

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

CHINA-MADE COVID TEST KITS

COMING TO MILLIONS OF US HOUSEHOLDS

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An instructor trains members of Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces, volunteer military units of the Armed Forces, in a city park in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Jan. 22, 2022.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

China Will Play Major Role in Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Experts

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

Tensions are mounting throughout the world concerning the possibility of a war between Russia and Ukraine. One question that has experts on edge is what role China might play in such a conflict, and how such an event could set a dangerous precedent for China's global ambitions—particularly in relation to Taiwan.

Russia has demanded that Ukraine never be allowed to join NATO. As of this week, it has amassed 130,000 troops at the eastern border of Ukraine to intimidate Western nations into disallowing Ukraine from ever joining the alliance and to pressure the global community away from further militarizing the region.

The Chinese leadership has joined in the effort, urging cool heads while also giving cover for Russia and its history of illegal expansion.

The regime's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke about the situation during a telephone call on Jan. 27. Wang used the call to tell Blinken to "stay calm" and warned the United States to stop creating "anti-China cliques."

The interaction could signal a much-increased role for China as a diplomatic go-between for Russia and the rest of the world.

A Different World than 2014

Despite the temptation to compare the current crisis to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, experts say that the geopolitical and economic landscape is quite different in 2022.

Perhaps the most notable difference, they say, is that China will play a prominent, if not dominant, role in any potential conflict and its eventual resolution.

This state of affairs is in stark contrast to 2014 when, given the chance to support Russia's claims to Crimea, the Chinese regime's leadership demurred.

"China did not recognize the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea because it did not want to get implicated," said Sam Kessler, a geopolitical analyst at North Star Support Group, a multinational risk management

Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during their meeting on the sidelines of a BRICS summit, in Brasilia, Brazil, Nov. 13, 2019.

This time, if the West carries through on its most severe threats, the impact on China could be profound, in terms of economics, but also in terms of reputation.

Christopher Miller, assistant professor of international history, Tufts University

A conflict between Russia and Ukraine would force Beijing to take a more solid stance than they did in 2014.

Sam Kessler, geopolitical analyst, North Star Support Group



SPUTNIK/RAMIL SITDIKOV/KREMLIN VIA REUTERS

firm. "They didn't condemn it either, which is important to know."

"The Chinese delegation abstained twice when initiatives to officially condemn the [annexation] were introduced at the United Nations," Kessler added.

There were multiple reasons for declining to recognize the Crimean Peninsula as Russian territory at the time, according to Giselle Jamison, associate professor of political science and international relations at St. Thomas University.

In the first, it interfered with plans for a deep-water port in Ukraine that China had invested in, Jamison told EpochTV's "China Insider" program. In the second, China did not have the depth of economic ties with Russia that it has now.

In fact, the increasing interconnectedness of the Chinese and Russian economic spheres owes largely to the 2014 annexation, which Kessler said changed nearly everything about the U.S.-China-Russia trilateral relationship and its balance of power.

"The sanctions imposed in 2014 enabled Moscow to abandon most of their Western economic interests and pivot to China and the rest of Asia," Kessler said.

"This has streamlined significant economic, security, defense, political, and good neighbor agreements that previously had either been stalled or gradual processes."

This interconnectedness means that China stands to lose much more to sanctions on Russia in 2022 than in 2014.

The potential knock-on effects of Russian sanctions on Chinese markets may thus necessitate that China's communist leadership will engage heavily in the Ukraine crisis.

"A conflict between Russia and Ukraine would force Beijing to take a more solid stance than they did in 2014," Kessler said.

"The current circumstances and diplomatic environment are more evolved and strained between all parties involved than they were in 2014. It would impact China

both politically and economically because their strategic positioning is now more direct and transparent than it had been."

Kessler's comments were in line with the findings of a recent report on the issue by Christopher Miller, an assistant professor of international history at Tufts University, and co-director of the school's Russia and Eurasia program.

"Because China is deeply intertwined with Russia in terms of trade and, to a lesser extent, finance, it would be unable to sit on the sidelines," Miller wrote. "Beijing would either have to reject US sanctions and export controls, help enforce them, or do some mix of both."

"Either way, China would be forced to choose."

China is Key to Russian Success, or Failure

That power over the effectiveness of U.S. economic coercion methods is new territory for China and means that Beijing could make or break any attempt by the United States to punish Russia for its actions.

