

THE EPOCH TIMES

# CHINA INSIDER



An electronic billboard leased by the Xinhua News Agency in New York's Times Square, in this file photo.

## PROPAGANDA WAR

HOW BEIJING CO-OPTS WESTERN MEDIA IN ITS GLOBAL INFORMATION OFFENSIVE

## OPINION

# Chinese Propaganda at Home and Abroad: Beijing Wages Propaganda Battle Abroad

Part 1 of 3: The CCP co-opts American mainstream media in its global propaganda campaign

ANTONIO GRACEFFO

To win over the hearts and minds abroad and at home, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses a variety of tools such as state media, complicit foreign media, self-criticism in the United States, and self-censorship in foreign countries.

Through these powerful tools, fueled by social media, the CCP is able to take advantage of real or imagined shortcomings of Western powers, particularly the United States, to convince Americans and Chinese citizens alike, that Western democracy is failing and that the Chinese system is superior.

The goal of CCP propaganda is to trumpet the benefits of the Chinese system, as well as the notion that living under the protection of the CCP is best. Chinese citizens need not yearn for Western freedoms or democracy, as they already enjoy a better life than the rest of the world. Left-leaning Westerners are led to believe that the West should learn from China, adopting its system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, providing an improved and more egalitarian life for all of its citizens.

The CCP maintains several news media abroad, to act as government mouthpieces, spouting Party propaganda and influencing Westerners, as well as overseas Chinese. Some of these include China Global Television Network (CGTN), Xinhua, Global Times, and Sing Tao Daily. Then-U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned that these media were owned and effectively controlled by the CCP, and were part of a (CCP) propaganda effort.

Chinese state media abroad generally exploit the failures of democratic countries, while promoting a positive image of the CCP. This Xinhua article, "Chinese democracy puts Western illusion in [the] dust," explains how "Chinese democracy" is superior to Western democracy. This is ironic for an effective one-party state, with little or no media freedom, where citizens do not vote for their country's leader.

Another Xinhua article, "Heavy-handed crackdown on protests lays bare U.S. double standard on human rights," takes on the police reaction to the George Floyd riots. Meanwhile, pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong were being arrested in the middle of the night and pro-democracy legislators were being ejected from parliament. At the same time, in Xinjiang, Uyghurs were being subjected to the most inhumane treatment, including forced labor, torture, forced conversion, and organ harvesting.

A Global Times headline ran, "China urges terrorist crackdown by Taliban, as Kabul deadly blasts exemplify US failure." The Global Times is quick



A screen advertising Xinhua News Agency is seen in Times Square in New York on March 2, 2020.

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Front pages of the China Daily (L), the Beijing News (C) and the Global Times (R) featuring the Notre-Dame Cathedral disaster, in Beijing on April 17, 2019.



NICOLAS ASFOUR/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES

to say that the United States failed in Afghanistan, while avoiding any mention of the fact that the CCP has already held high-level talks with the murderous Taliban and that it financially supports numerous terrorist organizations, including the United Wa State Army (UWSA) in Burma (also known as Myanmar) and the Naga Separatists in India.

Headlines in Xinhua stated, "Chinese investment brings Africa hope, not trap" and "China lauded for championing global efforts in helping Africa." The implication here was that, not only was Chinese economic engagement with Africa beneficial to Africa, with no downside, but the rest of the world recognized and commended China's "generosity." International observers, however, have called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also called One Belt One Road) a debt trap, which causes countries to lose some of their autonomy and control of their infrastructure, while increasing their indebtedness. Sri Lanka, for example, lost control of their airport and their largest seaport. As a result of BRI lending, the Congo, as of 2019, owes China 38.92 percent of GDP, Djibouti 34.64 percent, and Angola 18.95 percent.

Similarly, this Global Times story, "Quarantined Italians praise Chinese government's COVID-19 fight," illustrates the gratitude of the Italian peo-

ple to the CCP for saving their country amid a pandemic, which started in China. The CCP locked down its own people, suspended civil and human rights, crashed its economy, and drove up unemployment. Additionally, many observers believe that the most likely origin of the pandemic was the Wuhan lab. Consequently, this is one more example of the CCP creating a problem—abusing its own citizens and then taking credit on the world stage for being a "savior." Meanwhile, Italians were angry that Beijing had published "Grazie China" videos and social media posts, which allegedly thanked China for their help during the pandemic. Italian researchers determined that a number of the accounts, posing as Italian citizens expressing gratitude, were actually Beijing bots—carried out by the 50 Cent Army or "wumao" (Chinese citizens paid to post CCP-dictated content).

