

WEEK 23, 2022

THE EPOCH TIMES

# CHINA INSIDER

**NEVER  
FORGET**

**JUNE 4, 1989**

See Page **6**

## CCP INFLUENCE

# 'Pawns' for Beijing: CCP Pressures US Officials to Tilt Policies in China's Favor

EVA FU

It was late February 2020, as the pandemic was heating up in the United States, when a request from China caught Wisconsin state Sen. Roger Roth's attention.

It was an email from Wu Ting, wife of the Chinese consul general in Chicago.

Wu wanted Roth to help pass a resolution "in support of China's fight against the novel coronavirus."

The "Chinese government has taken unprecedentedly rigorous measures to bring [the coronavirus] under control, including locking down Wuhan," she wrote in a Feb. 26 email that has been viewed by The Epoch Times.

"We have drawn up a draft resolution just for your reference," she wrote, adding that the Chinese consulate in Chicago was committed to promoting China-Wisconsin relations, "particularly mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, agriculture, and other fields and people-to-people links."

The Chinese consul general looked forward to visiting Roth's "beautiful state" and meeting with the senator to "discuss how to take our relations forward," the email said.

Regarding the draft resolution, "In essence, it praised China for their openness and transparency in their handling of the coronavirus," Roth told The Epoch Times.

"I thought this had to be a joke," Roth said. "It came from a Hotmail account, of all places. It wasn't even an official thing." He discarded the email and thought of it no further, but Wu persisted. A few weeks later, she followed up using the same email, attaching the same resolution.

He had his staff verify the email address with state government sources and learned that Chinese consulate officials routinely use private email accounts. Wu, it turns out, is the wife of the Chinese consulate general Zhao Jian.

Once Roth realized the email was legitimate, he became "downright angry."

"I dictated a one-word response to them, and I said: Dear Consul General, Nuts. Signed respectfully, Roger Roth," he said. "Not only do we respond to them with the word 'nuts,' we even drafted our own resolution on the Communist Party of China, exposing who they really are."

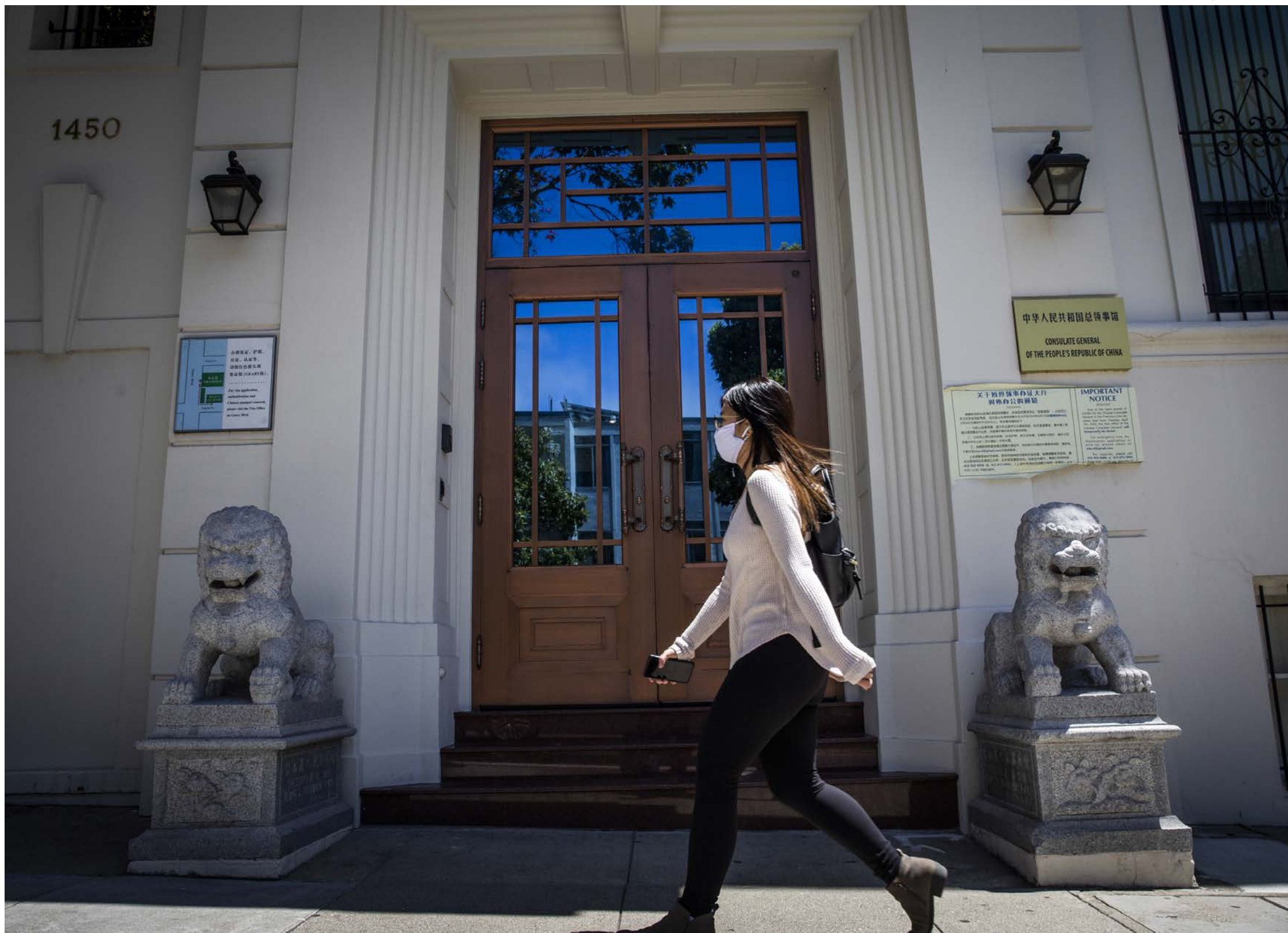
That one-word reply, a nod to Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe's famous response to a German surrender ultimatum during World War II, was the last communication Roth had with the Chinese consulate in Chicago. Wu later wrote an email expressing shock at his response, which he never replied to. But that interaction pushed him onto the offensive in Wisconsin.

