing's Unrestricted Warfare



A Chinese worker uses his computer at an office in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, China, on Aug. 4, 2020.

CATHY HE

News Analysis Chinese database containing the personal information of millions of people around the _globe was recently leaked to Western media, offering a glimpse into the regime's vast ing foreigners.

A private Chinese company, Shenzhen Zhenhua Data Technology, had amassed a database with files on 2.4 million people, compiled mostly from open-source material such as social media posts and online data. A reconstruction of ten percent of the database by an Australian cybersecurity firm named Internet 2.0 revealed that it included records on about 52,000 Americans, 35,000 Australians, 9,700 Britons, and 5,000 Canadians.

People in the database range from ordinary business professionals to prominent figures such as U.S. naval officers, China watchers in Washington, members of the British royal family, and company leaders. The data cache also provides details on countries' infrastructure, movements of military assets, and public opinion analysis.

Zhenhua marketed the database, called the Overseas Key Information Database, to the Chinese military, government agencies, and commercial clients, according to The Washington Post. In company documents, it described itself as a patriotic firm, with the military as its main target customer.

The database was leaked by a source in China to American academic Christopher Balding, who was previously based in Vietnam but has since returned to the United States due to security concerns. He then gave it to Internet 2.0 for reconstruction and analysis. Details were published by a consortium of media outlets last week, including The Washington Post and Daily Telegraph in the UK.

Zhenhua, in a response to The Guardian, said "there is no database of 2 million people," and denied any links to the Chinese government or military. A representative for the company said that Zhenhua's customers were research organizations and business

Experts told The Epoch Times that such a denial was unsur-

Michael Shoebridge, director of defense at think tank Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), said the statement "cannot be taken at face value," given that to assist Chinese security and intelligence agencies, and they must publicly deny doing so.

Unrestricted Hybrid Warfare

Casey Fleming, CEO of intelligence and security strategy firm BlackOps Partners, said the intelligence gathered in the database is used to support the Chinese regime's "unrestricted hybrid warfare" operations. This includes espionage, covert overseas influence campaigns, and stealing foreign innovation and military technology.

Unrestricted hybrid warfare refers to a strategy crafted by two Chinese military colonels in the 1990s, which espouses using a series of unconventional tactics designed to accomplish the objectives of war without engaging in actual combat.

The ultimate goal of this strategy Fleming said, is to "destroy democracy for the takeover of Chinese communism globally."

Zhenhua's majority owner, Wang Xuefeng, a former IBM engineer, had previously posted on Chinese social media about waging "hybrid warfare" by manipulating public opinion and "psychological warfare," according to Australian broadcaster ABC.

Nicholas Eftimiades, a former U.S. senior intelligence official and author of the book "Chinese Intelligence Operations," said that the database would help Chinese intelligence to target individuals primed for recruitment or blackmail—those with "vulnerabilities" that can be exploited, such as "a need for money, [or] political feelings against the administration." For instance, the Chinese regime could look for social media posts that suggest dissatisfaction with

For influence operations, the pro-

the government or financial dif-

cess is similar: Chinese agencies would look for people who post views supportive of Beijing's policies, Eftimiades said. They would then work to support that person, their organization, and amplify

their views. Shoebridge pointed out that the database includes profiles on children of powerful people such as politicians and business executives, allowing the regime to target these individuals through vulnerabilities found in their offspring.

The database includes profiles on children of powerful people such as politicians and business executives, allowing the regime to target these individuals through vulnerabilities found in their offspring.

"That's a pretty disturbing potential use of data like that," he said. At the same time, many of these children may themselves become influential people later in life. And so "the ability to exploit and influence those individuals is much greater because you've got a much more comprehensive understanding of them over time," Shoebridge

Massive Data Collection The Zhenhua data leak provides but a small window into the Chi-

nese communist regime's overall data harvesting activities. "The scope is beyond most people's comprehension," Flem-

Shoebridge likened the database to a single plastic ball in a large ball pit. This dataset would be combined with data compiled by other Chinese entities to be used in a range of operations to further the regime's interests.