Sing Tao Daily, based in Hong Kong, is a pro-Beijing media that targets overseas Chinese. This headline is typical: "Attending the return ceremony of the slain soldier, Biden was shamelessly criticized by conservatives"—Sing Tao looks for any misstep of the U.S. government and exploits it. Criticism of Chinese leader Xi Jinping would be unthinkable in China, therefore, CCP media interpret criticism of the American president, by Americans, as evidence that the country is on the verge of collapse.

Other stories in Sing Tao take the opportunity to espouse CCP sentiments such as this story about a meeting between State Councilor Yang Jiechi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken: "Biden's War Letter to Xi Jinping." According to the story, Yang told Blinken, "I don't think most countries in the world recognize the universal values advocated by the U.S., or agree that U.S. opinions can represent international public opinion." The CCP's goal is to displace the United States as the world leader. Part of achieving this goal is promoting the notion that the world would prefer to be led by China than by the United States.

In 2019, China Global Television Network (CGTN), which runs stories such as "America Failed Its Democracy," was deemed a foreign agent by

the U.S. Department of Justice.

In October 2020, the Trump administration designated six more Chinese media as foreign missions, including Yicai Global, Jiefang Daily, the Xinmin Evening News, Social Sciences in China Press, the Beijing Review, and the Economic Daily, bringing the total to 15 Chinese media that were forced to register. As foreign missions, these entities are required to disclose to the U.S. State Department their lists of staff, as well as property holdings. Unlike censorship of foreign media in China, the United States did not and does not restrict what these and other foreign media may publish. The U.S. position is that readers are free to read what they wish, but that they have the right to know that these media are part of a CCP propaganda effort, rather than independent or unbiased news outlets.

In 2021, the Department of Justice added Sing Tao Daily to the list of Chinese media that had to register as foreign agents. Sing Tao claims to be a privately-owned company, but both the current and former owners of Sing Tao Daily were members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a high-level advisory body composed of people loyal to and with close ties to the CCP.

*Editor's note: Part 2 discusses how Beijing's global propaganda campaign is aided by U.S. citizens and companies, dependent on Chinese money. Part 3 delves into how China's domestic propaganda machine praises the CCP, controls its people, and mocks America.*

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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.

REUTERS/ANDREW KELLY

## CCP VIRUS

# Newly Released Documents Detail US-Funded Coronavirus Research at Wuhan Institute of Virology: Report



A worker is seen inside the P4 laboratory in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 23, 2017.

KATABELLA ROBERTS

New documents have been released detailing U.S.-funded research on various types of coronaviruses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in Wuhan, China, where the first outbreak of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus occurred.

More than 900 pages of materials were obtained by The Intercept in connection with a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by the publication against the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The documents detail the work of the EcoHealth Alliance, a U.S.-based health organization that used federal money to fund research into bat coronaviruses at the Chinese lab. They include two previously unpublished grant proposals funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, as well as project updates related to EcoHealth Alliance's research.

One of the grants awarded by the NIH to the EcoHealth Alliance, "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence," amounted to \$666,422.

The grant proposal outlines an ambitious plan, led by EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak, to "investigate the ecology, evolutionary biology, and transmission dynamics of bat coronaviruses at the human-wildlife interface."

"Specifically, we will conduct field studies in China to obtain high-quality samples from bats, and identify, characterize and isolate known and novel coronavirus," the grant proposal reads. "We will analyze the patterns of coronavirus transmission among bats and other wildlife, and the risk of spillover to humans."

**The documents detail the work of the EcoHealth Alliance, a U.S.-based health organization that used federal money to fund research into bat coronaviruses at the Chinese lab.**

Researchers with Franceville interdisciplinary Medical Research Center collect samples from a bat inside a cave in the Zadié region of Gabon on Nov. 25, 2020.



STEEVE JORDAN/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES

Daszak's research also involved screening people who work with live animals.