"It awakened me to the real threats that our country is facing from the Communist Party of China," said Roth, who is running

As Utah adopted the pro-Beijing resolution in the early stages of the pandemic, another bill condemning the Chinese regime's forced organ harvesting appeared to hit roadblocks in the state's legislature.

Then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) listens to a question from Wisconsin Senate President Roger Roth, R-Appleton, during a Q&A session with state Republican legislators in the Senate chamber of the Wisconsin state Capitol in Madison, Wis., on Sept. 23, 2020.

California state Sen. Joel Anderson speaks in front of the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco during a rally to protest the Chinese regime's interference in California's legislature, on Sept. 8, 2017.



In August 2019, then-Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant received a letter from the Chinese consulate in Houston, warning that his state would lose Chinese investment if he chose to travel to Taiwan, Pompeo said in a speech in September 2020 at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

and seriously hurt the feeling of Chinese people."

"That had a chilling effect on my colleagues voting forward in the future," Anderson said. "All my colleagues had been voting in favor of it until they received the letter; the letter just completely flipped them from support to oppose."

"They didn't let it get to a vote; what they did is they tabled it. And then they voted to table it so that it could not be heard."

Anderson tried at least 18 times in the final week of the Senate session to bring the resolution to a floor vote.

His colleagues "didn't want to talk about it. But "the only difference between supporting it or not supporting it" was the letter.

#### Visa Blackmail

On the hot button issue of Taiwan, a self-ruling island that the regime has long desired to control, the regime has been no less aggressive.

In August 2019, then-Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant received a letter from the Chinese consulate in Houston, warning that his state would lose Chinese investment if he chose to travel to Taiwan, Pompeo said in a speech in September 2020 at the Wisconsin State Capitol.

Mirroring Bryant's experience, a U.S. congressional delegation a few months later would learn that Beijing rejected their visa applications to China after they had planned a trip to Taiwan, in what Rep. Sean Maloney (D-N.Y.) described as "visa blackmail."

"Chinese officials told members of my staff on multiple occasions that if I canceled the trip to Taiwan, I would be granted a visa," he wrote in an op-ed in October 2019.

