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CHINA INSIDER

CHINA'S ECONOMIC MIRACLE

IS IT REAL?

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A fruit vendor waits for customers along a street in Hong Kong on Nov. 14, 2020.

OPINION

Is There Really a China Economic Miracle?

DANIEL LACALLE

The year 2020 will be an extremely tough year for the European economy. Added to an unprecedented drop is a strong impact in the fourth quarter due to the new lockdowns.

Morgan Stanley estimates that the eurozone's GDP will fall by 2.2 percent in the fourth quarter, a 7 percent drop in the full year 2020. In addition, the investment bank lowers the outlook for 2021 with a rebound of only 5 percent in the average of the euro area, delaying the recovery of 2019 GDP to 2023.

The "jobless recovery" is even more worrying. The apparently spectacular rebound data for the third quarter resulted in zero job creation. Unemployment in the eurozone in September stood at 8.3 percent and in Spain at 16.5 percent, not counting the millions of furloughed jobs in Europe.

In this environment, the United States' recovery seems much stronger. GDP recovered in the third quarter to just 3.5 percent below 2019 levels. Unemployment has fallen to 6.9 percent in October but remains well above the record employment levels of 2019.

However, the data from China is apparently spectacular. The manufacturing and services index already show an enviable expansion. GDP for the first three quarters is already growing at 0.7 percent after an expansion of 4.9 percent in the third quarter. Urban unemployment in China is 5.4 percent after shooting to a paltry 6 percent. What is behind the Chinese miracle compared to the poor eurozone?

A planned GDP. The GDP of China is dictated by production, not demand. It's not an observed GDP, but rather planned by the government together with the provinces. For this reason, many analysts scrutinize the data and deduct various factors, including the

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In most economies, inventories are valued at market prices, while in China they're valued by the authorities and adjusted later. Constant methodological and base changes also lead to doubts regarding annual growth, despite the evident increase in transparency in recent years.

increase and valuation of inventories. It's not by chance that inventories of iron ore, automobiles, and finished goods have risen to the highest level in seven months as the economy recovers.

If the economic situation were in the announced expansion, inventories would be falling rapidly when sold. Much is produced that is then not sold and remains in warehouses. Thus, it's not surprising that industrial prices fell 2.1 percent in September and export prices 0.9 percent, and the country's debt soared 13.5 percent amid an apparently miraculous recovery. Industrial business profits have fallen 2.4 percent between January and September and, furthermore, factory door prices fell faster than expected in September and were at risk of deflation. These are signs of a slowly recovering economy, like all others, but not of a growth miracle.

In most economies, inventories are valued at market prices, while in China they're valued by the authorities and adjusted later. Constant methodological and base changes also lead to doubts regarding annual growth, despite the evident increase in transparency in recent years. Another difficult factor to analyze is the growth of construction activity, in a country where overcapacity is evident and ghost cities and uneconomical white elephant projects are multiplying.

The reduction in urban unemployment also hides a more complex reality. Unemployment in China is close to 11 percent on average, according to the Long Run Trends in Unemployment and Labor Force Participation in China study (NBER Working Paper No. 21460), and probably well above 13 percent in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis.

According to Capital Economics, Nomura, or Peking University HSBC Business School, another important challenge is calculating GDP with a realistic deflator. By using a de-

flator—the impact of prices on GDP—that's much lower than the observed one, GDP appears artificially higher than it really is. In an economy where inflation is underestimated, nominal wages, which grow at an official 3.6 percent, lose purchasing power almost every year due to the real cost of living, especially in food and daily expenditures, which are much higher than the official ones.

In a recent study (A Forensic Examination of China's National Accounts, Wei Chen et al., 2019), the authors concluded that China's GDP may have been exaggerated by around 2 percent per year between 2008 and 2016, showing that China's real GDP is probably 18 percent lower than the official figure.

China's GDP is never revised, and the December figure simply stands and is consolidated without question. This is an important factor that the Chinese authorities have tried to correct with greater transparency and adjustments by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The problem is that provinces have accelerated their race in the effort to provide spectacular figures, and the magnitude of the corrections of the national office doesn't compensate for these "exaggerations."