The documents also note that key experimental work with humanized mice was conducted at a biosafety level 3 lab at the Wuhan University Center for Animal Experiment and not at the WIV, as was previously assumed, The Intercept reported.

The grant proposal also acknowledges the potential dangers of the study, including during fieldwork, stating that it "involves the highest risk of exposure to SARS or other CoVs, while working in caves with high bat density overhead and the potential for fecal dust to be inhaled."

"There is also some risk of exposure to pathogens or physical injury while handling bats, civets, rodents or other animals, their blood samples or their excreta," the document reads. "Virus isolation may be a challenge."

The bat coronavirus grant provided the EcoHealth Alliance with a total of \$3.1 million, including \$599,000 that the Wuhan Institute of Virology used in part to identify and alter bat coronaviruses likely to infect humans, according to The Intercept.

The grant was initially awarded for a five-year period from 2014 to 2019. Funding was renewed in 2019, but suspended by the Trump administration in April 2020.

The second grant awarded by the NIH to EcoHealth Alliance, "Understanding Risk of Zoonotic Virus Emergence in Emergent Infectious Disease Hotspots of Southeast Asia," was awarded in August 2020 and extends through 2025.

The grant proposal states that it "will bring leaders in emerging disease research from the U.S., Thailand, Singapore, and the three major Malaysian administrative regions together to build an early warning system to safeguard against pandemic disease threats."

The team would "identify novel viruses from Southeast Asian wildlife, characterize their capacity to infect and cause illness in people, and use serological assays of samples from people in rural communities with high wildlife contact to identify the background rate of exposure, and risk factors that drive this."

In-depth surveillance at hospitals serving those communities would be used to examine if cryptic outbreaks are caused by those novel agents, which researchers hoped

would help them develop a rapid response to outbreaks in such regions.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many scientists were concerned about the potential dangers associated with such experiments, and the newly released documents will no doubt raise further questions regarding the theory that the CCP virus pandemic originated from a lab leak in Wuhan.

Following the release of the documents, Richard Rubright, a molecular biologist at Rutgers University, wrote on Twitter:

"The materials confirm the grants supported the construction—in Wuhan—of novel chimeric SARS-related coronaviruses that combined a spike gene from one coronavirus with genetic information from another coronavirus, and confirmed the resulting viruses could infect human cells."

"The documents make it clear that assertions by the NIH Director, Francis Collins, and the NIAID Director, Anthony Fauci, that the NIH did not support gain-of-function research or potential pandemic pathogen enhancement at WIV are untruthful."

In August, the World Health Organization (WHO) urged China to share raw data from the earliest COVID-19 cases, saying that it's "vitaly important to know how the COVID-19 pandemic began" and to set an example for establishing the origins of all future animal-human spillover events.

A WHO-led team spent four weeks in and around the central city of Wuhan with Chinese researchers in January 2021 to investigate the origins of the pandemic.

In March, researchers said that the virus had probably been transmitted to humans from bats through another animal and that "introduction through a laboratory incident was considered to be an extremely unlikely pathway."

However, the Chinese communist regime has faced fierce criticism from the international community, which has accused them of engaging in a cover-up.

In July, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters that investigations into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic in China were being hampered by the lack of raw data on the first days of spread there and urged the regime to be more transparent.

STR/CNS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

## OPINION

# Beijing Cements Washington's Climate Fail

A sandstorm is engulfing a village in Linze county, in the city of Zhangye in China's northwestern Gansu Province on April 25, 2021.



## ANDERS CORR

The Biden administration's recent visit to China has highlighted Washington's failure to fix the climate change problem. Most scientists say greenhouse gas emissions (GhGs) are causing irreversible global warming, and if we don't make changes quickly, like burning less fossil fuel, then irreversible climate catastrophe will result. China is the world's biggest emitter by far, but shows no interest in scaling back despite abject pleas from America's climate czar, John Kerry. Joe Biden got elected promising to make the changes necessary to avoid that end. But he failed, and for two main reasons. First, his administration is encouraging OPEC countries to pump more oil, which will decrease its global price and increase consumption. More consumption results in more emissions.