There are two key reasons, according to analysts, that indicate that Beijing would not support Western sanctions on Russia. The first is that its dependence on international trade with Russia has grown. The second is that its leadership is not incentivized to promote U.S. goals or ways of doing business.

Concerning the first, Russia currently imports and exports more goods with China than any other nation. Sanctions would majorly disrupt China's state-owned firms and Russian-based corporations.

Specifically, Miller's report warns that commodity markets for aluminum, nickel, copper, and palladium could be significantly disrupted, leading to price hikes which would further compound supply chain woes for critical technologies, to say nothing of energy supplies and other sectors.

Likewise, enforcing such measures would

CYBERSECURITY

China's 2022 Olympics App Can Spy on People: Researcher

FRANK FANG & DAVID ZHANG

A U.S. researcher is flagging a security flaw in a smartphone app that's mandatory for all those attending the 2022 Winter Olympics, describing what he found as "nefarious and concerning."

Jonathan Scott, lead mobile security engineer at fintech company cLabs, discovered the flaw recently after reverse-engineering both the iOS and Android versions of the My 2022 app—a tool developed by Beijing to track users' COVID-19 health status and to provide information about the Games.

What Scott also discovered was that the AI algorithm behind the app was developed by iFlytek Co., a blacklisted Chinese tech firm known for its ties with Beijing's human rights abuses in China's far-western Xinjiang region.

In an interview with EpochTV's "China Insider" program, Scott explained the flaw: The app listens to all audio and when it detects a user saying words deemed sensitive by Beijing, it collects the audio and sends it to servers in China for analysis.

The app automatically moves to the phone's foreground once it's triggered by sensitive words, even if the phone's user leaves the app in the background, according to Scott.

"It's an invasive application," he said.

As for what these sensitive words are, Scott said they're the words that make up a censorship keyboard list previously reported by the Citizen Lab. The list serves

what he called a "wake-up feature" to trigger the app's recording function.

The Citizen Lab, a research institute at the University of Toronto, released its digital forensic analysis on Jan. 18, discovering that the app's encryption to protect users' audio files and health and customs forms can be vulnerable to hackers.

The analysis also found that the app has the ability to censor 2,442 blacklisted words considered "politically sensitive in China." It concluded that the list was inactive on the app—contrary to what Scott found.

"I'm fairly confident they did not decrypt the iOS application, so they couldn't actually see these functions happening. Because it's very evident once you've decrypted the iOS application," Scott said about the discrepancy.

Scott said the code of his research is available for people to see at his GitHub repository, and he will release a full report on his findings.

He also noticed a questionable change of the app on the Apple App Store download page. The app's privacy policy changed from no data collected on Jan. 22 to collecting only contact information from its users.

In October 2019, the Trump administration placed iFlytek and 27 other Chinese companies and public security bureaus on a U.S. Commerce Department blacklist.

The department's filing said the "entities have been implicated in human rights violations and abuses in the implementation

FRANCOIS-XAVIER MARIT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A user holds a mobile phone showing the Winter Olympic Games 2022 official app "MY 2022" in Beijing on Jan. 20, 2022.

For Apple and Google to allow a blacklisted company to actually be on even Americans' phones, I mean, there's an issue there, right?

Jonathan Scott, lead mobile security engineer, cLabs

require China to go against its longstanding dedication to national sovereignty, by serving as an enforcer of the United States' vision for a liberal international order, which is unlikely.

There is also a tertiary problem for Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders, according to Jamison, which is pride. Pride that would prevent the regime from promoting export controls that could be used to imply that China somehow needs U.S. permission to trade with whomever it wishes.

"This time, if the West carries through on its most severe threats, the impact on China could be profound, in terms of economics, but also in terms of reputation," Miller wrote. "If China adheres to US sanctions against Russia, Beijing's economic heft will seem less significant and America's financial power will be enhanced," Miller wrote.

"This raises the stakes for Beijing, which in a crisis might conclude it has no choice but to stand up to America's extraterritorial sanction power. If so, Russia would find a valuable friend amid the crisis—and the West could find itself embroiled in a two-front financial war."

China Signaling Support for Russia

The Chinese regime, in fact, may gain influence if the United States attempts to leverage heavier sanctions on Russia, analysts note. This is due in no small part to the fact that Beijing has made leveraging loans a strategic priority for garnering influence worldwide.