"This was visa blackmail, designed to stanch the longstanding tradition of robust U.S. congressional engagement with Taiwan," he wrote.

As Utah adopted the pro-Beijing resolution in the early stages of the pandemic, another bill condemning the Chinese regime's forced organ harvesting appeared to hit roadblocks in the state's legislature.

The measure was introduced in late February 2020 by state Rep. Steve Christiansen. Days later, however, Utah doctor Weldon Gilcrease, who had been working with Christiansen on the bill, got a call informing him that the lawmaker was backing out.

In effect, Christiansen said, "I'm backing out because I was told I need to talk to the Chinese community," according to Gilcrease, an oncology professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine.

"To me, that meant he was pressured," he told The Epoch Times. "He wasn't backing out because he didn't believe it was true, he was backing out because he was afraid of not listening to the 'Chinese community.'"

"To me, that's the voice of the Chinese Communist Party. Those are the people that have clearly put pressure on our officials. The Chinese Communist Party has used its channels to pressure our legislators to do nothing."

While the proposal passed the third reading in the Senate, the latest update, on March 12, 2020, showed that the bill had lapsed.

Christiansen, who left office in October, couldn't be reached for comment after repeated requests via email, phone calls, and social media.



for lieutenant governor in his state.

"Most people in the world probably don't even know where we are, if we even exist, but they are trying to reach their tentacles even into Wisconsin," he said.

#### 'Pawns' for Beijing

Wisconsin isn't the only state where Beijing has tried to exert influence.

Around the same period as the emails to Roth, the state of Utah was approving a resolution expressing solidarity with the Chinese people. In language similar to what Wu had put forward, the resolution noted "a friendly relationship and strong economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties" that Utah and China share, and "the unique, 14-year legislative relationship between Utah and Liaoning," referring to a legislative exchange program between the Western state and a Chinese province.

That Feb. 25, 2020, resolution also urged against virus restrictions that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade and raise fear and stigma." At the time, the Trump administration had imposed a flight ban to and from China in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, a move that initially sparked condemnation from the Chinese regime and the World Health Organization, but was ultimately adopted by the majority of countries around the world as the pandemic evolved.

States like Utah that passed such resolutions didn't know "what was really happening and how they were being used as pawns," Roth said.

The Epoch Times has reached out to the bill's sponsor, state Sen. Jacob Anderegg, for comment. An email to the bill's sponsor in the state House, Eric Hutchings, who was a representative until last January, was undeliverable.

The states of Georgia and New York also

have passed a "China Day" resolution.

The Georgia version, passed on Feb. 3, 2020, intended to "commend the special friendship between Georgia and the People's Republic of China" and to "recognize the Consul General Cai Wei of the Consulate General of China in Houston."

Cai, prior to the resolution's passage, gave a speech on the state Senate floor touting China's leadership in the virus fight. The State Department five months later would order the closure of the consulate, with then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo calling it a "hub of spying and intellectual property theft."

The New York Senate resolution that was approved in June 2019, meanwhile, appears to be the nation's first such gesture to commemorate Oct. 1, marking the Chinese Communist Party's official takeover of China.

The resolution's lead sponsor, state Sen. James Sanders, didn't respond to inquiries from The Epoch Times about whether the consulate had any role in the resolution's eventual adoption.

#### Coercion and Threats

For those who chose to take a stance critical of the Chinese Communist Party, the regime took direct action in a bid to thwart their efforts.

The first time former California state Sen. Joel Anderson experienced Chinese pressure firsthand was 15 years ago, when he was first elected to the California state assembly.

His purported offense was to introduce a resolution recognizing the anniversary of the introduction of Falun Gong, a spiritual belief that the regime has marked for elimination since 1999. The resolution, he said, simply aimed to welcome Falun Gong adherents "to a country that recognizes re-

ligious liberty."

"It didn't say anything more. It didn't say that they were the best faith, or they were better than many other faiths," he said. "All it said was, you know, we welcome you."

That resolution put Anderson in the cross-hairs of the Chinese Communist Party. Shortly after, he received a six-page letter from Chinese authorities branding him a "terrorist."

"It told me that if I traveled to China, I'll be arrested and prosecuted as a terrorist," Anderson told The Epoch Times.