Second, President Biden is making unilateral climate concessions that decrease American production of oil, which will let Beijing off the hook. China emits about

double the greenhouse gas of America. After surrendering all of America's bargaining leverage, the Chinese regime will be increasingly empowered to force economically-debilitating emissions concessions on other countries. America will then be too weak to force China to decrease emissions.

Thus, the main effect of Biden's so-called environmentalism is to squelch American economic competitiveness, which we need to ease Beijing into responsible environmental stewardship, not to mention protect the world from the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) militarism and totalitarian rule. Biden is therefore not only doing too little to stop climate change, he's making it worse by allowing Xi Jinping to increase his power. Biden's environmental supporters should be outraged, but they are not. So Biden is responding to their false impression that if America leads through unilateral emissions reductions, the world will follow. That's not going to happen.

Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, will eagerly fill any energy market that the United States, from the goodness of our hearts, abandons. The CCP, desperate for justifi-

catory economic growth and in military competition with the United States, will continue in its emissions, ignoring past commitments to hit peak carbon in 2030, and neutrality by 2060.

To understand why, consider this fact: The CCP plans to race America economically, until China defeats us. America's belief in democracy, and the CCP's power-hungry totalitarianism, are on a collision course. Only one will survive.

The CCP commitments on emissions reductions are cheap talk, and like many of its agreements, are unworthy of the paper on which they are written. The regime's repeated abrogation of promises include a failure to support the Paris Agreement of 2015. China has funded almost 70 percent of the world's coal plant construction over the past decade, in 152 countries, through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also called One Belt, One Road). Building power plants is good for China's economy, so the regime wants to continue.

Yet, America keeps returning to China, foolishly seeking engagement and cooperation, only to have its hopes dashed, again and again. The more we seek cooperation, the weaker we look, and the more latitude Xi Jinping realizes he has.

The CCP's crushing power against Biden was on display for all to see during John Kerry's humiliating four-day visit to Tianjin, China, from Aug. 31 to Sept. 3. The visit served as an occasion for Chinese officials, including politburo member Yang Jiechi on a video call, to publicly lecture Kerry about America's supposed lack of cooperation with China, which he said needs to be rectified if the United States hopes for any ostensible climate cooperation in return.

On Sept. 1, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Kerry that "cooperation on climate change cannot be divorced from the overall situation of China-U.S. relations."

Beijing is thus denying that China itself needs climate cooperation, which is a form of madman brinkmanship that walks the world to the brink of climate disaster, as if the CCP does not at all mind plunging off the climate cliff. The regime's goal is to use environmental scare tactics to force America and its allies into yet more unilateral concessions, and in the process, to get America's grudging acquiescence to the regime's territorial expansion and violation of human rights.

More specifically, the CCP's demands are an end to three American defenses of democracy. First, it wants an end to sanctions against Chinese officials, who have committed the Uyghur genocide and abrogated the rights of Hongkongers. Second, it wants the United States to ease counter-espionage against Chinese spies. And third, it wants us to abandon the defense of Taiwan and essentially surrender the island democracy over to the whims of the regime.

Concessions on any of these points would be unconscionable, and a signal to the world that America has lost in its global defense of democracy.

The CCP's climate brinkmanship rests on the threat that America will boil from the climate change that China's industrial growth is causing. America will choke on the smog of its own intemperate and immoral consumerism, that has long taken

advantage of the cheap labor and low environmental standards to be found in China. Those low standards shaved a few pennies off the price of our Amazon packages, but at the cost of American industrial strength and jobs in the heartland. They destroyed our economic defenses against the regime's predatory trade practices.

The CCP "hopes the U.S. is woolly-headed enough to trade away its security priorities for unenforceable climate promises," writes the Wall Street Journal's editorial board, which was critical of Kerry's climate negotiations.

**The CCP's climate brinkmanship rests on the threat that America will boil from the climate change that China's industrial growth is causing.**

The framing of Kerry's visit to China illustrates America's weak position. On Sept. 2, Kerry was photographed in Tianjin, from Beijing, the center of power in China. He sat alone at a plain table with a modest American flag in front of a small folding screen on which was a Chinese painting of a peacock. The screen was dwarfed by a large wall made of cheap paneling. A garish blue plate gave Kerry's name in small English letters, with larger Chinese lettering at the top.