"It's the interaction of companies with data like this with other companies and government data that gives the power," he said.

This strategy is reflected in the regime's "civil-military fusion" doctrine, which seeks to leverage innovations by private enterprises to power military development, Shoebridge said.

An October 2019 report by ASPI said the regime is creating a "massive and global data-collection ecosystem" by harnessing the capabilities of state-owned enterprises and private Chinese technology firms. It cites the example of Global

Tone Communications Technology Co., a subsidiary of a Chines state-owned enterprise that is supervised by the regime's central propaganda department. The tech firm focuses on "big data" collection and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as facial recognition. It collects vast swathes of data around the world in more than 65 languages and processes it for use by Beijing for intelligence, security, and propaganda purposes.

Eftimiades believes there are likely dozens—if not hundreds—of Chinese companies involved in such big data collection to aid the regime. This doesn't include those run by China's security agencies, which is vacuuming up data on all 1.4 billion citizens via the country's sweeping high-tech surveillance

Chinese hackers have also stolen the personal data of tens of millions of Americans over the years, which are being fed to these databases in China and used to perfect AI tools, Eftimiades said. This includes the 2014 hack into the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), the federal government's personnel agency; the breach of credit reporting agency Equifax in 2017; and the 2016 cyberattack of health insurer Anthem.

The Epoch Times reported in February 2016, citing an insider source in China, that Chinese security agencies had built a database to handle the troves of stolen American personal information including sensitive personal information detailed in the security clearances of 21 million of current and former federal employees in the OPM hack, and personal records of nearly 80 million people from Anthem.

That database ran on powerful software capable of ingesting huge amounts of data, and then analyzed it for relationships between different individuals and events.

HUMAN RIGHTS

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 39, 2020

Chinese Consulate Directed NYPD Officer Who Was Charged With Spying for China: US Prosecutors

FRANK FANG

A New York Police Department (NYPD) officer's arrest has placed a spotlight on how the Chinese consulate seeks to infiltrate and influence local dissident com-

Baimadajie Angwang, a 33-yearold ethnic Tibetan and naturalized U.S. citizen, was arrested on federal charges for allegedly acting as an illegal agent for Beijing.

Federal investigators found that he was feeding intelligence to the Chinese consulate in New York City, including on the activities of ethnic Tibetans in the New York area. He also developed intelligence sources within Tibetan communities, and helped consular officials gain access to senior NYPD officials through invitations to official NYPD events, according to federal prosecutors.

Angwang was charged for acting as an illegal agent for China, committing wire fraud, making false statements, and obstructing an official proceeding. He is being held without bail.

If convicted of all these charges, he faces up to 55 years of imprisonment, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Though ethnically Tibetan, court documents show that Angwang's loyalty lies with the Chinese regime. In a 2018 conversation with his handler at the consulate, he described himself as an "asset" of the regime.

Since the Chinese Communist Party invaded the Tibet region, it has severely suppressed local customs and Tibetan Buddhist practices. Many Tibetans have fled persecution in China and thousands have settled in New York City.

Dorjee Tseten, executive director of Students for a Free Tibet, a New York-based advocacy group, said in a statement that the case "should be a wake-up call for all our leaders—at the federal, state and local level—about the alarming depth and reach of China's espionage operations."

He added that "Tibetans have long known the Chinese government is spying on our communities, even in a free country like the United States, and this incident shows the lengths to which Beijing would go to undermine the Free Tibet movement," which believes in political separation between China and Tibet.

Family Background

Angwang's family has extensive ties to both the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Chinese military, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Accord-



NYPD officer Baimadajie Angwang in an interview with NTD in Queens, New York, on Nov. 8, 2019.

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ing to the criminal complaint, his father has retired from the PLA while his mother is a retired Chinese government official. Meanwhile, his brother is currently a PLA reservist.

His parents are also members of the CCP, and the three family members live in China. Court documents did not indicate where in China.