Anderson, who at the time knew little about the Chinese regime's persecution of Falun Gong, said he was taken aback.

"China doesn't get to dictate to the United States. We're a free country. And we allow religious liberty," he said. "We allow all faiths to be practiced here in the United States."

The Chinese regime's displeasure toward Anderson didn't ease up after he joined the California state Senate years later. As a senator, he was invited on an official trip to China to promote bilateral trade relations. Recalling the threats from the letter,

he mentioned the issue to the state office handling the logistics. The answer that came back was blunt: He "would not be welcomed," Anderson recalled.

"So I can't go to China without fear of being arrested and convicted."

What happened to Anderson was not at all a one-off incident.

Over the decade and a half that followed, he and other U.S. officials at local and federal levels would receive pressure through visits, emails, and phone calls from Chinese authorities with an eye toward bending their policies in China's favor.

Anderson drew the regime's attention a second time when in 2017, he introduced a resolution denouncing Beijing's persecution of Falun Gong.

After the measure was approved by the state Senate Judiciary Committee with a vote of 5-0, the Chinese consulate in San Francisco sent a round of letters to all of Anderson's colleagues, warning that the passage of the resolution could "deeply damage the cooperative relations between the State of California and China



[It] awakened me to the real threats that our country is facing from the Communist Party of China.

Roger Roth, Wisconsin Senate president

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US-CHINA

# Biden Administration's China Policy

## Views the Communist Regime as 'Integral' to Global Progress

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

How do you compete with a potential adversary while simultaneously allowing that adversary to steal your most precious technologies? How do you defeat a rival whom you believe to be vital to your own survival?

These are the questions that one is immediately presented with when examining the Biden administration's long-awaited China policy, which was outlined by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on May 26, and during which he reiterated that the nation would not seek to break away from China's economy nor to pursue conflict with its communist regime.

"Competition need not lead to conflict," Blinken said. "We do not seek it. We will work to avoid it. But we will defend our interests against any threat."

The much-anticipated policy, which the administration did not describe at length for 17 months, disappointed many who believed that Blinken's speech merely summarized the actions that the administration had already taken and did not meaningfully present any real change to U.S. policy or strategy regarding China.

Derek Grossman, an Indo-Pacific analyst for the Rand Corporation, said in one tweet that the affair was a "missed opportunity," and failed to cover any new ground.

Notably, however, the outlining of the Biden administration's China policy did at least implicitly convey one message: The United States failed to deter both China's rise and the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) increasing aggression.

Indeed, Blinken explicitly stated that the United States wouldn't interfere with China's ascent to great power status, that it would seek only to ensure that the CCP adhered to international rules, and also that it knew the CCP wasn't adhering to those rules.

The new policy did offer something of a rebrand, which Blinken referred to as the "American Model," and described its underlying strategy in the words "Invest.



Secretary of State Antony Blinken speaks on China at Jack Morton Auditorium of George Washington University in Washington on May 26, 2022.

**The Biden administration is liable to think twice about sanctioning foreign entities if doing so either threatens the climate agenda or irritates key allies.**

Michael Sobolik, fellow, American Foreign Policy Council

policy, Blinken appeared to only speak of two spending bills, both of which were from last year.

The first was the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that was created following the failure of the administration to pass its mammoth Build Back Better legislation. The second was the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, a Senate bill that would increase technology spending by over \$100 billion. The House version, the America COMPETES Act, was passed earlier this year, and the two bills are currently before a bicameral conference committee that aims to reconcile the differences between the pieces of legislation.

The administration's decision not to encourage any decoupling between the United States and China also raises some issue with how strategic such investments will be, given the ability of the CCP to simply steal whatever new technologies the United States develops. That decision, however, may have been driven by two interest groups, the first being major U.S. corporations with business ties to China.

There is a fear among major U.S. companies, not that CCP will steal their technology, or coerce them into different business practices, or use slave labor to produce their goods—but that their investment in China will be lost.

"One of the key vulnerabilities that we're becoming more and more aware of is the degree to which Wall Street firms and American banks and investment companies continue to see China as this great market or this great investment opportunity," said Arthur Herman, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based think tank.

Likewise, one report from the Harvard Business Review last year stated succinctly that "No executives we've met want to see the time, effort, and investment they've put into developing a presence in China go to waste."