After being lectured like a schoolboy, Kerry consoled himself to reporters, saying that most of his meetings were at a very detailed level with Xie Zhenhua. But, Xie is a relatively low-level Chinese negotiator, whereas Kerry holds a cabinet-level position. Thus already at the negotiating table, China has forced a concession onto the Biden administration. As the more senior negotiating partner, Kerry is likely to reveal America's bottom line in Tianjin, whereas Xie must check any proposal through layers of bureaucracy, thus protecting Xi Jinping's moving bottom line.

The Chinese regime is outmaneuvering the United States on climate negotiations, in Afghanistan, in Hong Kong, and at the United Nations, to name just a few places. America must get back on track, and quickly, or there will be no returning from the cliff over which we plunge, alone, leaving Beijing to rule this smoggy world.

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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.*

STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The People's Liberation Army storms ashore from landing crafts in an exercise on the mainland coast close to Taiwan, on Sept. 10, 1999.

## OPINION

## Is Taiwan on the Brink of Defeat?

## RICHARD A. BITZINGER



Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense (MND) dropped a bombshell last week when it presented an incredibly downbeat assessment of the growing Chinese threat toward the island state.

In its annual report to the parliament, the defense ministry stated that China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) could "paralyze" Taiwan's defenses.

The report, according to Reuters, stated that China could launch both "soft and hard electronic attacks," knocking out communications and take down Taiwan's internet. This, in turn, would "paralyze [Taiwanese] air defenses, command of the sea, and counter-attack systems abilities."

Saturation attacks with missiles could incapacitate command centers and military installations. Meanwhile, computer network attacks and fifth columnists of Chinese spies inside Taiwan could sabotage transportation, traffic systems, and public utilities, as well as "decapitate" the political leadership.

Finally, the MND report argues that China's growing force of long-range missiles and an increasingly capable PLA Navy—operating three aircraft carriers by 2025—could be sufficient to prevent foreign militaries (that is, the United States and perhaps Japan) from intervening on Taiwan's behalf.

Why such a gloomy forecast? Military leaders usually think like pessimists but talk like optimists, especially in public. They plan for



Four U.S.-made AH-1W SuperCobras attack helicopters launch rockets during the 35th "Han Kuang" military drill in southern Taiwan's Pingtung county on May 30, 2019.

worse-case scenarios but almost always expect to win.

This simply could be a good bureaucratic move on the part of the Taiwan military: scare the civilian leadership into coughing up more money for defense.

That's a tricky play, however. It could just as easily backfire, by convincing too many people that defending against China is a hopeless task, so just give up and negotiate a settlement.

Nevertheless, it is past time for Taiwan to have a hard, serious look at its capabilities to deter China or, increasingly, be able to defeat an attack by the PLA.

Take defense spending, for example. Roughly 25 years ago, Taiwanese military expenditures totaled around US\$13 billion. Earlier this year, the Taiwan government approved a 2022 defense budget of US\$16.9 billion.

Over the same period, Chinese defense spending has grown nearly twenty-fold: from around US\$10 billion in 1996 to more than US\$209 billion in 2021. And while this does

not consider inflation, neither does it include suspected "off-budget" military expenditures such as spending on the People's Armed Police, the Chinese Coast Guard, or military pensions.

Of course, one does not expect Taiwan to match China dollar-for-dollar when it comes to defense spending, but surely it can do better than a 30 percent increase spread over 25 years.

To be sure, Taiwan has its strengths. It has made considerable strides in building up a long-range precision-strike capability. It deploys a variety of anti-ship, air-launched, and land-attack cruise missiles (ASCMs, ALCMs, and LACMs), including a 745-mile range supersonic LACM. It also has several short-range Tien Chi ballistic missiles forwardly deployed (probably on Kinmen and Matsu).

In addition, Taiwan has acquired a variety of stand-off smart munitions from the United States, as well as the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) ballistic missile in mobile launchers.

Taiwan has also expanded its ground-based air defenses, hardened shelters for its fighter jets (or moved them to underground hangers or dispersed highway strips), and improved its capabilities for rapid runway repair and camouflage.

Finally, as Ian Easton of the Project 2049 Institute has noted, Taiwan is "a defender's dream come true," its few beaches bordered by "cliffs and urban jungles," its granite hills "honeycombed with tunnels and bunker systems," and its outer islands bristling with missiles, rockets, and artillery.

