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CHINA INSIDER



POSITIVE COVERAGE

**BEIJING'S ATTEMPTS
TO INFLUENCE FOREIGN MEDIA**

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OPINION

What Lurks Behind China's Food Crisis

STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Chinese farmers work in a wheat field in Chiping County, Shandong Province, China, on March 15, 2017.

CHEN SIMIN

Chinese leader Xi Jinping has again emphasized the need for food security.

"Efforts should be made to ensure food security and strengthen food production year by year," Xi said at the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) annual central rural work conference held on Dec. 28 and 29, 2020.

Xi said ensuring food security means that China's food supply shouldn't be controlled by others, according to a Xinhua report on the conference. But in reality, China's food production self-sufficiency rate slipped to 86 percent in 2019—which is below the 90 percent safety line set by the Chinese regime—from 96 percent in 2013.

In 2020, China has bought 92.8 million tons of soybeans from January to November, up 17.5 percent year-on-year, and monthly soybean imports reached historically high levels for six consecutive months, according to data from China's General Administration of Customs. Based on that rate, China imported a record high of over 100 million tons of soybeans in 2020.

In addition, from January to October, China imported 7.82 million tons of corn, which is at least 3 million tons more than in 2019. China's total corn imports for 2020 are estimated at 10 million tons, and expected to further increase in 2021.

The regime claims there's no food shortage and doesn't allow people to hoard grains. Meanwhile, the regime has snapped up a massive amount of imported soybeans and corn. The data also shows that imports of soybeans, being China's crop with the largest supply and demand gap, have been increasing year after year. China's corn imports may follow the same trend.

CCP agricultural officials have claimed that the main reason for the spike in soybean imports in 2020 was the high demand to feed the country's pig herd.

Although agricultural officials don't treat soybeans as food, they emphasize that "the degree of dependence on foreign producers is extremely low." In China, the main staple foods are rice, wheat, corn, and soybeans.

In August last year, a Chinese think tank released its annual Rural Develop-

China's arable land is decreasing every year due to desertification and urban land expansion.

ment Report, which stated that "China is expected to have a food supply gap of about 130 million tons by the end of 2025." Rice, corn, and wheat will be about 25 million tons short, it said.

In an interview with state broadcaster CCTV in April last year, Yuan Longping, a Chinese hybrid rice expert, also revealed that "China doesn't have enough food to eat," and "if other countries don't sell it to us, we will be in trouble."

While authorities keep saying that grain production has increased every year, China's food security is still often questioned, and the loss of arable land is mentioned as the biggest concern.

China's arable land is decreasing every year due to desertification and urban land expansion. Historically, to further economic development, cities have often taken over the best arable land. So-called experts have pointed out that despite the continuous decline of its arable landmass, China has maintained a constant increase of grain production per acre, meaning the utilization rate of arable land is increasing. The argument is that the higher the utilization rate of arable land, the higher the annual output per unit of arable land in terms of production technology.

The consequence is that this kind of practice exhausts the farmland and causes the quality of the soil to decline. In other words, China's arable land isn't only extremely limited, but the soil quality is quite poor. For example, Yuan invented the double harvest rice method, although rice output increased by only 2.07 percent in the past 20 years.

The Rural Development Report also pointed out that in addition to arable land, China's food production depends on another important factor: manpower. It takes farmers to tend the land. But under the CCP's urbanization policies, people from rural areas continue to move to the city.

The report predicted that by 2025, the urbanization rate across China will be 65.5 percent. Conservative estimates are that the migrant population moving to urban centers from rural areas will grow by 80 million. Therefore, the proportion of people engaged in agriculture will drop to about 20 percent.

At the same time, the proportion of the country's rural population who are 60 and older will rise to 25.3 percent, or about 124

million people. The aging population will create another social problem.

While the CCP claims to care about agricultural production, the Party doesn't care about the lives of farmers. The unfair treatment of Chinese farmers is well known, including against many who practice Falun Gong, a spiritual meditation that has been severely persecuted by the Chinese regime since 1999. Minghui.org, a U.S.-based website that serves as a clearinghouse on information about the persecution, has extensively reported on the CCP's protracted suppression of Falun Gong adherents in China's vast rural areas. Countless numbers of farmers have been forced off their land, with incalculable economic losses.