Yet another op-ed in Barron's lamented that decoupling could force companies to choose between following Chinese or American laws.

Align. Compete." But what do those three concepts really mean?

### 'Invest' or 'Invested'?

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the administration's newly minted "American Model" was its emphasis on using taxpayer monies to invest in select industries while refraining from actually divesting in trade with China.

"The United States does not want to sever China's economy from ours or from the global economy, though Beijing, through its rhetoric, is pursuing asymmetric decoupling, seeking to make China less dependent on the world and the world more dependent on China."

"We will invest in the foundations of our strength here at home," Blinken said, "our competitiveness, our innovation, our democracy."

Blinken said that such "strategic investments" would be made in the realms of education, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and quantum computing, though he did not give any examples of how precisely this investing would be done, in what amount, or to what organizations, or whether or not there a plan.

When he did speak of specific investments to be made under the China

The second force working to stymie the Biden administration from pursuing a more assertive stance with China is, somewhat ironically, the Biden administration itself, and specifically its vocal progressive staff.

One report by Michael Sobolik, a fellow in Indo-Pacific Studies at the American Foreign Policy Council, said that there were many in the administration who wanted to take a tougher stance on China, but that their voices were drowned out by the more progressive members of Biden's cabinet, which considers partnership with China to be key to pursuing global climate change initiatives.

In fact, according to Sobolik, the Biden administration failed to enact tough measures that would have clamped down on companies associated with slave labor in China's Xinjiang region because of a "heated interagency fight ... between its national security and climate change team[s]."

Sobolik's comments suggested that the Biden administration initially considered a total ban on solar products implicated in forced labor in the region, but ultimately watered that stance down to a ban on imports from one major company, Hoshine Silicon Industry.

The Department of Commerce later added three solar companies to the export list, though those companies could dissolve and reform with a new name to evade hardship.

"The message is clear," Sobolik wrote, "the Biden administration is liable to think twice about sanctioning foreign entities if doing so either threatens the climate agenda or irritates key allies."

### Alignment for Whom?

Concerning international alignment, Blinken acknowledged that China has become increasingly aggressive since the ascension of Xi Jinping as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader in 2012, but said the United States would work to ensure that the strategic environment around China was favorable to the United States by shaping the environment around it.

"We will align our efforts with our network of allies and partners, acting with common purpose and in common cause," Blinken said.

"We cannot rely on Beijing to change its trajectory. So we will shape the strategic environment around Beijing to advance our vision for an open, inclusive international system."

In this regard, the United States does have some clout, though it is fading, and the administration's decision not to confront China directly on key regional issues such as the defense of Taiwan could make some nations in the region wary of picking sides between the two superpowers.

Still, some headway has been made.

The administration has helped to increase the importance of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue—an informal grouping between the United States, India, Australia, and Japan—in regional affairs, signed the AUKUS agreement to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines, and is working to strengthen the legitimacy of ASEAN in the hopes of aligning more Western-friendly nations in Southeast Asia toward a shared pursuit of open markets and security agreements.

It also recently signed the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), a 14-nation agreement that aims to grow participating economies through shared supply chain development and climate change policies.

The concept of alignment has historically been something that the United States considered to be a strategic weakness of China which, owing to a strong commitment to its own sovereignty, regularly refuses to change its strategic aims or policies to accommodate other nations.

That has been shifting, however, most notably so with regards to Russia, but also globally.

The CCP's steadfast devotion to Russia throughout the latter's ongoing war in Ukraine has proven a contentious point with the international community, and has seen the development of what may be the closest thing to an official ally that China has had under communist rule.

The communist regime also recently attempted to rush a 10-nation Pacific security deal, likely intended to expand its own global military presence and provide it a strategic maritime advantage over the U.S. Navy.

There is also the regime's Belt and Road Initiative, a trillion-dollar infrastructure investment project used to expand its economic and political influence worldwide, and the so-called "string of pearls" strategy, under which Beijing plans to build a network of several vital ports and

military facilities leading from Africa to Hong Kong and which incorporate several choke points for global commerce.