United Front

Before his arrest, Angwang was assigned to NYPD's community affairs unit, serving as a liaison to a portion of Queens serviced by the 111th Precinct.

Angwang began acting at the direction and control of officials at the Chinese consulate in New York since at least 2014, according

His handler at the consulate was believed to be assigned to the "China Association for Preservation and Development of Tibetan Culture," a division of China's United Front Work Department (UFWD), according to Falun Gong

UFWD carries out foreign influence operations known as "United Front work" to "co-opt and neutralize sources of potential opposition" to the CCP, according to a 2018 report published by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC).

"United Front work serves to promote Beijing's preferred global narrative, pressure individuals living in free and open societies to self-censor and avoid discussing issues unfavorable to the CCP, and harass or undermine groups critical of Beijing's policies," the report explained.

In the United States, cultural and friendship associations are one of many local groups guided or funded by the UFWD.

Angwang regularly referred to the Chinese official connected to the UFWD as "Boss" and the two exchanged texts and talked on the phone on at least 55 occasions between June 2018 to March 2020, according to the criminal complaint. On at least one occasion, Angwang addressed the official as "big brother."

In a phone call in November 2018, Angwang suggested to the official that the latter needed to "develop" intelligence sources from Catholics, Muslims, or people of Hui ethnicity in the Tibetan

In another phone call in February 2019, Angwang identified a U.S. citizen of Tibetan ethnicity as a good intelligence source, who planned to run for political office again in the future after an unsuccessful campaign. Angwang said he would send information about the individual, including his past employment and family members, to the Chinese official.

The Epoch Times' sister media, New Tang Dynasty Television (NTD), was a topic of conversation between Angwang and the Chinese official during a phone call in November 2019.

In the call, Angwang sought permission from the Chinese official on whether he could appear on NTD's program "Xiaotian Interview," saying he didn't "dare to be too reckless." According to the criminal complaint, NTD asked the NYPD for an officer with fluency in the Mandarin dialect as a candidate for its interview, and the NYPD responded by asking Angwang if he could do it.

In response, the Chinese official told Angwang he "absolutely shouldn't do it" because "China is totally against [NTD]" due to its ties to Falun Gong.

"In the future, if you want to go back [to China] or something, it will have an enormous impact," the official said, warning Angwang about the consequences if he were to appear on the NTD program.

Incidentally, Angwang had appeared on NTD news segments in April 2019 and November 2019. But he did not appear on the Xiao-

"Once you go on their program, China does not differentiate whether you are FLG [Falun Gong] or not," the official added, before adding that "China has not eased up on FLG."

The Epoch Times and NTD were founded in 2000 and 2001 respectively by a group of Chinese-Americans who are adherents of the spiritual practice known as Falun Gong. They founded the media in order to bring a free press to China.

While The Epoch Times was founded by Falun Gong practitioners, it is an independent business that neither represents Falun Gong nor is owned by it.

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual practice with meditative exercises and moral teachings based on truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. According to the Falun Dafa Information Center, there were 70 million to 100 million adherents prior to the Chinese regime's persecution in July 1999. Since then, hundreds of thousands have been detained and tortured in jails, brainwashing centers, and labor camps.

The Chinese official asked Angwang to "come up with a suitable [reason]" to turn down NTD's interview request.

Angwang also asked the Chinese official if the presence of NTD reporters at NYPD press conferences would be "a problem." In reply, the Chinese official said: "You cannot block them from coming. It's freedom of the press."

According to the criminal complaint, Angwang informed his NYPD superiors that he did not want to be interviewed by NTD in January 2020.

It is unclear if officials at the New York Chinese consulate paid him for the information he provided. However, a conversation dated December 2018 between Angwang and the Chinese handler suggested that payments were made to Angwang.

During the phone call, Angwang said that he was willing to assist without the expectation of payment—"whatever is worth money or not worth money to your side."