Another problem is that annual revisions compute for growth but aren't revised in the GDP figure for the year. The calculation base is reduced. For example, according to independent consultancy firm China Beige Book, gross capital formation for the third quarter of 2019 has been revised down by 2.3 trillion yuan. As the 2019 figure falls, the growth on the same data for 2020 seems spectacular. That same review was made with the retail sales figure. Those for August 2019 were revised down by 50 billion yuan and the growth figure for 2020 seems miraculous. However, a revision of such depth in the base calculation of figures for 2019 didn't generate a downward revision of the GDP for that year.

These methodological problems are added to the survey used for the calculation. The government uses a list of companies that generate a minimum amount of revenue. That list grows and shrinks, creating homogeneity problems that the NBS tries to adjust for.

In the United States, each daily, weekly, and monthly data is analyzed by different independent entities, and each data point is impossible to manipulate by a government authority. That's why the GDP is constantly revised. China's GDP is the only one that's not revised. It's published and consolidated.

It's a shame, because the reality observed by companies and citizens in China is that the economy is recovering slowly and unevenly, but it's recovering, probably with a year-on-year drop of 2.5 percent, which would be, in any case, a very positive figure. Falling into planned overcapacity and excess of triumphalism on the part of some provinces competing to provide better data than others ends up questioning the reality of the improvement in the economy.

Beijing has pledged to bring the data up to International Monetary Fund standards, but lack of independent scrutiny and the competition from the provinces when it comes to providing positive and spectacular figures continue to generate inconsistencies between sales, inventories, consumption, and profits. The recovery of the real economy in China is happening, but it's not dissimilar to that of many of the leading Asian countries.

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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.

FINANCIAL DECOUPLING

Trump Administration Accelerating Financial Decoupling With China: Experts

CATHY HE

President Donald Trump's recent executive order banning U.S. investments in a group of companies with ties to the Chinese military marks a significant step in accelerating an economic decoupling with the Chinese regime, according to experts.

Many of these companies are publicly traded on stock exchanges around the world. U.S. investors, through their pension funds, could also unwittingly transfer wealth to these entities from the United States.

Starting on Jan. 11, 2021, U.S. companies and individuals will be barred from investing in Chinese-military-linked firms, including 31 companies previously designated by the Pentagon as being "owned or controlled" by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA). U.S. investors will be given until Nov. 11, 2021, to divest of investments in those companies.

The companies include prominent technology and manufacturing firms, such as state-run mobile operators China Mobile and China Telecom, rail car manufacturer China Railway Construction Corp. (CRRC), video surveillance manufacturer Hikvision, aerospace firm Aviation Industry Corp. of China (AVIC), defense company Norinco, cloud computing and data-center company Inspur, and chemicals giant Sinochem.

The order, signed on Nov. 12, stated that American investments were helping fund the Chinese regime's military goals, jeopardizing national security.

"China is increasingly exploiting United States capital to resource and to enable the development and modernization of its military, intelligence, and other security apparatuses," it stated.

Roger Robinson, president of RWR Advisory Group and former chairman of the congressional U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC), said the move is a "historic first" in imposing penalties

on Beijing through capital markets. He added that the order is unlikely to be reversed by subsequent administrations.

"It will no longer be possible to put the genie of capital markets sanctions back in the bottle," Robinson told The Epoch Times in an email.

The order also allows the defense secretary to designate additional Chinese firms as "Chinese military companies," significantly increasing the risks for Americans looking to invest in a wide range of Chinese companies, said John Mills, a former senior official at the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"This puts a shadow over all Chinese companies," he told The Epoch Times.

Chinese companies are directed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to contribute to the PLA's development under the doctrine of "civil-military fusion," which seeks to harness the power of private industry to fuel military modernization.

CRRC, China Telecom, and Inspur have publicly supported China's military-fusion strategy.

Under this doctrine, "essentially everything is an appendage of the CCP," Mills said. Any Chinese company operating within or outside of China is "in effect an extension of the state."

"This begs a great question: Why would I want to invest in a Chinese company that really is encumbered by and required to be an extension of the state?"

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro estimated that at least a half-trillion dollars in market capitalization was represented by the 31 Chinese companies and their subsidiaries.

"American capital should not be used to finance the construction of Chinese communist weapons literally aimed at killing Americans and driving the U.S. military out of Asia," Navarro told reporters in a call on Nov. 12.

Among the 31 companies, many are traded on mainland Chinese or Hong Kong exchanges while two firms,

China Mobile and China Telecom, are traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

In recent years, global stock-index providers such as MSCI and FTSE have added Chinese stocks to their global and emerging markets indices, allowing billions of dollars of U.S. investment to flow into Chinese equities.