"China is monopolizing strategic choke points in the Indian Ocean region by investing in geopolitically important ports from Hong Kong to Sudan," one report from the Institute for Security and Development Policy said. "The String of Pearls quite literally encircles neighboring countries, particularly India."

The United States therefore, has already lost no small advantage in its ability to shape the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific, and the CCP's increasing efforts to subsume the interests of smaller nations into its own plans raise doubt as to how the administration will adequately pursue the third leg of its China policy: Competition.

**There is a fear among major U.S. companies, not that CCP will steal their technology, or coerce them into different business practices, or use slave labor to produce their goods—but that their investment in China will be lost.**

### Is This Competing?

Blinken said that the United States was "well-positioned to outcompete China in key areas" by using its invest and align tactics but, thus far, there seems to be little evidence that there has been any net gain from the administration's efforts.

The Biden administration has largely continued many of President Donald Trump's China policies, though it is now considering watering down U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods. It has also drawn fire for not pushing back more strongly against the regime's rampant industrial espionage efforts, expansionist efforts in the East and South China Seas, and human rights abuses which include genocide.

Moreover, the administration scrapped a Trump-era initiative aimed at combating Chinese espionage on account of accusations of racism, despite a DOJ review that found no evidence of bias in the program.

To that end, Blinken said that the United States would have to counter China's repressive one-party state apparatus by demonstrating the validity of the liberal system, which he said was not based on "Western values" but "global aspirations." Though Blinken also said that the United States' open society was being exploited by China in order to undermine it.

"Our task is to prove once again that democracy can meet emerging challenges, create opportunity, and advance human dignity," Blinken said. "The future belongs to those who believe in freedom."

### China Stance Softening for Sake of Global Progress

In all, the strategy of the Biden administration to date might best be described as appeasement. Appeasement to corporate interests, and appeasement to the climate lobby.

But to what end? Perhaps echoing the sentiments of the progressive members of Biden's cabinet that suppressed national security interests for climate change legislation, Blinken said that the United States simply could not achieve its global ambitions for climate and healthcare progress without the help of China.

To that end, the United States will apparently work with China against its own interests because it is in the perceived interest of the world.

"There's simply no way to solve climate change without China's leadership, the country that produces 28 percent of global emissions," Blinken said.

"China is also integral to the global economy and to our ability to solve challenges from climate to COVID. Put simply, the United States and China have to deal with each other for the foreseeable future."

"Even as we invest, align, and compete, we'll work together with Beijing where our interests come together," Blinken added. "We can't let the disagreements that divide us stop us from moving forward on the priorities that demand that we work together, for the good of our people and for the good of the world."

*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.*

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President Joe Biden meets with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during a virtual summit from the Roosevelt Room of the White House in Washington on Nov. 15, 2021.



MANDEL NGAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

## OPINION

# Never Forget the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre



FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

We must learn the lessons of June 4, 1989, for the future of the world

BENEDICT ROGERS



As I watched the military parades at the start of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations on June 2, I was full of admiration for the men and women in uniform who not only marched and played music with remarkable precision and discipline, but whose very purpose was to defend us as a country and our values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

They answer to a civilian, democratically elected government and a mon-

**A regime that's allowed to massacre thousands of people with impunity is not only a threat to its own people—it becomes a threat to us.**

Tanks sit in a street in Beijing on June 6, 1989, two days after the suppression of the pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square.

arch who, although unelected, embodies both in her role and in her character a constitutional assurance to safeguard our democracy.

Tens of thousands of people joined the celebrations in London's parks and streets, and millions more participated across the UK and around the world. I was surprised to learn through media commentary that the Commonwealth, a network of 54 countries with the queen at its head, represents 2.6 billion people, almost a third of the world's population.

But as we mark the extraordinary 70th anniversary of the queen's coronation, my thoughts quickly turn to another anniversary that we commemorated just two days later, the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing on June 4, 1989.

Thirty-three years ago in China, the most populous country in the world, with 1.4 billion people, Beijing ordered its army to turn its guns and tanks on its own citizens. The death toll is estimated to have been at least 10,000, with thousands more injured, arrested, jailed, and tortured.