If the United States sanctioned Russia, China could offer loans to cover the lost revenues, thereby simultaneously helping Russia

to evade the heft of the sanctions while also increasing its own economic sway over Russia.

"China is very likely to not obey any Western sanctions that would be imposed on Russia since they already firmly opposed the ones placed on Iran," Kessler said.

"If the West imposed more export controls and sanctions on Russia, then China could find ways to violate them while imposing blame on the West for having caused it," Kessler added.

To that end, Chinese state-run media has already broken with the precedent of 2014, and suggested support for Russia. The Global Times, a hawkish CCP-controlled outlet, tweeted an editorial that said the crisis stemmed from NATO cannibalizing Russia's strategic space.

In recent times, as the United States and its allies have taken an increasingly tough stance toward Beijing's malign activities, China and Russia have grown closer. Putin is expected to visit China in February, and the two nations have implemented joint military drills on an unprecedented scale over the last year.

While China is key to Russian success, however, its communist leadership is not as altruistic as Russia might like to believe. And China's slow shift into the leading role in the Sino-Russian relationship could carry its own price to pay for Russia.

"Chinese philosophy and politics, in my opinion, is a lot more long term and, in a way, [more] clever, than the abrupt nature of Putin," Jamison said.

While Beijing is unlikely to directly aid

in a conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Jamison said, it would help Russia sidestep any punishments, and carefully calculate the United States' response.

"China is watching," Jamison said.

Ukraine: A Precedent for War With Taiwan?

The Russia-Ukraine crisis is something of a litmus test, then, for the viability of an alternative framework to the U.S.-led international order. It is an opportunity for CCP leadership to measure the effectiveness of authoritarian governance as a counter vision to the liberal-democratic ideals enshrined by the U.S.-led rules-based international order.

According to Miller, China will use the crisis in Ukraine to gauge the effectiveness of the United States in responding to regional issues throughout Eurasia, and determine what the corollary responses should be.

"The success or failure of U.S. efforts to impose meaningful costs on Russia if it escalates will be seen as a test of whether the U.S. could do something similar in Asia ... Because of this, China will not see a new phase of war between Russia and Ukraine as a peripheral issue in its foreign policy, even though China has no core issues at stake in Ukraine itself," Miller wrote.

In this way, Kessler said, China's observations of the Ukraine crisis will inform how it proceeds in its ambition to unite Taiwan with the mainland.

"Russia and China are very likely engaged in observing every little move the West is making and testing them to see how it re-

sponds," Kessler said.

"This will greatly impact China's future decisions regarding Taiwan, especially since Xi Jinping is facing reelection," he added, referring to the Chinese leader's bid for an unprecedented third term in power to be determined at a twice-in-a-decade Communist Party Congress to be held this autumn.

China's ambassador to the United States, Qin Gang, in an unusually direct statement, said in an interview on Jan. 27 that the United States would face "military conflict" over Taiwan if the island's democratic government continued to seek independence from the regime's communist government.

According to Kessler, what lessons the CCP ultimately derives from U.S. efforts to sanction Russia could have profound implications for the continued success of the United States in the Indo-Pacific and abroad, as CCP officials consider the ongoing tensions to a test of American power itself.

"Other than Ukraine, this could lead to future military and economic decisions relating to Taiwan as well," Kessler said.

"The endgame for Russia and China is to very likely figure out the potency of Western commitment and resolve."

David Zhang contributed to this report.

Andrew Thornebrooke is a reporter for The Epoch Times covering China-related issues with a focus on defense, military affairs, and national security. He holds a master's in military history from Norwich University.

RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS SERVICE VIA AP



The Russian army's Iskander missile launchers take positions during drills in Russia, on Jan. 25, 2022.



A negative result is shown from a take-home COVID-19 test kit in Los Angeles on Jan. 10, 2022.

SUPPLY CHAINS

Chinese-Made COVID-19 Test Kits Are Coming to Millions of American Households via White House Initiative

EVA FU

As the White House's free at-home COVID-19 test kits are reaching millions of U.S. households, the "Made in China" label on some of those kits is stirring concerns. The distribution, which started last month, is part of a Biden administration initiative to give away 1 billion self-test kits to Americans for free. A sizable portion of these kits will be sourced from iHealth Labs, a California subsidiary of Chinese medical gear manufacturer Andon Health.