The MSCI indexes, for instance, include surveillance equipment maker Hikvision. In 2019, the administration placed the firm on a trade blacklist that forbids U.S. companies from doing business with it, over its role in the mass surveillance of Uyghur Muslims in China's western Xinjiang region.

MSCI also includes Hong Kong-listed AviChina Industry & Technology, the listing company for AVIC. The firm and its subsidiaries develop aircraft and weapons systems for the Chinese military.

While the U.S. administration has piled constraints on economic and trade links with the Chinese regime, citing national security and human rights concerns, the executive order marks the first major action targeting the financial sector.

As of Oct. 2, there were 217 Chinese companies listed on U.S. exchanges, with a total market valuation of \$2.2 trillion, according to the USCC.

Earlier this year, the administration blocked the Thrift Savings Plan, the pension fund for federal employees including military personnel, from investing in Chinese equities.

U.S. officials have also urged university endowment funds and state pension funds to divest from Chinese holdings.

In August, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said he expected the Securities and Exchange Commission to adopt a recommendation for Chinese companies on U.S. exchanges that fail to meet auditing requirements by January 2022 to be delisted.

Epoch Times staff member Emel Akan and Reuters contributed to this report.

Why would I want to invest in a Chinese company that really is encumbered by and required to be an extension of the state?

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Investors look at a screen showing stock market movements at a securities company in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang Province on Feb. 3, 2020.

ELECTION

Beijing Took Advantage of Pandemic to Interfere With US Election: China Expert

JAN JEKIELEK & CATHY HE

The Chinese regime capitalized on the global spread of the CCP virus to destabilize the United States—and ultimately impact the presidential election—according to Robert Spalding, author of the book “Stealth War: How China Took Over While America’s Elite Slept.”

“We are in 2020, in the midst of a people’s war waged by the Chinese Communist Party around the world to essentially destroy liberalism,” Spalding, a retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general, told The Epoch Times’ “American Thought Leaders” program on Nov. 10.

In early January, the regime found itself with its “back against the wall,” having signed the phase one U.S.-China trade deal that would have forced it to modify its economy. That, in turn, would result in rising unemployment domestically, Spalding said.

But as the outbreak in Wuhan erupted, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) realized that they could “take this crisis and turn it into an opportunity,” he said, noting that the Chinese word for “crisis” consists of the characters for “danger” and “opportunity.”

So the regime enabled the global spread of the virus by allowing international air travel while shutting down domestic travel, Spalding said. It also amassed and hoarded medical supplies from around the world, causing a global shortage.

It then ran a multi-faceted information campaign to cover up its role in causing the pandemic, while trumpeting its handling of the outbreak. For example, it pressured the World Health Organization to downplay the risk of human-to-human transmission in the early stages; ran disinformation campaigns alleging the virus

originated from the United States and Europe; and deployed social media campaigns to encourage lockdowns similar to those in China, along with the idea that the United States and other countries weren’t doing a good job in handling the pandemic—a narrative that gained significant traction before the election.

“So when you add all of these things together, the actions by the Chinese Communist Party deliberately impacted the U.S. election,” Spalding said.

The impact of the CCP’s actions was evident in the introduction of massive mail-in voting due to the pandemic, he added.

Spalding noted that some “digital machines that are used for voting have either some bit of software or hardware that comes from China, maybe both.”

“This has been noted in study after study, that we have a challenge with both mail-in ballots and digital machinery, particularly that have components from China,” he said.

Robert Spalding, author of the book “Stealth War: How China Took Over While America’s Elite Slept”

“Why did we have massive mail-in ballots? Because of the coronavirus? Because of the Chinese Communist Party. Why do they have this opportunity? Because we brought them into the WTO, because we welcome them into the community of nations. It all comes together.”

The Trump administration, under the 2017 National Security Strategy, took a stand against the CCP’s actions. “It understands what has been going on, and then it begins to fix the problem,” Spalding said.

Fast forward to January 2020, Chinese leader Xi Jinping seized the opportunity from the pandemic to respond to the challenges posed by the Trump administration.

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“But what you learned from watching movies like mafia movies and Al Capone, these organizations, but particularly like the Chinese Communist Party, are some of the most secretive organizations in the world. They don’t telegraph what they’re doing,” he said.