To paraphrase the title of Charles Dickens's novel "A Tale of Two Cities," this past weekend, the world focused on a tale of two armies: the British Army, with the queen at its head, the epitome of public service and duty, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictators in charge, the embodiment of repression, inhumanity, cruelty, mendacity, impunity, and criminality.

No one would suggest that the British army is perfect—but the difference is this: It's accountable to the people through our democratically elected leaders, the system addresses acts of wrongdoing, and its objective is to protect the country, its people, and its values, not a political party or an ideology. By contrast, the PLA's name is a misnomer. It's against the people and against "liberation." It should be renamed "the People's Repression Army."

That's why it's so vital that we remember the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, for three reasons.

First, the CCP is trying desperately to

make us forget. Across China, generations of people have grown up since 1989 with no knowledge of the scenes of barbarity that occurred in Tiananmen Square, the surrounding streets, and in cities across the country on June 4 that year.

The butchers of Beijing and their successors in Zhongnanhai have censored news, spread propaganda, and brainwashed people so successfully that many people genuinely don't know, and those who do are afraid to remember.

Until three years ago, Hong Kong was the only place under Chinese sovereignty that could still commemorate the June 4 massacre. Thousands of people would gather each year in Victoria Park. When I lived in Hong Kong for the first five years after the handover, I would join the crowds in a candlelit vigil. Now those vigils are banned under the draconian national security law imposed by Beijing on Hong Kong.

Some activists, such as lawyer Chow Hang-tung, are serving long jail sentences for organizing such vigils. Last year, no formal vigil was permitted, but Catholic churches held masses, and Hongkongers flashed their mobile phone torches as a sign of remembrance.

This year, the Catholic Church in Hong Kong has said it won't hold any masses, and the police closed Victoria Park, warning that even visiting a park on June 4 could be a crime. Illegal gatherings could result in five years in prison. Presumably, flashing a phone torch light is risky, too.

Late last year, all remaining symbols of remembrance for the Tiananmen Square massacre—the Pillar of Shame, the Goddess of Democracy, and other memorabilia—were torn down and banned. Beijing wants to erase the memory of the June 4 massacre, even in Hong Kong.

Despite this, some brave Hongkongers still found ways to mark the anniversary. Miniature figurines of the Goddess of Democracy were hidden around the campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in defiance of authorities.

That's all the more reason why we who have freedom outside China must ensure that the spotlight remains on the June 4 anniversary. We must not be silenced.

The second reason we must keep the spotlight on the Tiananmen Square massacre is simply this: We should have learned the lesson in 1989 that a regime that turns its guns on its people is not a regime to be trusted, respected, or legitimized. It says a lot about the nature and character of a regime if it's prepared to slaughter thousands of peaceful protesters in full view of the world.

Until recently, we failed to learn that lesson. For a time, many of us, myself included, thought we saw signs of liberalization in China in the 1990s and early 2000s.

**It was so hard to believe. I saw tanks moving at high speed, tear gas, machine gun fire, and I heard so much screaming.**

Yang Jianli, a prominent exiled Chinese activist

I traveled more than 50 times in China throughout that period, including living in China several times for short stints and living in Hong Kong for the first five years after the handover. I made many Chinese friends—including human rights lawyers, bloggers, religious leaders, and civil society activists—who appeared at the time to have a certain amount of space and who themselves felt cautiously optimistic that it might expand further.

Few of us were so naive as to not understand that the CCP was always repressive, but it did appear that, for a while, the red lines had become more distant, and space for some degree of free thought had expanded. Over the past decade of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's rule, that view has been entirely reversed, as literally all that space has been shut down and many of its inhabitants have been locked up.

In China today, there are slow-motion June 4 massacres taking place all the time. Not with tanks and guns, but with repressive laws, prison camps, surveillance technology, and instruments of torture.

The Uyghurs are facing genocide, as is increasingly recognized by the international community. Atrocities in Tibet have increased. The persecution of Christians has intensified. The persecution of Falun Gong and forced organ harvesting has continued. And Hong Kong has turned from one of Asia's freest and most open cities into a police state.

I was denied entry into Hong Kong in 2017, have received numerous threats to myself and my mother over recent years, and have been warned by the Hong Kong Police Force officially that I could face jail in Hong Kong if they could get their hands on me. That doesn't worry me because there's little they can do as long as I don't get extradited, but it illustrates the dangers for Hongkongers, Uyghurs, Tibetans, and mainland Chinese-exiled dissidents. If the CCP is willing to threaten a foreign activist in this way, the dangers for those it regards as "its own people" are even greater.