Since December 2021, the company has won contracts worth more than \$2.1 billion with the U.S. federal government and some state governments, according to Andon's filings and federal contract records.

Roughly \$1.8 billion of the amount for the White House rollout came from the Department of Defense (DOD). The department awarded two contracts to the lab on Jan. 13 and Jan. 26, respectively, which would bring more than 354 million Chinese-made kits to U.S. homes.

The White House said on Jan. 28 that 60 million U.S. households have ordered the free test kits through the government's new website: covidtests.gov

U.S. reliance on China to produce these test kits is a call for reckoning, according to Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.).

"If we should have learned anything from this pandemic—it is that it's imperative to break U.S. dependence on Chinese medical and PPE [personal protective equipment] supply chains," Wittman told The Epoch Times.

U.S. supply chain vulnerabilities came into the spotlight during the early months of the pandemic, when U.S. frontline re-



Rapid at-home COVID-19 test kits are distributed by the GreenRoots environmental protection organization and Chelsea Community Connections in Chelsea, Mass., on Dec. 17, 2021.

The U.S. reliance on China for producing these test kits—two years after COVID-19 spread out from the country—is a call for reckoning.

Rep. Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

sponders struggled for critical medical supplies and had to turn to foreign countries, principally China, for the gear.

Wittman called for the administration and members of Congress to advocate for the medical equipment to be made at home.

The DOD contract didn't specify iHealth Labs' China connection, nor was the relationship mentioned on iHealth Labs' website.

White House officials didn't respond to The Epoch Times' request for comment, nor did representatives for Andon and iHealth Labs.

Andon only began making the self-test kits on a commercial scale in November

2021. Driven by its U.S. success, Andon's stock has soared by nearly 14-fold as of Jan. 18.

The Food and Drug Administration granted Andon's iHealth Labs emergency approval in November 2021 to sell its COVID-19 nasal swab test kits in the United States. The lab has also received orders with a combined total of \$333 million from the New York State Department of Health and the state of Massachusetts.

California, Washington, Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio, and the District of Columbia also have placed orders, according to Chinese media outlet reports.

Last month, more than 120 Republican lawmakers voiced complaints about having to wear "Made in China" masks. In a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, they expressed their "disbelief and outrage" that taxpayer dollars are being used on Chinese-made masks when U.S. alternatives are available.

With the regime's pandemic cover-up, suppression of whistleblowers, and continued efforts to obfuscate virus origin tracing efforts, "it is inexcusable for taxpayer dollars to be spent in support of the Chinese economy," according to the letter.

To Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), the matter is the same with the test kits.

"Senator Scott thinks it is unacceptable that the Biden administration would spend American taxpayer dollars on COVID tests from Communist China, which just goes directly to supporting General Secretary Xi and his genocidal regime, instead of supporting American manufacturers and jobs," his office told The Epoch Times in a statement, referring to Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

COURTESY OF FLYING CLOUD PRODUCTIONS



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

‘Unsensored’ Film Is a ‘Scathing Indictment of the CCP’: Pompeo

FRANK YUE & SHERRY DONG

On Jan. 21, around 9:00 p.m., when the film "Unsensored" was just finishing in Hall 10 of Cinemark in Fairfax County, Virginia, the audience stayed motionless in their seats. Ten seconds, 20 seconds, even 30 seconds passed ... no one spoke or stood up as the screen kept scrolling with the cast's names. Some were wiping away tears, apparently unable to pull themselves from the story so soon.

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently watched the movie in the same theater. He called the film "a moving, honest, scathing indictment of the CCP [Chinese Communist Party]."

"The truth of Xi & his predecessors' utter depravity & the power-driven horrors they've inflicted cannot be denied," he wrote on Twitter and encouraged people to watch it. "This movie unsilences the wonderful Chinese people."

In theaters in Mesa, Arizona, and in Raleigh, North Carolina, the audience gave a standing ovation at the end of the movie. "Unsensored" has since its debut on Jan. 21 been released in 30 U.S. cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, and San Diego. So far, the showtimes have been extended for another week until Feb. 3.

Canadian filmmaker Leon Lee presents a story of two couples of Chinese college students, who risked their lives to reveal the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) appalling persecution of peaceful Falun Gong adherents. With the help of a Chicago journalist, they successfully unearth the CCP's dehumanizing abuses to the international community.