Take Jilin Province, a major grain-producing region, for example. Authorities in Jilin, which is one of the three major "golden corn belts" in the world, are among the most avid persecutors of Falun Gong adherents. Many local farmers who practice Falun Gong have been arrested, harassed, sent to brainwashing classes, and deprived of their contracted land because they refused to renounce their faith. These farmers grow corn and soybeans that are important to the country's food supply.

Chinese internet users have often said that China's food crisis is a combination of "internal and external troubles." The internal troubles are related to China's agriculture, rural areas, and farmers, and they are actually far greater than the external troubles, which are the result of broken international supply chains.

Looking at it from another perspective, the CCP's concern about China's food crisis solely stems from the regime's need for stability. The Chinese people, on the other hand, are genuinely worried about a famine because they're still traumatized by memories of the scores of people who died of starvation during the famine caused by the CCP's "Great Leap Forward" in the 1950s.

Chen Simin is a freelance writer who often analyzes China's current affairs. She has been a contributor to The Epoch Times since 2011.

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

CCP VIRUS

Chinese Regime Struggling to Contain CCP Virus Outbreaks

NICOLE HAO

Despite enacting stringent lockdown measures, Chinese authorities are struggling to contain CCP virus outbreaks throughout northern China.

Hebei Province is the hardest-hit, with two cities, Shijiazhuang and Xingtai, seeing the biggest surges in new infections.

Authorities have publicized little information despite imposing restrictions on people's movements and requiring mass testing for COVID-19, the disease caused by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus.

The central government has thus far reported dozens of new cases each day. But government directives suggest the outbreak is more severe than authorities let on.

Shijiazhuang

Meanwhile, citizens revealed the harsh reality of living under lockdown. All get-togethers, large-scale events, and inbound and outbound travel have been banned. Stores have been shut down. In some parts of the city, residents cannot leave their homes.

In recent days, residents in Shijiazhuang complained that food prices had gone up dramatically. They worried that their savings may soon run out.

Cheng Lan (pseudonym) told the Chinese-language Epoch Times in a Jan. 11 phone interview: "The mayor said eggs are 4.14 yuan per 500 grams (about \$0.58 per pound). But the lowest price I can find is seven to eight yuan per 500 grams (about \$1 to \$1.12 per pound)."

Cheng said the prices of many food products, such as fruits and vegetables, have at least doubled in the past few days.

Due to the worsening outbreak, some schools have forced students to leave campus. However, all public transportation and taxi services were suspended following a lockdown imposed last week. They became stranded on the streets.

The Epoch Times obtained an internal notice issued by the Shijiazhuang "command center" that handles COVID-19 outbreaks, which revealed that authorities are anticipating a surge in COVID-19 infections during the Chinese New Year holiday. The Chinese New Year, the nation's most important traditional holiday event, kicks off on Feb. 12. Hundreds of millions make trips to their hometowns

Government directives suggest the outbreak is more severe than authorities let on.

The discrepancy between authorities' preparation measures and the low number of confirmed infections led some to question the official data.

to reunite with family.

The command center stated in the Jan. 6 "action plan" that districts, counties, and cities throughout Hebei must "lock in" supplies for pandemic control during the holiday, and "be well-prepared for large-scale nucleic acid tests in case of any emergencies."

The Epoch Times also obtained an "emergency notice" issued on Jan. 6 by the "quarantine support team" within Shijiazhuang's command center, which instructed Gaocheng district—where most of the city's infections have been detected—to immediately inspect 469 rooms at three local schools and prepare them to be used as isolation units.

These makeshift quarantine facilities are typically used for people who are close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 patients and suspected by authorities to have been exposed to the CCP virus.

Xingtai

On Jan. 10, the Xingtai United Front Work Department urged residents to donate materials for people who will be staying at a newly set-up makeshift quarantine facility.

The city's United Front said it needed to furnish 5,000 patient rooms with a single bed, mattress, blanket, pillow, toiletries, tea kettle, and other necessities.

The announcement added that materials for 3,000 rooms should be made ready within two days.