Moreover, investigators uncovered financial ties between Angwang and China beginning in 2014. In January 2014, Angwang received two separate payments of \$50,000 and \$20,000 from an account at the Bank of China in New York.

In April 2016, Angwang wired \$100,000 from a U.S. bank account to a bank account in China held by his brother. Angwang wired an additional \$50,000 a month later to another Chinese account held by an unnamed individual. Also in May 2016, his brother wired Angwang \$49,985.



China's Park Project in Samoa Saddled With Quality Concerns: Leaked Documents

Investment is part of Beijing's ambitions to influence the region

NICOLE HAO

eijing's flagship foreign policy initiative, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has stirred controversy since its inception, with critics warning that the infrastructure projects place developing countries in a "debt trap" by offering unsustainable loans, while exploiting their natural resources to drive the Chinese economy.

Now, two letters from the South Pacific nation of Samoa have revealed how one Chinese construction project—being overseen by the government of Huizhou city in southern China—is overrun with quality problems and work practices that could harm the environment.

The letters and a set of internal documents from the Huizhou government—which were leaked to The Epoch Times by a trusted source—show that the Guangdong provincial government ordered the city to build projects in Samoa, which fit Beijing's political agenda. Huizhou is a municipal-level city in Guangdong Province.

The project is a friendship park in Samoa's capital, Apia. It was first announced in November 2015, as part of an agreement between Apia and Huizhou, and construction began in May 2018.

Beijing

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In August 2018, Samoa announced that it would join the BRI. Since then, the park project has become part of BRI.

An internal document sent to the Huizhou foreign affairs bureau on Dec. 4, 2019, from the city's housing and construction bureau noted that the total investment for the friendship park amounted to Financing terms are unclear.

The Huizhou and Samoan governments didn't immediately return requests by The Epoch Times for comment.

Complaints

The two letters were sent by Sa-



Samoa's government sent two letters to Huizhou city government in southern China's Guangdong Province in December 2019 and January 2020, in which the government complained about the BRI projects' quality.

moa's Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure. One, dated Dec. 20, 2019, was sent to the foreign affairs bureau of the Huizhou city government, while the second, dated Jan. 9, was addressed to the Shanghai Construction Group the firm that Huizhou contracted to build the friendship park—with the city copied on the letter.

The first letter listed 11 issues related to the park, which is located at the seaside Eleele Fou neighborhood and faces the Apia Harbor. Some were problems that the Chinese side had previously agreed to resolve but didn't, while other concerns were new, according to the letter.

Issues included rainwater stagnation at the car parking lot; a harbor lighthouse in need of repair; the lack of fencing around the lighthouse to prevent tourists from entering; continued excavation around a water pump house, which could cause a collapse; instead of local, traditional materials, to build a traditional Samoan thatched hut.

The Samoan ministry suggested ways to fix the issues. "We hope for Huizhou's favorable consideration to avoid any further delay to the project," it said.

The letter to Shanghai Construction Group criticized the company for not following conditions in the agreement, such as waste materials being "scattered around the site."

That was a "clear breach" of a commitment to dispose of waste materials at a local landfill, the let-

Improper "discharging of sediment from work activities" also caused soil to be washed into the lake. The erosion near the embankment caused "rocks and mud to break into the lake," which is a breach of the condition that "the proposed activity shall not have undue detrimental environment impact," the letter said.

The ministry asked the company to fix the issues "immediately." According to two internal documents from Huizhou city's foreign affairs bureau, Li Jianjun, director of the construction department at the housing and construction bureau, led two officials and three designers on a trip to Apia to resolve issues with the park from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2, 2019.

According to the person who leaked the documents to The Epoch Times, Shanghai Construction Group couldn't send its workers to Samoa on time because of the CCP virus pandemic.

The Chinese company didn't immediately return a request by The Epoch Times for comment.

BRI in Samoa

Beijing authorities set their eyes on fostering close ties with Samoa—a nation with voting power at international forums such as the United Nations, and which is situated near vast swaths of resource-rich ocean.