Overall, therefore, Taiwan has made remarkable progress on building a large conventional deterrent. As such, there is some cause for optimism.

In fact, the MND report acknowledged that the PLA still lacked the capacity—particularly when it came to transport and logistics—to launch a full-scale invasion of Taiwan. Nevertheless, China is working to boost those capabilities.

The questions remain, therefore. When will the Taiwanese public take the threat seriously? When will Taiwan start spending more on defense, and in the right places?

One of Taiwan's first fixes should be to its ground forces. Admittedly, modern, high-tech warfare emphasizes navies and air forces over armies, as well as stand-off precision-strike with missiles and guided munitions. However, an island state like Taiwan still needs a respectable army for anti-invasion duties.

Taiwan has downsized its ground forces to the point of incredulity. The Taiwan Army is down to around 150,000 soldiers, far less than the 215,000 troops the MND says it needs to repel an invasion. Moreover, the conscription period has been cut to just four months—hardly enough time to train a "battle-ready" soldier. The army even lacks sufficient numbers of bullets for training.

And while Taiwan says that it can count on 1.5 million reservists, Minnick notes that they train only five days every two years (if they are called up at all), "during which time they typically perform simple chores and not weapons training." In fact, he argues, the reserves would be "cannon fodder" in wartime.

Secondly, Taiwan needs to make a long-term commitment to making significant annual increases (say, a minimum of 3 percent) in defense spending and to allocating funds to those areas where it could build up potent, asymmetric counters to the PLA. These include stealthy surface ships, carrier-killer missiles, sea mines, cyber weapons, and a variety of stand-off, long-range precision-strike weapons such as smart drones.

Finally, the United States and other countries (particularly Japan) that are increasingly concerned about a growing Chinese threat in the region can do their part by reaffirming their commitment to the defense of Taiwan, as a means of preserving a peaceful cross-strait relationship. Fortunately for Taipei, a sizable percentage of Americans continue to support Taiwan's self-government, even to the point of sending U.S. troops to its defense.

Going back to the MND report, therefore, pessimism is perhaps not unwarranted. Neither, however, is defeatism.

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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.*



U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry is seen on a screen with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi during a meeting via video link on Sept. 1, 2021.



Top Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi in Washington on Nov. 09, 2018.



CHINESE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE VIA AP

STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



An AI cancer detection microscope by Google is seen during the World Artificial Intelligence Conference 2018 (WAIC 2018) in Shanghai on Sept. 18, 2018.

## NATIONAL SECURITY

## Security Experts Call for Ban on AI Transfers to China

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

U.S. tech companies continue to build artificial intelligence (AI) research labs in mainland China, despite the ability of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to co-opt any research they do for its own purposes, military and otherwise, experts warn.

The experts believe that the only way to ensure a halt in the growth of the CCP's AI capabilities is to implement a ban on technology transfers to China from the United States.

According to a 2020 study by a think tank at Georgetown University, more than 10 percent of all AI research labs owned and operated by Facebook, Google, IBM, and Microsoft are now located in China. And that number is growing.

U.S. companies also continue to face unbridled intrusion into their intellectual property by the CCP. Both the vulnerability of companies' research in mainland China and the interference of CCP officials could present a grave threat to international security, according to experts.

### Resisting CCP in China 'Virtually Impossible'

Foreign businesses face significant risks by operating in China, according to Casey Fleming, CEO of strategic advisory firm Black Ops Partners.

"Everything that happens in China is 100 percent under the control of the Chinese Communist Party," Fleming told The Epoch Times. "There is no such thing as 'doing business in China' without it being directed by the Chinese Communist Party."

Fleming believes that it isn't possible for U.S. companies to carry out AI research in China without having that research stolen or otherwise co-opted by the CCP or the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the official name of the regime's military.

According to Fleming, that state of affairs is a result of the CCP's military-civil fusion strategy, which seeks to eliminate all barriers between the civil and military spheres with regard to research and development of new technologies.

"When they look at your civil AI, they're specifically looking at it first and foremost for military applications and secondarily toward commercial applications," Fleming said. "With the Chinese Communist Party, civil and military are fused. They are one in the same."