On Jan. 11, state-run newspaper Dazhong Post News cited the city's United Front officials, who said the materials would be used in Nangong, a municipal area within Xingtai, and that the furnished rooms would be used by medical staff who treat COVID-19 patients and close contacts of diagnosed patients.

Nangong has only announced 15 infections so far. But the city also said 334 medical staff were taking care of COVID-19 patients.

The discrepancy between authorities' preparation measures and the low number of confirmed infections led some to question the official data.

Ms. Chen, who lives in Nangong, told Radio Free Asia: "More and more residential compounds and neighborhoods were sealed off in the past days... I can't tell you the number of infections. We are not allowed to say it. You should understand my

meaning after I told you that Nangong is fully locked down."

Unannounced Outbreaks

Two northeastern provinces, Heilongjiang and Jilin, announced new confirmed patients. But the central government did not include them in their official tally.

Wangkui county in Suihua city, Heilongjiang, reported that a pregnant woman took a nucleic acid test and tested positive. Soon, her 10-year-old son was also diagnosed.

Two days later, on Jan. 11, the county entered full lockdown and told all residents not to leave city borders.

Wangkui residents shared the videos they shot with The Epoch Times, in which authorities could be seen sealing off residential compounds.

A man who works at a local hotel named Shunfulou said in a phone interview that all residents are now being required to take nucleic acid tests. Each household is only allowed to have one person go outside to buy necessities.

A man working at another hotel said no taxis or private vehicles are allowed on the roads. All businesses except hotels and supermarkets have been closed since Jan. 10 afternoon, he said.

The outbreak has now spread to other cities.

On Jan. 12, Harbin, Qiqihar, and Yichun cities in Heilongjiang, as well as Changchun city of Jilin, announced that they detected patients who tested positive after visiting Wangkui county recently or coming into contact with someone who had traveled there.

On Tuesday, Changchun authorities were seeking out people who took the same buses, shopped in the same stores, or visited the same restaurants as the diagnosed patients.

Similar scenarios occurred in Jinzhong city, Shanxi Province, and Langfang city, Hebei.

On Monday evening, Jinzhong city announced "wartime" mode after two people who recently visited Hebei tested positive.

Langfang, a city of 4.9 million, went into full lockdown after a person who recently traveled to Beijing tested positive. All residents must be confined at home for seven days and tested for the virus.

Frank Yue contributed to this report.

GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A health worker walks past residents as they line up to be tested for COVID-19 in Beijing on Jan. 11, 2021.

CHINESE INFLUENCE

Beijing-Linked Group Tries to Sway US Media With Reporter Trips, Dinners With Execs

CATHY HE & EVA FU

A group tied to Beijing has organized trips to China for more than 120 journalists from almost 50 U.S. media outlets since 2009, as part of a broad campaign to deepen the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) influence in the United States.

Called the China-United States Exchange Foundation (CUSEF), the group is a Hong Kong-based nonprofit headed by billionaire Tung Chee-hwa, a Chinese regime official. Tung was formerly the Chief Executive (top government leader) of Hong Kong and is currently a vice-chairman of the CCP's political advisory body, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. CUSEF is registered as a "foreign principal" under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

FARA filings reveal how the group has tried to sway media coverage and shape public opinion in the United States.

Alongside trips for journalists, the group has organized trips for current and former lawmakers, courted media executives from major publications via private dinners, and aimed to cultivate a group of "third party supporters" in the United States to generate positive opinion articles on China that would appear in Western media outlets.

The activities offer a glimpse into the CCP's sprawling efforts to influence public perceptions and sway elite opinion in Western democracies, in an effort to persuade governments to adopt policies in tune with Beijing's agenda. The goal of this campaign, dubbed "United Front work" by the Party, is to "make Americans receptive to Beijing's form of authoritarianism," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a speech last October.

By targeting foreign news outlets, the regime hopes to limit negative media coverage of Beijing, while boosting favorable coverage, Grant Newsham, a senior fellow at Washington-based think tank Center for Security Policy, said in an email.