In May 2014, the BRI official website published a study about the importance of Samoa's location, two large islands that are located between Hawaii and New Zealand and about 100 miles west of American Samoa.

After Samoa signed on, Beijing planned to build at least two ports in the country. One is the Asau wharf on the northwest coast of Savai'i island; the other is Vaiusu port on the north-central coast of Upolu island.

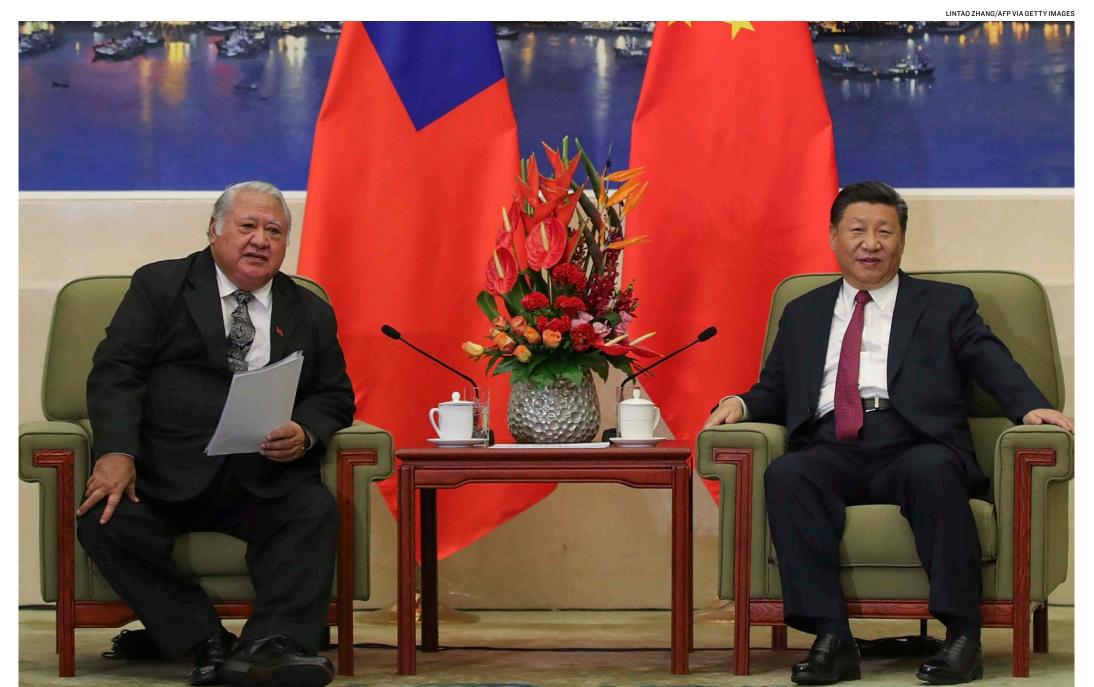
Experts grew concerned that the Chinese regime was seeking to increase its military presence in the Pacific through the Samoa investments. The Washington-based think tank the Brookings Institution published a July 20 analysis about the risks of China's activities in the South Pacific.

"The first risk, which has a low probability of occurring but would have a profound impact, is that China is trying to use its leverage through diplomacy, debt, trade, or elite capture to establish a military base somewhere in the South Pacific," the article stated.

It also warned that South Pacific nations "may be willing to align themselves with China in certain United Nations votes."

Samoan local newspaper Iniini Samoa cited its pro-Beijing Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi in June 2019 as saying China's investments were purely financial But the BRI projects have already

saddled Samoa with debt. Local media Loop Samoa, citing figures from Chao, reported in August 2019 that "38 percent of Samoa's \$1.1 billion national debt was owed to China." That figure is about half of the country's gross domestic product that year, according to the Samoa Bureau of Statistics.



Samoa's Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi meets Chinese leader Xi Jinping at the Great Hall Of The People in Beijing on Sept. 18, 2018.