Falun Gong is a spiritual practice that features three core tenets of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, along with five slow-moving exercises. After it was made public in 1992, its following in China grew to an estimated 70 million to 100 million people in 1999. The CCP, deeming the practice's popularity a threat, then launched a nationwide campaign to eradicate it.

The production is based on actual events in connection with practitioner Wang Weiyu, a gifted graduate of China's Tsinghua University. Wang experienced torture, including hours of electrocution by electric baton, during eight and half years' imprisonment in Beijing for refusing to give up his belief in Falun Gong. In 2013, he fled communist China and joined his family in the United States.

New York-based screenwriter Maximilian Kempf described "Unsensored" as a "legal thriller," which kept the audience always questioning in their mind.

"You know, it always makes you want to question," Kempf said in an interview with The Epoch Times. "You're at the edge of your seat throughout the movie."

He said the movie is highly professional in terms of the graphics, the music, the act, and especially the narrative. Even the torture scenes were handled in a tasteful way, said the screenwriter.

At the same time, he highlighted its Western perspective, which appeals to the international audience. He said that the production carries humanity and compassion, which is a universal value.

"So I'd encourage people to go to the website that the movie is based on," said the screenwriter. "This movie needs a lot more publicity, hopefully."

"In many ways, I was attracted to this film," Margarita Marin-Dale, a retired professor and a human rights lawyer, told The Epoch Times after she watched the show with her two sons. "Because I'm very concerned about individual liberties, freedom of religion, freedom of speech. I think it shows how difficult and conflicting it is for people to stand up for the truth."

She said, "I think that this movie brings attention to the oppressive nature of the regime in China, even though China is doing ... economically very well."

Moreover, she heaped praise on Falun Gong believers for their bravery shown in standing up to the Chinese totalitarian regime. "And as Americans who believe in democracy and freedom, I think we should be very supportive of them," said the rights lawyer.

She was also convinced that the Chinese communist regime is doomed to failure. "It's like a pot of boiling water," she

said. "But eventually it will explode if you keep on holding the lid down. So, it's very important that freedom prevails."

The movie also captivated her two sons William Dale and Philip Dale.

"It felt like you were really there," said William Dale. "I definitely shed a few tears during the film. That was very emotional." His brother Philip Dale commented, "I love how it portrays the humanity of all the characters in the situation."

Mary Lien Nguyen is a retired IT specialist who had worked in the Federal government for nearly 30 years. She fled Vietnam and moved to the United States in 1979.

She told The Epoch Times the show moved her to tears.

As an immigrant from communist Vietnam, Nguyen said she knows how terrible communists are. She accused the CCP of concealing the truth about Falun Gong and trying every means to silence fearless whistleblowers, like the college students in the movie.

She warned that communists try to destroy humanity. She said that is a terrible thing for her, and she hoped that the truth told in the show would spread to the entire world.

Positive audience reviews abound on social media.

"My young son and I saw this incredible film today," said an internet user named Kerry Debois. "It's my deepest hope every person goes to see this important and very well done movie. I was gripped the entire time."

A viewer by the name of Karen Evanek left a message, "The abundance of anonymity in the credits is stunning. May they/you all remain safe."

There is a post from Iris Neal, reading that "Just saw this powerful eye-opening film today. ... I will recommend it highly. ... Sad that so many involved with production had to be 'anonymous.'"

A parent calling herself Hawa Agnes-Hass said, "I'm taking my husband and kids to see this movie as a family! My kids have to understand what is happening in my America."

"Unsensored" was the Audience Award Winner at the Austin Film Festival in 2021. And on Jan. 25 it gained nomination by The Political Film Society as the best film on human rights as well as the best film exposé for 2022.

Leon Lee also directed the documentary "Human Harvest" (2014), which exposed the CCP's removal and sale of organs from prisoners of conscience, who are mainly Falun Gong detainees. The film was broadcast in more than 25 countries and won the Peabody Award in April 2015.

The truth of Xi & his predecessors' utter depravity & the power-driven horrors they've inflicted cannot be denied.

Mike Pompeo, former U.S. secretary of state

CHUNG HOI/THE EPOCH TIMES



Falun Gong practitioners take part in a parade marking the 22nd year of the persecution of Falun Gong in China, in Brooklyn, N.Y., on July 18, 2021.