Positive stories—such as "how many shiny skyscrapers there are in Shanghai and Shenzhen, and how the PRC

[People's Republic of China] has been so successful in battling COVID-19, and how the Chinese economy has recovered nicely"—shape "both public and 'official' thinking in the U.S.—and ultimately shapes official (and business and financial) policy" towards China, Newsham said.

Media Engagement

FARA filings from 2011 made by BLJ Global, a public relations firm hired by CUSEF, laid out a multi-pronged plan to frame public discourse on U.S.-China relations in positive terms—centered on the idea of "China as an indispensable partner to the U.S."

The firm listed the objectives of its work for CUSEF as: "Develop and foster a community of like-minded experts on U.S.-China relations;" "Build relationships with influential media figures who can serve as positive voices for discussions on U.S.-China relations;" and "Construct a positive and cohesive message of U.S.-China engagement and work to broadcast that message through the Chairman [Tung] ... Third-party supporters and organizations, and the media."

Its target for 2010 was to place an average of three articles a week in various publications containing statements in support of China. In 2009, the firm "assisted or directly influenced" the publication of 26 opinion articles and quotes within 103 articles, the filing stated.

Some positive opinion articles would be written by CUSEF's "third party supporters," a group of experts, former politicians, and influential figures whose membership BLJ sought to expand, given their key role in "effectively disseminat[ing] positive messages to the media, key influencers and opinion leaders, and the general public."

Journalist Trips

Since 2009, BLJ has organized journalist trips for 128 journalists from 48 U.S. outlets, including Washington Post, the New York Times, the L.A. Times, Vox, NPR, and NBC, according to a review of FARA filings.

The firm, in the 2011 filing, called the visits "familiarization trips" intended to recruit "top journalists to travel to China, selected for effectiveness and

opportunities for favorable coverage." "These visits should be designed to offer a fresh and positive look at China's accomplishments, and underscore how important it is for the U.S. to engage directly with China," it said.

In 2009, two trips attended by reporters from seven publications yielded 28 articles, the filing said.

The China trips, Newsham said, resembles the Chinese regime's "long-standing practice of 'visit diplomacy' and hospitality that works so well with government officials and businessmen from many countries."

He added this approach "works really well with people who have only limited experience with China."

Journalists may believe they are immune from the regime's influence efforts, Newsham said. "But that's hard to believe."

Shift in Perceptions

The Chinese regime has heralded foreign journalist trips like those funded by CUSEF as important programs through which reporters can understand the "real China."

The Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, a state-controlled body that regularly funds trips for foreign officials, plays host for the journalists on the CUSEF-sponsored trips.

Then-director of the Institute Yang Wenchang, at an internal meeting in 2009, called U.S. media visits a "very good experiment," noting that such efforts needed to be carried out for the long term with an emphasis on creating a "unique brand."

In 2020, director of the institute Wang Chao wrote in their in-house publication that the organization has made increasing efforts to invite foreign media groups to China so that they can "experience China's progress firsthand, and use these media as a window to make more foreigners see a real China."

The Party-run All-China Journalists Association has been running a journalist exchange program since 2010. A 2016 state media article boasted that foreign media visits organized by the association have played a key role in expanding China's international "friend circle."

Such trips have allowed "reporters

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Grant Newsham, senior fellow, Center for Security Policy

Journalists sit next to the screens showing Chinese leader Xi Jinping delivering a speech via video for the opening ceremony of the 3rd China International Import Expo at a media center in Shanghai on Nov. 4, 2020.

STRI/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES



ANTHONY WALLACE/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES

A copy of The New York Times is displayed among other newspapers in Hong Kong on July 15, 2020.

who have never been to China and have been deeply influenced by biased U.S. reporting on China" to "have in-depth conversations with Chinese officials, experts, and media counterparts about China's development, which helps to clear much of the misunderstanding or concerns," the article said.

It further cited testimonials from a senior editor at Huffington Post, who said the visits arranged by the association made him "realize how ignorant the U.S. press circle is about China."

A Pulitzer-winning financial columnist with the L.A. Times, after a 9-day visit to China, said he found that the understanding from U.S. media about China "will never catch up with the speed of China's development," according to the report.

A reporter with Reuters, identified as "Patrick," said the China visit had changed his perception about the role of Chinese media.