“The only time that you find out what’s going on behind the curtain is when you have a major, major crisis in the country.”

For instance, in 2013, when Xi came to power amid intense factional infighting, an internal Party communique “Document No. 9” was leaked. Last year, as the regime faced intensifying pressure from the Trump administration, the “Xinjiang papers” documenting the CCP’s mass detention of Uyghur Muslims were released to the media.

Secretive Organization Spalding said most journalists, and even the intelligence community, are hesitant to share the same warning about the CCP, “because what they are looking for—it is a product of our own reality—is a paper trail ... that there is evidence that shows direct involvement of a bad actor in some event.”

Motivations The Chinese regime “wants a future where the world is dominated by authoritarian regimes,” he said. To achieve this, the Party leadership realized decades ago that it needed to “attach [itself] to the United States” to acquire the trade, talent, and, most importantly, capital to grow its economy.

“So what do they do? They basically make a deal with the United States, that leads to [entry into] the [World Trade Organization] in 2001, which leads to the destruction of the working class in America,” Spalding said.

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A voter receives assistance from an election worker at a voting center in Grand Central Market in Los Angeles on Nov. 3, 2020.

FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ELECTION

Beijing Sees Biden as Someone Susceptible to Its Influence: Victor Davis Hanson

JAN JEKIELEK & FRANK FANG

The Chinese regime would be happy to see a new U.S. administration without President Donald Trump, according to historian Victor Davis Hanson.

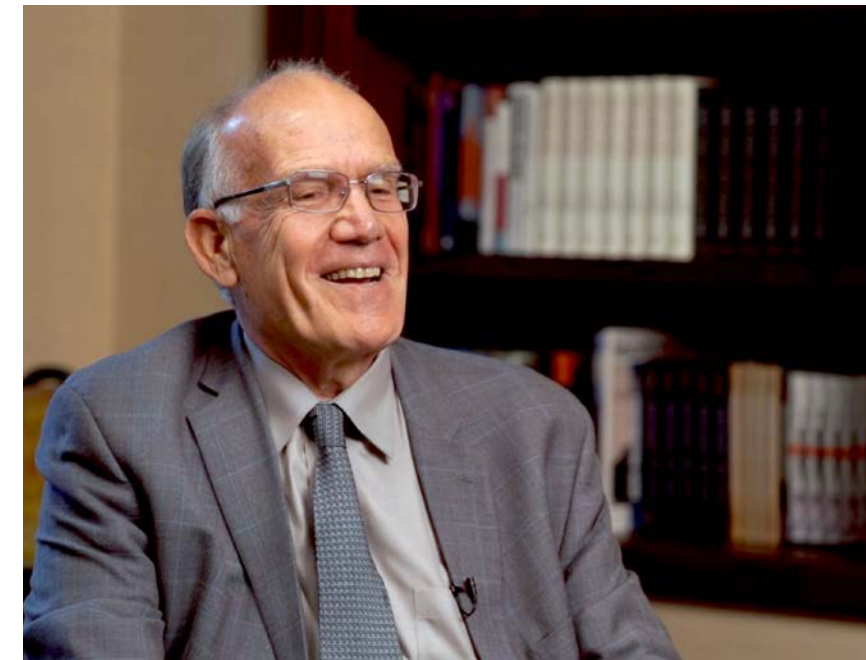
If Democratic Party candidate Joe Biden wins the election, Beijing would also press harder on U.S. allies in the Asia-Pacific region, said Hanson, who is a senior fellow at the Stanford University-based think tank Hoover Institution.

On The Epoch Times’ “American Thought Leaders” program, Hanson said Beijing sees Biden as someone who would work with the communist regime—“a sign of weakness to be exploited.”

While many media outlets have declared Biden the winner of the presidential election, The Epoch Times will not call the race until all results are certified and any legal challenges are resolved.

Hanson analyzed Beijing’s view of the election: “I think they’re going to be much more confident now because of the Biden victory, because I think their chief nemesis and biggest worry is gone if Trump loses.”

The Trump administration has confronted the Chinese Communist Party on a range of issues, including unfair trade practices, espionage, malign influence in the United States, security



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threats posed by Chinese technology, and human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.

Without a hardline policy toward China under Biden, Hanson said the regime would put pressure on Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, all key U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

He said Beijing could “send something into the waters off Taiwan” and see how Biden reacts.