That fusion is one reason why experts have sounded the alarm over the potential military applications of China's space program. In a similar

There is no such thing as 'doing business in China' without it being directed by the Chinese Communist Party.

Casey Fleming, CEO, Black Ops Partners

A screen shows visitors being filmed by AI security cameras with facial recognition technology at the 14th China International Exhibition on Public Safety and Security at the China International Exhibition Center in Beijing on Oct. 24, 2018.



NICOLAS ASFOURI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

vein, the CCP has made the full integration of AI into all facets of life a central focus for its military strategy against the United States and plans to be the world's AI leader by 2030.

Robert Bunker, director of research and analysis at C/O Futures, a consulting company, similarly said that it was "virtually impossible for an American tech company to operate in China and not aid the PLA in developing its AI research and prototyping capabilities."

"The CCP has infiltrated all the high-tech Chinese corporations with its political and intelligence officers—in fact, those companies cannot operate without such close cooperation with the central government," Bunker told The Epoch Times in an email.

### Wooed by the Chinese Market

According to Fleming, U.S. tech companies have a difficult time resisting the false promises of the CCP, all but guaranteeing access to the nation's largely untapped market of 1.3 billion people. Those companies aren't getting the deal they signed up for, however.

"Any company doing business in China is being played," Fleming said. "How long can you survive when they steal your intellectual property and sell your product based on your intellectual property to your customers at 45 cents on the dollar?"

According to CCP-owned media, more than a quarter of all Silicon Valley startups depended on Chinese investments in 2016. Though that number has since dwindled, much of the damage continues to be felt as those investments offered CCP-backed companies the opportunity

to gain early access to U.S. intellectual property.

The Pentagon's Defense Innovation Unit labeled such efforts as part of a technology transfer strategy and noted that it allowed the CCP and the PLA to effectively purchase cutting-edge technologies at the same time that the U.S. military was acquiring them.

Compounding the issue is the CCP's 2015 National Security Law, which requires all information systems in China to be made "secure and controllable." Analysts say that this gives the CCP the power to force companies to hand over invaluable intellectual property, such as source code and encryption keys. A spate of new cybersecurity rules introduced in recent years has further tightened controls of data in China.

As a result of Beijing's growing clampdown on data, major companies, including IBM, immediately allowed the CCP to review their source code. Other companies, such as Tesla, evaded scrutiny by Chinese authorities for a time by storing data overseas, a practice recently forbidden by the CCP.

### Stopping the Flow

Bunker, Fleming, and the Defense Department agree that there's a clear threat posed to international order by the CCP's economic coercion and by global companies' continued desire to develop research facilities in China regardless of CCP interference.

For the experts, the greatest threat, in no uncertain terms, was the fact that the United States doesn't currently monitor, restrict, or ban foreign venture investments in, nor the transfer of, early-stage technologies

with potential military applications, including AI.

Fleming believes that the United States needs to better adapt its laws in accordance with an understanding that it's engaged in a war with the CCP—a non-conventional, hybrid form of war, wherein the CCP is determined to ignore all rules at the expense of international order.

"It's war," Fleming said. "The problem is that it's a war that we as Westerners don't understand. We only think in terms of uniforms, troops, ships, guns, planes, and bombs."

That unrestricted hybrid warfare aims to blend the political, economic, and cyber capabilities of the CCP to do all of the damage of a kinetic war without risking any of the repercussions.

Such a war will continue unabated until the United States puts a stop to the one-way flow of emergent technologies to Beijing from Silicon Valley, according to Fleming.

"The technology should be categorized as national security software or technology, and therefore precluded from distribution to adversarial nation-states," Fleming said. "The classification doesn't exist right now, for the most part."

"Our laws have not caught up with technology."

To that end, then-President Donald Trump signed an executive order in 2020 to help guide federal development on the use of AI. Other efforts by the Trump administration to limit the transfer of AI to China were blunted, however, and ultimately only limited AI exports to China that dealt with geospatial imaging software.

It's currently unclear how the Biden administration will respond to the situation. For Bunker, however, the answer is clear: Stop the flow.

"The U.S. government needs blanket high-tech and critical technology transfer bans between American and Chinese corporations for starters," he said.

"American companies are directly responsible for providing the CCP regime with its initial military AI startup capability. This is already haunting us in the increasing great power confrontation between Chinese authoritarianism and American liberal-democracy taking place."