"Before visiting China, I thought that Chinese media served the goal of class struggle, but after coming here I found that this idea remains fixated on the Cultural Revolution period, which is somewhat laughable," he said, according to the Chinese article. He called the media exchange "quite valuable."

The regime has also utilized these media trips in times of crisis, seeking to sway foreign media sentiments to its side. Following two major protests by ethnic minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang against the Party's rule in 2008 and 2009 respectively, which the CCP branded as riots, the association "condemned Western media that fabricated news at the earliest opportunity," according to a 2011 article by state-run media Xinhua. The group "promptly arranged foreign media for on-site interviews ... to create a favorable public opinion for the handling of the incidents," the article said.

Reuters declined to comment. Huffington Post and L.A. Times did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Private Dinners

From 2009 to 2017, CUSEF hosted a range of dinners and meetings with representatives from 35 outlets, including Time magazine, Wall Street Journal, Forbes, New York Times, AP, and Reuters.

Private dinners hosted by Tung with executives and editors at top American publications—usually in Washington and New York—were described by BLJ in the 2011 FARA filing as "invaluable for their effectiveness in engaging support from the leaders of the news industry."

"While it cannot be quantified, the influence that Mr. Tung has had on

high-level opinion-formers has served to sway news coverage in major outlets and influence the elite," BLJ continued.

As vice chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Tung presides over a key unit in the regime's United Front network. The advisory body self-identifies as a "patriotic united front" organization for "promoting socialist democracy."

United Front work, described by Party leaders as a "magic weapon," involves the efforts of thousands of groups inside and outside of China that carry out political influence operations, suppress dissident movements, gather intelligence, and facilitate the transfer of technology to China.

Tung, a Shanghai-born Hong Kong businessman, was the first chief executive of Hong Kong after the city transferred from British to Chinese rule in 1997. He resigned in 2005 before finishing his second term. While in office, he oversaw the drafting of the controversial anti-subversion bill called Article 23, which triggered the city's largest protests until the mass pro-democracy protests of 2019.

He has consistently expressed loyalty to the Chinese regime, most recently in December by voicing his support for the national security law that Beijing imposed on the city last year. He has also claimed that Beijing did not breach its promises under the "one country, two systems" formula—under which Hong Kong was to retain autonomy and freedoms not found in the mainland—and has not "intruded in Hong Kong affairs for the past 22 years."

In a meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in 2017, Xi praised Tung for "selflessly devoting your time, energy, wisdom, and resources to the nation," and "establishing an example for late-comers."

CUSEF and BLJ did not respond to requests for comment. CUSEF, in a 2017 statement to Foreign Policy, denied any connection to the Chinese regime. "We do not aim to promote or support the policies of any one government," a spokesperson said at the time.

The Lure of Chinese Money

Besides fostering influence through personal relationships, the CCP yields more direct influence on Western media by controlling their ability to operate in China and their access to Chinese citizens, Newsham noted.

"If you write something too critical of the CCP ... you can be kicked out of the country," Newsham said. "So it leads to a degree of self-censorship—that inevitably 'weakens' the coverage of [China] in that it presents a less than accurate account of things."

Foreign correspondents in China

have accused the regime of "weaponizing" visas to pressure foreign media to alter their reporting. Last February, the regime revoked the visas of three Wall Street Journal reporters after the newspaper declined to apologize for running an opinion article headlined, "China is the Real Sick Man of Asia."

In 2013, Bloomberg pulled the plug on an investigative report on ties between Wang Jianlin, then China's richest man, and top CCP leaders, for fear of retribution from Beijing. NPR reported last year. "It is for sure going to, you know, invite the Communist Party to, you know, completely shut us down and kick us out of the country," Bloomberg then-editor-in-chief Matthew Winkler said in an October 2013 conference call obtained by NPR. "They'll probably shut us down."

Successful Campaign

Newsham said Beijing's efforts to sway American press coverage have been "rather successful."

"Consider also how long it took to get any sort of decent press coverage of Chinese genocide in Xinjiang, or any coverage at all, of CCP organ harvesting from Chinese, often Falun Gong, victims," he said, referring to a spiritual group that has been severely persecuted in China since 1999. "From the CCP's perspective, that's a success."