CHINESE REGIME

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 39, 2020

Beijing Has No Way Out of the Crises It Faces: Chinese Scholar

NICOLE HAO

Nothing can help the Chinese communist regime as it battles with crises on multiple fronts, according to a Chinese scholar who earlier this year called on Chinese leader Xi Jinping to step down.

Leng Jiefu, a retired professor and former director of the politics faculty of Renmin University, a prestigious Chinese university, in April wrote a letter to Wang Yang, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a political advisory body, in which he suggested that Xi should resign in response to growing calls from the international community that the regime be held accountable for its role in causing the global spread of the CCP Virus.

He also urged the regime to adopt a democratic federal system, creating a "United States of China" to solve issues relating to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Uyghurs, and Tibetans.

The letter began circulating online in early September, attracting widespread attention among Chinese netizens.

Leng, in a recent interview with The Epoch Times, confirmed he sent the letter, but lamented that the recommendations were now "out of date" given a range of worrying developments in recent months.

"Now it's too late! Probably even federalism and Xi's regime can't solve the issues," he told The Epoch Times in a phone interview.

Leng pointed to a series of crises resulting from the regime's aggressions in Hong Kong and Taiwan, its repression of ethnic minorities, and deteriorating relations with other countries.

In Hong Kong, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) imposed a national security law which took effect in July, prompting sweeping international condemnation, sanctions from the United States, and broad backlash from the city's residents, he said.



The Chinese regime has also ratcheted up military activity in the Taiwan strait, spurring increased U.S. naval moves in

The best strategy is to let Xi Jinping resign from all his

Leng Jiefu in an April letter

In Inner Mongolia, the CCP recently introduced a policy eliminating Mongolian language teaching in classrooms, sparking widespread boycotts among locals and angering ethnic Mongolians around the world.

Overseas, Leng said the regime has seen worsening relations with a range of Western countries including the United States, Australia, Canada, and the Czech Republic.

change. Kennedy warned that a

sizeable portion of the IPO pro-

ceeds would end up in the in-

vestment portfolios of millions

The company should also be

blacklisted by the Commerce

Department as soon as possible,

He called on Trump to "encour-

age Americans to invest patrioti-

cally" and to deny the CCP "the

resources that enable it to oppress

More Chinese companies are

of American investors.

In his April letter, Leng wrote about how the regime should respond to rising demands from around the world calling for billions in compensation for Beijing's coverup of the CCP Virus resulting in its global spread.

PROVIDED TO THE EPOCH TIMES BY INTERVIEWEE

"How shall we deal with the compensation? Shall we fight all these countries?" Leng said in the letter. "[If we fight], we won't have any friends [in the world] but have a burden—North Korea." "The best strategy is to let Xi Jinping

resign from all his positions ... Then the pressure from the international community will be minimized ... At that time, the new regime leader can handle the foreign affairs easily," Leng added. Leng also addressed the Taiwan issue,

saying, "It's more and more impossible that we [mainland China] can unify Taiwan because Taiwan has the support

The CCP sees Taiwan as part of its own territory, even though the democratic island is self-ruled with its own government, military, and currency.

Leng said the reason why the United States supports Taiwan is because it supports democracy. He then suggested: "Adopting a democratic federal system is

the best solution to solve Taiwan issue." Such a federal system would see China divided into several regions, with each region governed by an autonomous regime. Each of these autonomous regimes would also fall under a federal administration in Beijing. By setting up a federal government, issues in Hong Kong and Xinjiang would be resolved Leng said.

"Granting Hongkongers autonomous rights can restore Hong Kong's status as a free port and develop its economy," Leng wrote. "The federal system can solve China's ethnic conflicts because the ethnic conflicts only can be solved by conciliation, not by suppression."

In contrast with official Chinese positions opposing the United States, Leng considers the country as China's "best friend."

"It hasn't invaded any of our land. The support we have received from the U.S. is more and bigger than the support from any other country [in history]," he wrote.

Leng also broached China's domestic issues, such as agriculture. In the last two decades, a growing number of Chinese farmers have become migrant workers flocking to the cities because Beijing didn't have policies to support farmers, he wrote.