Unsensored is now playing in select theaters nationwide. For the full theater list, visit UnsensoredMovie.com

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TRUTH *and* TRADITION

A NEWSPAPER ABRAHAM
LINCOLN WOULD READ

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OPINION

Let's Discover the Traits of the Tiger, and Use the Year of the Tiger to Fight for Freedom

BENEDICT ROGERS



Today we begin the celebration of Lunar New Year and welcome in the Year of the Tiger. I want to begin by wishing all Mandarin-speaking friends gong xi fa cai, and Cantonese speakers gong hei fat choy.

Over the past decade, I have been increasingly critical of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), as it has unleashed a major crackdown on everyone who displays anything other than absolute loyalty to Xi Jinping and the Party. The intensification of repression in China has included some of the most severe atrocity crimes—genocide and crimes against humanity—as well as a nationwide campaign of persecution against Christians, the dismantling of Hong Kong's freedoms and autonomy, increased repression in Tibet, continued persecution of Falun Gong, the disappearance of human rights defenders, including lawyers, and the shutdown of whatever limited space previously existed for civil society, independent media, citizen journalism, and dissent.

In response to these appalling developments, I have been involved in helping to establish several initiatives—from the China Tribunal into forced organ harvesting to the Uyghur Tribunal into genocide, from the UK Conservative Party Human Rights Commission's two inquiries and reports on China's human rights crisis, in 2016 and 2020, to the foundation of Hong Kong Watch. And I have been privileged to play a small part

in the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), the Stop Uyghur Genocide campaign, the China Democracy Foundation, the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), and Tories for Tibet.

As a result, I know I am not popular in Beijing. In 2017, I was perhaps the first Westerner to be publicly refused entry to Hong Kong, the city that had once been my home and where I had begun my career as a journalist and activist. I then found myself a target for the CCP's intimidation efforts, receiving anonymous, threatening letters postmarked from Hong Kong at my home address in a sleepy suburb of London. Such letters were also sent to my neighbors, my mother, and my employers. Such tactics are typical of the CCP in China—putting pressure on dissidents by threatening them directly and trying to get neighbors, relatives, and employers to silence them—but the idea that the regime thought this would work in London is bizarre.

And they did not stop there. At least five different British Members of Parliament on five separate occasions have been lobbied by the Chinese Embassy in London, specifically asking them to shut me up. Then in October 2018, I was the target of a torrent of screaming verbal abuse by a CGTN journalist, Kong Linlin, at the Conservative Party Conference. After screaming at me, she physically assaulted my friend—an incident that was caught on camera and went viral. She was subsequently convicted in a British court of common assault.

More recently, the intimidation at-

On a visit to Canada late last year, I received for the first time a more specific threat—an email that made reference to the exact hotel where I was due to stay in Vancouver.

(Right) Residents visit a lantern show ahead of the Lunar New Year, which welcomes the Year of the Tiger on Feb. 1, in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, on Jan. 29, 2022.

(Below) British Conservative Party MPs Nusrat Ghani (C), Sir Iain Duncan Smith (R), and UK director of the World Uyghur Congress Rahima Mahmut at a demonstration call on the British Parliament to vote to recognize alleged persecution of China's Uyghurs as genocide and crimes against humanity, in London on April 22, 2021.



STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

tempts moved into the digital realm, with fake email accounts being set up in my name and absurd emails sent to parliamentarians, journalists, and others by my impersonator. I am not the only one to be subjected to this—British MPs Tom Tugendhat, chair of the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Sir Iain Duncan Smith, former leader of the Conservative Party, Nus Ghani, Lord David Alton, and my friend and colleague, IPAC Co-ordinator Luke de Pulford have all experienced a similar email campaign.

On a visit to Canada late last year, I received for the first time a more specific threat—an email that made reference to the exact hotel where I was due to stay in Vancouver. Compared with previous threats, this was more concerning because it indicated specific knowledge of my precise location. I received security advice that made me take this seriously, and I took appropriate precautions.

Why am I sharing all this now? For four reasons.

First, around the world governments, parliamentarians, the media, and the public are finally starting to wake up to the dangers of the CCP. Xi's regime is not only increasingly repressive at home, it is also increasingly aggressive abroad, but its "wolf-warrior" diplomacy is losing friends and its long-standing infiltration, influence, intimidation, and espionage operations to subvert democracies are finally being exposed.