Beijing views Taiwan as a part of its territory and has threatened

to use military force to bring the island under its fold. It also opposes governments or international organizations from forming ties with the island that might suggest the real situation—that Taiwan is a de-facto independent country with its own democratically-elected government, military, currency, and constitution.

Bilateral ties between Washington and Taipei have warmed considerably in recent months under the Trump administration, which sees Taiwan as an important ally in its Indo-Pacific strategy. In recent months, two senior U.S. officials visited Taiwan, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Undersecretary of State Keith Krach.

Upset by the cordial U.S.-Taiwan relations, Beijing has held military exercises near its coastal waters and sent military planes near the island in recent months. According to Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense, thus far China has violated Taiwan’s airspace on 11 different days during the month of November.

“I think they’re [Beijing] delighted [at a Biden victory], and I expect them to be very cautious but very, very definite in the trajectory in which they want to move—and that is to press, press, press,” Hanson said.

LEAKED DOCS

China’s Efforts to Influence Education Field Suffer Setbacks

ALEX WU

The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) major overseas education projects have suffered setbacks recently because of the COVID-19 pandemic, funding cuts, and pushback by the international community’s pushback, leaked government documents recently obtained by The Epoch Times reveal.

Confucius Institutes (CIs) and the Belt and Road University Alliance are educational projects that aim to spread the Chinese regime’s communist propaganda in foreign countries.

Confucius Institutes

The Epoch Times obtained a set of documents from the Gansu provincial government, including internal work reports. According to a document from the province’s education bureau dated June 11, deputy director Xu Hongwei said during a communist cadre training session that the COVID-19 pandemic “has a huge impact on international cooperation and exchanges in education” this year.

Xu emphatically pointed out that CIs are suffering setbacks and have entered a “severe winter.” He said that since 2018, 16 U.S. universities have announced that they won’t renew agreements with the CIs, and 11 of the facilities have closed.

CIs are operated under the government agency Hanban, under its Ministry of Education. But amid the international community’s pushback against Beijing’s infiltration tactics through CIs, the CCP rebranded CIs in July under the new name of Chinese International Education Foundation.

Hanban says the CIs are still a government-funded project, and teachers who are sent to teach overseas are still screened and selected by the Party.

In August, a Washington-based center that promotes CIs in the United States was designated as a foreign mission. In September, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he hoped that all CIs on American college campuses will

be closed before the end of 2020.

According to the document, Xu stated at the cadre training that “Party management of foreign affairs” must be strictly implemented, including the work of CIs. Xu regarded the establishment of seven CIs by Gansu Province as an achievement of the local government’s “going global.”

However, CIs “are facing difficulties of transformation,” the Gansu education bureau admitted in a work report on “opening up the education field to the West,” issued on Sept. 7.

‘Belt and Road University Alliance’

In October 2015, the Gansu provincial government established the “Belt and Road University Alliance,” an offshoot of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China’s grand foreign policy project, at Lanzhou University. It was then installed at 47 universities in BRI countries and regions, under an agreement called the “Dunhuang Consensus”—named after the famous locale known for its Buddhist statues and frescos and a critical hub of the ancient Silk Road.

Gansu’s education bureau stated at the time that it should actively expand CIs in BRI countries with the help of the Belt and Road University Alliance.

CCP authorities have used Gansu’s strategic location to reach out to central Asian countries along the Silk Road through establishing the Alliance.

Gansu officials disclosed in a memorandum on Belt and Road-related education efforts that this year’s special funds invested by local universities under the BRI were cut nearly in half, to more than 6.76 million yuan (\$1 million) from 12.136 million yuan (about \$1.73 million) in 2019.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students attending CIs in BRI countries fell to 4,758 this year, from 7,790 students in 2019, and 12,421 students in 2018—which was the peak, according to the document.

In addition, the document dis-



The Confucius Institute building on the Troy University campus in Troy, Ala., on March 16, 2018.

closed that the number of schools joining the Alliance this year is the same as last year, at 173, which shows that it failed to attract new members.

The internal documents also reveal the latest project of the CCP’s global infiltration through education—creating a new “Overseas Chinese International Schools” program.

In a June document issued to the Gansu division of a CCP advisory body known as the Chinese

People’s Political Consultative Conference, the national Ministry of Education said it would create an educational model primarily based on the existing CI, that would be gradually developed into a separate international school that would offer Chinese language and culture instruction.

The program hasn’t yet officially begun.

Epoch Times staff member He Jian contributed to this report.