Andrew Thornebrooke is a freelance reporter covering China-related issues with a focus on defense and security. He holds a MA in military history from Norwich University and authors the newsletter Quixote Hyperdrive.

LIRAN/XINHUA VIA AP



Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (L) and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pose for a photo during their meeting in Tianjin, China, on July 28, 2021.

## CCP

## China Forms 'New Axis of Collaborators' With Pakistan and Taliban, Former US Commissioner Says

FRANK FANG &amp; JAN JEKIELEK

The communist regime in China has created a new alliance to challenge the United States and Western democracy, according to Johnnie Moore, a former U.S. Commissioner on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) commissioner.

"They're creating a new axis of collaborators against the Western democratic order," Moore said, referring to the alliance of China, Pakistan, and the Taliban, in a recent interview with The Epoch Times "American Thought Leaders" program. He called the alliance a "geopolitical catastrophe."

China has openly backed the Taliban in recent months. In June, China's foreign minister Wang Yi, at a meeting with his counterparts from Pakistan and Afghanistan, vowed to "bring the Taliban back into the political mainstream." A month later, Wang welcomed a visiting Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar.

After the Taliban's swift takeover of Kabul in mid-August, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) quickly welcomed the Taliban's rise in the war-torn nation, though the Chinese regime has yet to formally recognize the terrorist group.

The Taliban has also seen the CCP as an important ally. In a recent interview with the Italian newspaper La Repubblica,

Taliban spokesperson Zabiullah Mujahid praised Beijing as a "main partner" and a "gateway to markets around the world."

Moore said there are three reasons Beijing values a partnership with the Taliban.

First, the Chinese regime wants to tap into Afghanistan's rare earth and other minerals, which are estimated to be worth up to \$3 trillion.

Rare earths are 17 elements on the periodic table that are vital in many industries including consumer electronics, defense, and green technologies. Currently, China controls about 80 percent of the global rare earth supply, and has previously cut off its exports as a retaliatory tactic against other countries.

Additionally, Beijing wants to control movement across its shared border with Afghanistan, Moore said.

China's far-western Xinjiang region and Afghanistan share a 46-mile-long border. The Chinese regime fears that Uyghur militants might use the border crossing to launch at-

tacks in Xinjiang, where Beijing has locked up more than 1 million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in internment camps.

Most important of all, Moore said, Beijing wants to "exploit the current situation in order to diminish the prestige of the United States."

Beijing has used the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan as fodder for its propaganda campaign, painting the United States as an unreliable partner. Most recently, on Sept. 3, state-run China Daily published an article criticizing U.S. democracy. It argued that when the United States "exported" its "model of democracy," it brought "disaster to the countries concerned."

The relationship between Beijing and the Taliban is the latest example of a neocolonialism and exploitive foreign policy emanating from the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing, that aims to take advantage of any country and any leader gullible enough to accept their promises, which are almost never fulfilled.

Johnnie Moore, former commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

### The CCP's 'Neocolonialism'

"The relationship between Beijing and the Taliban is the latest example of a neocolonialism and exploitive foreign policy emanating from the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing, that aims to take advantage of

any country and any leader gullible enough to accept their promises, which are almost never fulfilled," Moore said.

Many developing countries, including Kenya, Nepal, and Mozambique, have become indebted to China after they signed up to China's Belt and Road investment initiative (BRI). Beijing rolled out the initiative in 2013 to build up trade routes linking China with other parts of the world in an effort to build up geopolitical influence.

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are also BRI members; the latter signed up to the Chinese initiative in 2016. On Sept. 2, the Taliban expressed a desire to continue being part of the BRI.

That day, Abdul Salam Hanafi, a senior member in the Taliban negotiating team, told assistant Chinese foreign minister Wu Jiahao that the BRI would "contribute to the region's development and prosperity."

Moore said: "What they [CCP] do is they exploit vulnerable countries through leaders in order to advance their agenda.

"And what's happening around the world slowly and what the Taliban will learn, and what Pakistan will learn, and some of these other countries that have chosen to go down this path, is what the Chinese people long ago learned but aren't allowed to say: The first victim of the worst vices of the Communist Party is its own people, the Chinese people."

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