The recent decision by Britain's intelligence agency M15 to warn Parliament about the activities of the CCP's United

Chinese Communist Party (CCP).



Christine LEE

Affiliations:

- China Overseas Friendship Association; and,
- British-Chinese Project.

LEE has acted covertly in coordination with the UFWD and is judged to be involved in political interference activities in the UK.

A detail of an M15 Security Service Interference Alert identifying Christine Lee as "an agent of the Chinese government" operating in the British Parliament, issued by the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons on Jan. 12, 2022.

Front Work Department, and specifically one of its operatives, Christine Lee, is very welcome, if rather late in the day.

My experiences are just one tiny illustration of the much bigger and wider threat that the CCP poses around the world. To understand the scale and range of the CCP's tactics abroad, you would do well to read Clive Hamilton and Mareike Ohlberg's book "Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World."

Second, my experiences pale into insignificance compared with the threats to Chinese, Hong Kong, Tibetan, and Uyghur exiles, who face a much more serious physical threat and the emotional struggle of knowing that their relatives back in China may be in danger if they

speak out against the CCP. But if the CCP is prepared to go as far as to threaten Western activists and parliamentarians in their own homes and in democratic societies, it does not take much imagination to understand how much further they may go to silence those it regards as its own people in exile.

The third reason for sharing this—and for doing so at this time—is that we must never, ever give in. The threats I have received only embolden me to continue and to redouble my efforts. If anything, I regard them as a badge of honor. And it also shows me that far from being the confident, strong superpower it wants us to believe it is, in fact the CCP regime is weaker and more insecure than we may realize.

A regime that resorts to trying to silence critics abroad is not a superpower. A regime that puts at the top of the agenda in a meeting with a British MP a request to shut me up—when also on the agenda for that meeting were global challenges and issues such as climate change and trade—is not a secure regime. A regime that is so scared about an article due to be published about Hong Kong that it calls an MP to ask him to pressure me to withdraw the article pre-publication is cowardly and paranoid. A regime that spends time and money sending letters to my 80-year-old mother in the English countryside in the hope that she will reprimand her son is one worthy of ridicule. My mother, by the way, laughed at the letters and told me she had given up trying to tell me what to do 30 years ago.

In this Year of the Tiger, the free world should rediscover the characteristics of the tiger—fearlessness and courage—and stand up to the butchers of Beijing. The age of kowtowing is over. The example of Lithuania, a small but plucky nation that understands from its own history the value of freedom and has stood up to the CCP with remarkable courage, should inspire us, as should Taiwan. Other democracies should stand with them, and together we should build a "United Front" for freedom to counter the CCP's United Front.

Let us use this Year of the Tiger to fight back, to defend our freedoms at home and to speak out for the peoples living under CCP repression within China's borders. As the Winter Olympics open in

Beijing on Feb. 4—Games that a criminal regime such as Xi's should never have been allowed to host—let us use them to shine a spotlight on the CCP's crimes and generate maximum embarrassment for the CCP.

The fourth reason for writing at this time is to say that I love China, its culture, history, and diverse peoples. Throughout history China has contributed so much to the world. My fight is not with China or its peoples, but with the CCP—and we should always differentiate between the two. Beijing and its proxies accuse me of being "anti-China." The CCP's wumaos earn their fifty cents every day on Twitter leveling this charge. But on the contrary, it is because I am deeply pro-China—as a country—that I want its diverse peoples to be treated with dignity and respect, and granted the basic freedoms and rights that I enjoy. In that sense, it is the CCP and its repressive, mendacious character that is "anti-China."

We should never confuse criticism of the CCP with anti-China or anti-Chinese racism. Such racism exists and, tragically, is increasing, and we should always call it out, condemn it, and counter it. But the CCP is increasingly setting a trap for us, suggesting that criticism of the Chinese regime is akin to racism. Nothing could be further from the truth, especially when that regime is itself shaped by a deep racism that has had genocidal consequences for the Uyghurs, Kazakhs, other Muslim minorities, and Tibetans, among others. It is possible to be genuinely anti-racist and anti-CCP at the same time, and it is imperative that we are.