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“一带一路”教育行动合作备忘录信息采集表

序号	名称	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1	“一带一路”国际交流合作专项经费（财政拨款）（单位：万元）	428.06	543.61	961.199	1213.57	676.58
2	省（区、市）级经费投入（单位：万元）	650	650	650	982	1049
3	公立教师出国访学/培训人数	262	336	353	296	35
4	公立教师“一带一路”沿线国家留学人数	127	115	124	124	34

Gansu provincial government document, titled, “Belt and Road Educational Action Cooperation Memorandum Information Collection Form,” issued in 2020.

PROVIDED TO THE EPOCH TIMES



Protesters stand at the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco to raise awareness about the persecution of Falun Gong in China on Sept. 21, 2020.

FREEDOM OF BELIEF

China's Persecution of Falun Gong Continues, With Over 1,000 Arrested and Harassed in October: Report

ALEX WU

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is continuing its nationwide persecution of adherents of Falun Gong, a traditional spiritual practice that the regime has heavily suppressed since 1999.

According to October statistics reported on Nov. 12 by Minghui.org, a U.S.-based website that tracks the persecution of Falun Gong in China, police unlawfully arrested and harassed 1,077 Falun Gong practitioners in the month of October in 139 cities across 27 provinces and regions. Courts across the country sentenced 65 Falun Gong practitioners to jail for their faith. Chinese human rights lawyers have said such prosecutions are illegal, as it violates China's constitution that guarantees freedom of belief.

While China celebrated the traditional Double Ninth Festival in October, which emphasizes respect for seniors, 92 elderly Falun Gong practitioners aged over 65 were abducted from their homes and harassed, including two above the age of 90. Another 19 elderly Falun Gong practitioners also aged over 65 were unlawfully sentenced to jail, the oldest being 80 years old.

The report also detailed the Chinese regime's financial persecution. In October, the CCP's police and courts extorted a total of 417,840 yuan (\$62,300) in cash from abducted Falun Gong practitioners. Meanwhile, 34 people's pensions were suspended without grounds.

The Minghui report also recorded a recent mass arrest of Falun Gong practitioners.

On the evening of Oct. 27, the National Security Team of Hunan Province and Changsha City, alongside local district police (known as public security bureaus in China), abducted 14 Falun Gong practitioners and illegally raided their homes.

Details of representative cases of persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in October were released.

The Case of Ma Zhenyu

Zhang Yuhua, the wife of detained Falun Gong practitioner Ma Zhenyu, explained her husband's plight to President Donald Trump during an event on religious freedom held in Washington on July

17. Zhang herself survived torture while being detained inside a labor camp.

On July 20, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued a statement condemning the CCP's persecution of Falun Gong. Citing Zhang and her husband's case as an example, he demanded that the CCP immediately stop the torture and abuse of Falun Gong practitioners and release those who have been imprisoned for their beliefs.

Although this case has received great attention from the international community, Ma has not regained freedom despite having fully served his sentence.

Ma was a former radar engineer of the Nanjing 14th Research Institute of the Ministry of Information Industry of China. He was sentenced to three years in prison for sending letters to CCP leaders about Falun Gong calling for an end to the communist state's persecution. His sentence ended on Sept. 19. The Suzhou Prison in Jiangsu Province stated that Ma was handed over to the Nanjing police bureau that day. Zhang said that she has not been able to contact her husband so far.

Ma is now reportedly incarcerated at a police station in Suojin Village, Xuanwu District of Nanjing city, according to Minghui.

org. He is being confined in a room next to the mailroom at the police station. Officers have also pressured Ma's family, including his 80-year-old mother, demanding that they not contact his wife in the United States.

Shanghai Senior Engineer Imprisoned for Suing Ministry of Public Security

The Minghui report also detailed the case of Shanghai engineering expert Xu Yongqing, who is also a Falun Gong practitioner. After her two-year incarceration at the Hongze Lake Prison that ended on Nov. 28, 2019, Xu has been continually harassed, monitored, and persecuted by local authorities.

In December 2016, Xu Yongqing submitted an application for "information release" from China's Ministry of Public Security, asking whether its document "Notice on Certain Issues Concerning the Identification and Banning of Heretical Organizations" was still valid.

The document listed 14 CCP-labeled "heretical organizations," which did not include Falun Gong.