Besides underreporting Beijing's human rights abuses, U.S. media outlets often fail to account for the Chinese regime's role in precipitating crises on domestic soil.

For instance, in its coverage of the CCP Virus pandemic, the "mainstream media refused to even entertain the possibility it leaked from a Chinese lab. And they attacked such claims as 'fake news,'" Newsham said.

He noted that this theory has only recently appeared to gain more acceptance in media coverage. "But the media wasted a year at least, and allowed the PRC to obscure the story."

Press coverage of the fentanyl crisis that kills tens of thousands of Americans each year also routinely fails to mention that the synthetic drugs originate from China, Newsham noted. Meanwhile, reports on the Chinese economy "very rarely" mention that official economic and financial statistics are unreliable, or that there is no rule of law in the country, he added.

Newsham suggested the matter of the media's engagement with the Chinese regime "comes down to principle ultimately."

"Would these reporters/executives have done something similar with South Africa's apartheid era government? Maybe not."

HUMAN RIGHTS

Investigator of China's Forced Organ Harvesting Wins First Global Humanitarian Leader Award

ANDREW CHEN

He is known to the Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners, and other oppressed minorities in China for his battle against the regime's human rights violations and courageous investigations into brutal organ harvesting.

David Matas, a Canadian lawyer and human rights defender, has become the first to be awarded the Global Humanitarian Leader of the Year award by the human rights group Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need (CSRDN).

The CSRDN works with the Canadian government to bring relief internationally and provide an opportunity for a new life to those in desperate need. This award is given to individuals or organizations for distinguished contributions in promoting the values of integrity, equality, and respect for international law.

"We want to recognize David's tremendous contributions to saving lives and justice by speaking out against the horrific crimes of forced organ harvesting in China. Killing people for their organs is a most cruel and barbaric practice and must be stopped," CSRDN co-chair Dr. Aliya Khan said in a press release on Jan. 6.

In his effort to end this brutality in China, Matas co-founded the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China, a not-for-profit company that consists of lawyers, academics, ethicists, medical professionals, researchers, and human rights advocates who are dedicated to the cause.

Organ Harvesting in China

Matas, along with former Edmonton MP David Kilgour, were jointly nominated for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for their investigation of the Chinese regime's persecution and forced organ harvesting of practitioners of Falun Gong, a type of spiritual cultivation from the Buddhist tradition.

"I value the award because it gets publicity to the issues that I am concerned about and it also gives credibility to the positions that I've taken," Matas told The Epoch Times.

The Matas-Kilgour report was later published in the 2009 book "Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for Their Organs".

We want to recognize David's tremendous contributions to saving lives and justice by speaking out against the horrific crimes of forced organ harvesting in China. Killing people for their organs is a most cruel and barbaric practice and must be stopped.

Dr. Aliya Khan, co-chair, Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need

"The government of China and its agencies in numerous parts of the country, in particular hospitals but also detention centres and 'people's courts,' since 1999 have put to death a large but unknown number of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries," the report wrote.

The Evolution of Atrocity: From Falun Gong to Uyghurs

Today, fifteen years after the report was released, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has continued and even accelerated such acts, Matas says.

"It's accelerating because the transplant capacity in China keeps on increasing, and with a real obvious increasing [in] alternative resources besides prisoners of conscience," Matas said.

He said that although the CCP still uses Falun Gong practitioners for organ harvesting on a mass scale, the population of the group has "depleted" over time and the CCP has been looking for additional sources, such as the Uyghur population.

The organ harvesting industry in China has developed more sophisticated technologies and supply chains for distributing the extracted organs.

"In 2006, there wasn't an organ distribution system nationally, and everything, all organs are being sourced locally. That really made the Uyghurs who are in Xinjiang not that easily accessible," Matas said.

"There's also a development in transplant technology. Organs can last longer outside the body today than they used to. So organ harvested today in Xinjiang can be shipped around in China."

The Magnitsky Act, a Global Human Rights Effort

The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, a bipartisan bill that expanded on the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012, has been used to address human rights violations around the world. Sanctioned offenders can be banned from entering the United

States and their assets can be frozen.