And that leads me to my third reason why the June 4 anniversary matters. We must always learn from history. Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine has surely taught us that. A regime that's allowed to massacre thousands of people with impunity is not only a threat to its own people—it becomes a threat to us.

All dictatorships are like bad drivers with one eye in the rear-view mirror. If no one tries to pull them over for their speeding or drunken driving, they'll carry on, causing carnage. Until now, for 33 years, the rest of the world has failed to keep the CCP in check—and as a result, the regime has been emboldened. That's why today we have a Uyghur genocide, the total destruction of Hong Kong's freedoms, the continued tragedy of Tibet, religious persecution, organ harvesting, and the all-out assault on civil society in China.

For my new book, "The China Nexus: Thirty Years In and Around the Chinese Communist Party's Tyranny," which will be published in October, I interviewed several prominent activists and journalists who were in Beijing on June 4, 1989. Their stories are consistent.

Yang Jianli, a prominent exiled Chinese activist, told me that in the early hours of June 4 he and his colleagues cycled into the square.

"We saw the troops open fire, and we saw many people killed," he told me in an emotional online call. "It was so hard to

believe. I saw tanks moving at high speed, tear gas, machine gun fire, and I heard so much screaming. That was what propelled me into becoming an activist."

Veteran Canadian journalist Jan Wong, author of "Red China Blues," who was in Tiananmen Square on June 4 told me what she saw firsthand.

"They were shooting, people were running, and people tried to rescue others," she said. "They brought out bodies on bicycle seats and pedicabs. They just ran into gunfire."

Later that night, Wong herself narrowly missed a bullet fired into the wall of the Beijing Hotel, just inches from the balcony where she was standing observing the carnage.

She saw the infamous "Tank Man" scene in real-time.

"The army had been running people over, and I had watched the tanks. Then my husband pointed to this man standing in front of a tank. ... I saw this whole dance between 'Tank Man' and the tank. He tried to stop the tank like a soccer goalie. Then he climbed onto the tank, tried to talk, then climbed down again," Wong said. Then he "melted into the crowd."

In addition to "Tank Man," she believes that the tank driver was a "real hero" because he refused to run the man over.

I believe we need to do three things going forward.

We need to ensure that history keeps a record so that—despite Beijing's best efforts—the massacres of 1989 aren't forgotten and that one day the cause for which so many gave their lives prevails in China: freedom, justice, peace, and truth.

Then we need to try to find the "tank drivers" in the regime who refuse to run people over. As hard as it may be, we have to do to the CCP what they do with such skill to us—we must pursue a divide-and-rule policy and cause them to split.

And at the same time, we must create a united front to fight their "United Front." Unity doesn't mean uniformity. We can welcome and respect the diversity of thought, strategy, tactics, and approach. But we should endeavor to encourage a "unity of spirit and purpose."

Egos and rivalries should be set to one side, with personal agendas suspended, and everyone who opposes the regime in Beijing should find a way to work together—or at least not work against each other. Only when we do that—and create our own "United Front"—can we have a hope of advancing.

Thirty-three years on from the massacre, let's not allow China's fallen heroes to be forgotten. Let's remind the free world, as a large part of it has just celebrated an icon of human dignity—the queen—this past weekend, of the big challenge that faces us ahead in confronting the problem of the CCP. Action on that front would go some way toward respecting the legacy of those who stood—and fell—in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

*Benedict Rogers is a human rights activist and writer. He is the co-founder and chief executive of Hong Kong Watch, senior analyst for East Asia at the international human rights organization CSW, co-founder and deputy chair of the UK Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, and member of the advisory group of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China, and the Stop Uyghur Genocide Campaign.*

A life-size sculpture of "Tank Man" stands beside the numbers "6" and "4", representing June 4, and a miniature sculpture of Tiananmen Rostrum, on display at Liberty Sculpture Park in the Mojave desert town of Yermo, Calif., on June 1, 2021.

DAVID TURNLEY/GETTY IMAGES



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