In the absence of a reply from the Ministry of Public Security, Xu filed a lawsuit with the Beijing Second Intermediate Court in May 2017, suing the ministry for

"administrative inaction."

The ministry then ordered the Shanghai police bureau to put pressure on Xu to withdraw the lawsuit, but he refused.

On Nov. 29, 2017, Xu was kidnapped by local and national police officers in Hanjiang District of Yangzhou City. He was sentenced to two years imprisonment and fined 5,000 yuan (\$740) by a local court.

He was beaten and injured in prison. After he was released, he was unemployed due to poor health. Xu and his wife rented a house in the countryside, but they were continually monitored and harassed by local authorities, according to a Minghui report.

During the Mid-Autumn Festival in early October, Xu returned to his hometown in Zhejiang Province to visit his mother. On Oct. 11, he received a message informing him that all the belongings in his Shanghai house had been moved to a warehouse belonging to the Party committee of Yanxing Village, though he had already paid rent to the landlord for October and his lease didn't expire until Oct. 31. Xu immediately returned to the rented home in Shanghai and found that the door lock had been replaced. He had to spend the night in a small hotel nearby.

At present, Xu remains homeless.



Falun Gong practitioner Ma Zhenyu.



President Donald Trump shakes hands with Zhang Yuhua, a Falun Gong practitioner who survived persecution in China, at the White House on July 17, 2019.

While China celebrated the traditional Double Ninth Festival in October, which emphasizes respect for seniors, 92 elderly Falun Gong practitioners aged over 65 were abducted from their homes and harassed, including two above the age of 90.



Journalists attend a video press conference that was hosted by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on May 24, 2020.

CORRUPTION

Chinese Regime Mandates Journalists and Monks Study Communist Ideology

NICOLE HAO

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) recently ordered all monks at a famous Buddhist monastery to study political ideology, while thousands of the country's journalists had to take tests on communist ideology in order to obtain their government-registered press passes.

Back in October 2019, the Party required all reporters and editors to pass a test on "Xi Jinping's Thoughts on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era," referring to paramount leader Xi Jinping's brand of political ideology.

Without a qualified score on the test, journalists will lose their media passes.

Chinese state-run Xinhua previously reported that each journalist has to study at least 24 hours of Xi's ideology, primarily comprised of the speeches he gave in past years, before they can take the test.

On Nov. 9, Radio Free Asia reported that it checked official data from China's General Administration of Press and Publication, the CCP's

The Party required all reporters and editors to pass a test on paramount leader Xi Jinping's brand of political ideology.

Journalists attend a news conference by Guo Weimin (on screen), spokesman for the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, as he speaks via video link at the media center in Beijing on May 20, 2020.

administrative agency for controlling and regulating news, print, and internet publications, and found that "205,000 Chinese journalists passed the 'Xi Thoughts' test by Oct. 30 and obtained press licenses."

China's propaganda minister Huang Kunming similarly ordered all Chinese reporters, editors, and other media staff to adhere to the Party line during a media awards ceremony in Beijing on Nov. 6: "spreading and interpreting 'Xi Thoughts' must always be the primary political task for journalists who work at the frontline of news," he said.

Huang added that they should "sing high praises of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era and the CCP."

On Nov. 6, the Buddhist monastery the Daci'en Temple in Xi'an city, Shaanxi Province organized all monks to study the communiqué from the CCP's key political meeting this year, the fifth plenary session.

According to a post on the monastery's official WeChat account, the abbot Zengqin asked all monks in the temple "to put your mind and actions into following along with the key speech Xi Jinping [gave at the

session]."

The speech and communiqué primarily focused on the Chinese regime's economic development goals for the next five years.

Daci'en Temple is known for its beautiful Dayan Pagoda, which was built in 652 during the Tang Dynasty. It is said that the temple used to hold sutras and figurines of Gautama Buddha, which the Buddhist monk Xuanzang brought from India to China. Xuanzang is a leading character in the famed "Journey to the West," who traveled to India to retrieve sutras and then stayed at Daci'en Temple to translate them into Chinese.

In recent years, the Chinese regime has increasingly pressured places of worship to study and believe in communism.

Shaolin Temple—known as the fabled birthplace of kung fu—announced during a flag-raising ceremony in August 2018 that it belongs to the CCP.

Soon after, nearly all Buddhist temples followed Shaolin Temple's example and organized similar ceremonies to show their loyalty to the CCP.



THOMAS PETER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



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