On July 9, 2020, the United States sanctioned one Chinese government entity and four current or former government officials who are reported to have committed serious rights abuses against ethnic Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

Huang Yuanxiong, a police chief at the Wucun police station in Xiamen city, Fujian Province, who interrogated and abused Falun Gong practitioners, was also named as a human rights offender in a list of offending officials released by the U.S. State Department on Dec. 10, 2020.

Canada also enacted its version of the Magnitsky Act in 2017, but it has not been used to address any human rights issues in China.

Matas said the use of this legislation is an encouragement for victimized communities and can show that the Canadian government cares about what is happening to them.

"Identifying perpetrators is a step towards bringing them to justice. Once named, they cannot be unnamed. Naming under the Magnitsky legislation is a signal that justice awaits the perpetrators, whether it comes sooner or later," he said.

"Naming disincentives the crime. Others will think twice to avoid their also being named. Not naming has the opposite effect, giving perpetrators a free ride, telling them that mass criminality has no adverse consequences. That is not a message we should want to give."

Countries and international entities are joining the cause with similar precautionary legislations. The European Union passed the "Global Magnitsky Human Rights Sanctions Regime" on Dec. 7, 2020. Australia and the United Kingdom have also introduced similar Magnitsky-styled bill or legislation.

Although the Magnitsky Act listing has not yet been used against offenders of organ harvesting, similar precautionary legislation has been developed in a number of countries, such as Taiwan's Human Organ Transplant Act, all of which would discourage atrocities.

"I would encourage people to get informed, get involved," Matas concluded.

EXCLUSIVE

Pompeo: The 'True Face' of the CCP Has Been Exposed

SAMUEL ALLEGRI & JAN JEKIELEK

In an interview with The Epoch Times' "American Thought Leaders" program, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the Trump administration's efforts to reconnect modern America to its founding origins based on God-given rights, and illustrated the administration's foreign policy of keeping America safe from the worldwide threat of communism.

At the outset, host Jan Jekielek asked Pompeo why it took so long for the United States to sanction the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for gross human rights violations, especially against practitioners of the meditation group Falun Gong.

"You go back all the way to Tiananmen Square. We've known the nature of this regime, and frankly, freedom-loving people across the world have known the nature of authoritarian regimes throughout history. And yet we ignored it," Pompeo said.

Every experience I've had, in my six years as a member of Congress, and now four years serving in the Trump administration, would suggest that anything but trusting anything that comes from the Chinese Communist Party is folly. They've broken promise after promise after promise.

Mike Pompeo, secretary of state

Pompeo said the reason for the disregard of the CCP's grave violations was in great extent due to the existence of a belief that if the United States engaged in fair and reciprocal trade and engagement, the situation would improve.

Reality showed that the idea was clearly "false all the way through," he said.

President Donald Trump understood the failure of that engagement policy from the beginning and changed the U.S. stance fundamentally, Pompeo said, adding that it wasn't just the United States that has changed its view of China, but the whole West.

"Even when you look at Europe and Australia and Southeast Asia, they know too, they know that the Chinese Communist Party is up to no good." He said that while dissidents were warning about CCP wrongdoing, the



Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at the State Department in Washington on Jan. 4, 2021.

United States was involved in very serious counterterrorism operations and the focus was taken off the CCP.

"We took our eye off this enormous threat, and now—it's now upon us. It's now inside the gates, the Chinese Communist Party is here in America, and the Trump administration has begun in every dimension to turn the ship in the right direction, to get America to once again do the right thing and protect itself from this communist threat in China."

Pompeo was then asked why he's been more focused on religious freedom than any other secretary of state.

"It's at the center of every civilization, this idea that human beings have inherent dignity because of their humanness," he said. "And if you get that piece wrong, bad things flow from that."

Under Trump's leadership, the administration has focused on religious freedom, not just in China, although specifically with the CCP, Pompeo said.

"We've seen what they're doing to the Uyghurs in the western part of the country. We've seen what they've done to Tibetans. We now see them doing the same thing to other ethnic minorities, including the people in Mongolia and the north part of China. And then Christians throughout the entire country," he said.