Leng suggested that the regime create incentives to encourage farmers to stay in villages and spur agriculture.

This year, the CCP virus pandemic, flooding, droughts, and pests have devastated crops in the country. China is now grappling with food shortage and stepping up agriculture imports to feed

CHINESE STOCKS

Chinese Fintech Giant Poses Risks to US Investors, Advocacy Group Warns

EMEL AKAN

iate of Chinese giant Alibaba is set to go public, and a sizeable portion of the funds raised are to come from U.S. investors, raising alarms in Washington.

Chinese financial technology firm Ant Group Co. is preparing for an initial public offering in Shanghai and Hong Kong next month. Controlled by billionaire Iack Ma, founder of Alibaba, the fintech company aims for an approximately \$225 billion valuation through the public offering.

Ant Group is the parent company of China's largest digital payment platform, Alipay, which has 1.2 billion users, serving mainly Chinese customers. Its largest competitor, PayPal, by contrast, serves 346 million active users across 190 countries.

The leading U.S. investment banks Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, and Citigroup are joint sponsors of Ant Group's IPO.

The Committee on the Present Danger: China (CPDC), a Washington-based advocacy organization, sent letters to the leadership of the Hong Kong stock exchange and four Wall Street banks to warn against a possible new risk to U.S. investors from the "increasingly controversial" public offering. The group also sent a letter to President Donald Trump.

In the letters, the advocacy group warns Hong Kong stock

exchange and four U.S. banks listed in New York, U.S. investors that they have fiduciary duties to will be exposed to the company fully reveal Ant Group's material through the Hong Kong stock exrisks, including human rights and national security concerns. Ant Group's prospectus dis-

closed potential financial technology and e-commerce sectoral risks. It also cited U.S. sanctions as risks to the company's business. However, it largely ignored the risks arising from the company's ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

The advocacy group identified seven problematic risks, including the roles played by Ant Group and its partial owner Alibaba "in the severe human rights abuses" of Uyghurs by the Chinese regime.

The letters also state that Ant Group is a threat to U.S. national security. In 2018, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) blocked Ant Financial's acquisition of U.S. money transfer company MoneyGram over national security

The fintech giant raises concerns as its technologies are used by the CCP and its People's Liberation Army to oppress the Chinese people. It is also a participant in building China's controversial social credit system, which tracks every move and purchase of Chinese citizens.

"We believe that the IPO should, at a minimum, be delayed to ensure that such disclosures are faithfully done and properly evaluated," Brian Kennedy, CP-DC's chairman, wrote in a letter

national security concerns. The U.S. regulators would require cur escalation of tensions between rently listed companies to come the United States and China and into compliance with the new potential U.S. government action standards by Jan. 1, 2022. against Ant Group may cause declines in share-value, harming U.S. investors. "For its part, the CCP hopes to

translate a huge IPO victory for Ant, largely bankrolled by American investors, into a validation of its bid to continue to have access to hundreds of billions in Western financing, despite its vicious crackdown on Hong Kong," the letter stated.

The White House and the four U.S. investment banks advising Ant Group didn't immediately respond to requests from The Epoch Times for comment.

Ant Group and many Chinese companies have avoided New York for their listings as Washington has increased its crackdown on foreign companies that fail to

facing increased scrutiny from comply with U.S. audit standards. the Trump administration over Under the White House plan,

> The fintech giant raises concerns as its technologies are used by the CCP and its People's Liberation Army to oppress the Chinese people.

The size of the Ant Group's IPO is subject to market conditions, but the company aims to raise nearly \$30 billion from the dual listing in Shanghai and Hong Kong. This could mark the biggest IPO of all time, surpassing the US\$29.4 billion public offering last December by Saudi Aramco.



Though the company won't be Motorists drive past an Alipay logo next to the office building of the Ant Group in Shanghai on August 28, 2020



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- Security and espionage
- Influence on media and Hollywood
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