I first went to China at the age of 18, to teach English for six months in Qingdao. I made many friends there, went back to teach in a hospital during my summer holidays as a university student, lived in Hong Kong for the first five years after the handover, and travelled widely throughout China until I was no longer able to. I have very fond memories of making dumplings in Qingdao at Lunar New Year, and of celebrating the festival in Hong Kong during my years there. I look forward to the day when I can return to China and Hong Kong, when they are free, to celebrate Lunar New Year with my friends in liberty and without fear.

Let us use this Year of the Tiger to redouble our efforts to work for that goal. Let us not allow the CCP to intimidate us. It is said that the Year of the Tiger symbolizes "recovery" and "growth." After the COVID-19 pandemic, the whole world needs that. But let it not only be an economic recovery and growth. Let us work for a recovery and growth in values, especially freedom, democracy, and human rights—which I hope the diverse peoples living under CCP repression today will one day enjoy.

Happy Lunar New Year.

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

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JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

Are Big Chinese Tech Firms in Trouble?

Beijing prioritizing smaller technology firms in state-sensitive industries

FAN YU

When Icarus flew too close to the sun, he got burned, tumbled out of the sky, and fell into the ocean.

China's tech giants have certainly been flying high. Alibaba, Tencent, Baidu, and other platform companies have become household names, made their founders billionaires, run apps that Chinese people use on a daily basis, and altogether hold immense power—economically, politically, and socially.

We're not predicting their demise here. But recent developments suggest that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) may be gunning for these companies, their executives, and their business dealings.

The official communique issued after the recent Central Commission for Discipline Inspection's (CCDI) Sixth Plenum

included some strong words, vowing "to investigate and punish any corruption behind the runaway expansion of capital and the monopoly of platform enterprises in order to sever the connections between power and capital," according to the English version of China's state-run Xinhua News Agency.

Those word choices from China's top anti-graft organization, specifically "runaway expansion of capital" and "monopoly of platform enterprises," suggest that investigations into Chinese big tech firms are underway.

Regarding the expansion of capital and alleged monopoly activities, CCP regulators fined Alibaba and Tencent in January for failing to disclose a series of acquisitions that date back several years. The new round of fines follows several fines already extended to Alibaba, Ten-

cent, and Baidu in 2021.

And investigations are extending beyond the corporate level.

Concurrent to the CCDI announcement in January, CCTV aired a series of documentaries detailing cases of former local officials ensnared for corruption. One such example was that of Zhou Jiangyong, the former party secretary in Zhejiang Province—home to Jack Ma's Alibaba—who allegedly gave certain companies preferential treatment in exchange for financial and economic assistance for his family.

While no specific companies were named by the CCTV documentaries, Financial Times noted that Jack Ma's Ant Group was one of the companies that purchased land at a discount in Hangzhou, China, after buying ownership stakes in a company run by Zhou's

brother.

On Jan. 26, Zhou was officially expelled from the CCP by the CCDI for corruption.

These ongoing investigations could spell more headaches for Ma, who has already come under intense CCP scrutiny over the past two years.

More to come on this front, but CCP's clampdown machines are revving their engines.

After decades of allowing Chinese entrepreneurs free rein to build their businesses with minimal oversight—by Chinese standards—Beijing's regulatory winds are shifting. In a series of regulatory actions that started in 2021, the CCP has made it clear that technology companies must work for the Party and directly support the Party's goals.

The CCP's favors appear to be shifting away from the tech giants and toward



GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A man walks past an Alibaba sign outside the company's office in Beijing on April 13, 2021.

smaller tech companies.

Premier Li Keqiang recently called for more Beijing support for the country's smaller tech companies and retailers. It has been a recurring policy theme for China, with small- to medium-sized

businesses increasingly being prioritized by Beijing.

CCP regime boss Xi Jinping has touted China's so-called little giants for more than two years. Beijing even created a national program to divert funding

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to small- to medium-sized enterprises involved in the science and technology sectors.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has identified almost 5,000 "little giants" across the country, granting them financial incentives and tax cuts. Many of these companies align directly with the CCP's goals of dominating in semiconductors, health care, and automation/robotics.

It's a way to support China's ambitions of growing an independent domestic technology sector, which was severely crippled by the Trump administration's sanctions on firms such as Huawei.

With major tech giants falling out of favor, the hope of CCP's global technology dominance increasingly rests upon these small companies.

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