"These things that are fundamental affronts to human dignity are something that is a hallmark of authoritarian regimes, and General Secretary Xi Jinping is no different. He knows that he has to extend ever-increasing power and control in order to maintain his capacity to rule. And that shuts out the important space that religious freedom should have for every human being in the world."

We took our eye off this enormous threat, and now—it's now upon us. It's now inside the gates, the Chinese Communist Party is here in America, and the Trump administration has begun in every dimension to turn the ship in the right direction, to get America to once again do the right thing and protect itself from this communist threat in China.

Mike Pompeo, secretary of state

Pompeo said the administration has done its best to shine a light on these violations.

"The world will keep up this drum-beat, demanding simply that the Chinese Communist Party permit people to exercise their God-given rights to practice and not practice their faith in the way that they so choose."

He says he's emphasized a clear difference between the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people, because the people who live there are good but are sadly "under the jackboot of an authoritarian regime."

"Chinese people who live all across the world, including here in the United States of America, we want to honor them, and we admire them," Pompeo said. "And we hope that they too will join the call to change the nature of how this regime behaves in its international activities."

Trading with China fairly or having Chinese students in the United States isn't a problem, he said, as long as they don't break rules that would compromise U.S. security or freedom.

Pompeo says he distrusts the CCP. "Every experience I've had, in my six years as a member of Congress, and now four years serving in the Trump administration, would suggest that anything but trusting anything that comes from the Chinese Communist Party is folly."

"They've broken promise after promise after promise."

MILITARY

China Develops Helmets for Soldiers With Self-Destruct Button: Report

NICOLE HAO

The Chinese military is equipping soldiers stationed in Tibet with newly developed helmets embedded with a self-destruct button.

The button triggers an embedded bomb to go off, killing the soldier. "At a battalion or brigade level command center, a commander monitors a soldier who is far away by using the navigation system. The commander can activate the self-destruct function of the soldier's helmet if he can't get in contact with him," state-run media China Observer reported on Dec. 27, 2020.

Soldiers can also press the button themselves. "If a soldier is seriously wounded and doesn't want to be captured, he can activate the self-destruct function himself. This can maintain his dignity, as well as prevent the enemy from obtaining this system," the report stated.

The new helmet is part of an "individual soldier digital combat system" given to troops in the Tibet theater command.

They face Indian troops at the border, where there were recent skirmishes over disputed territory in the Ladakh region.

If a soldier is seriously wounded and doesn't want to be captured, he can activate the self-destruct function himself. This can maintain his dignity, as well as prevent the enemy from obtaining this system.

Report by state-run media China Observer

The system includes an antenna and bomb, night-vision multifunctional glasses, and a digital control terminal that can be worn on the arm.

After being equipped with the system, soldiers at the frontline can communicate with the battalion commander at the command center via radio, according to the report.

Meanwhile, the commander can see the frontline via video footage captured by the soldier's camera-equipped jacket.

By viewing the footage, the commander can order to fire artillery targeting Indian soldiers, the report stated. It further claimed that soldiers can push the button to detonate when they approach Indian forces. This system would ensure that the Chinese side would win any potential conflict with the Indian army, the report stated.

Soldiers in special forces units, the squad infantry, as well as the artillery, aviation, and armor divisions will be equipped with this system.

Hours after the Observer published the report, the content about the embedded bomb and suicide-style attacks was deleted.

But the original report was archived by multiple websites.

U.S.-based China affairs commentator Tang Jingyuan noted that this new equipment is evidence that the People's Liberation Army (China's military) struggles to manage its soldiers, and has to use extreme methods to ensure they don't desert their



A female Chinese People's Liberation Army soldier trains at the Pamir Mountains in Kashgar, northwestern China's Xinjiang region on Jan. 4, 2021.

posts or disobey their commanders.

Since 2018, the Chinese regime has issued increasingly severe punishment on deserters, such as banning them from public transportation, attending school, operating a business, working in government posts, and applying for passports.

"Now PLA soldiers are forced to fight after wearing the helmets. Otherwise, they will be killed by their commander," Tang said.



David Matas testifies at a U.S. congressional hearing on organ harvesting, in this file photo.

LISA FAN/EPOCH TIMES

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



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