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DEFENSE

China's War Machine Is Betting the Future on Drones

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

A swarm of drones flies through the night sky over the Pacific. Shrouded in darkness and less than 100 miles from the California coastline, they move in groups of four and six, stalking U.S. Navy vessels. They whir about

over the ships' bows, gathering intelligence

to deliver to faceless masters. They match the speed of the naval vessels, flying unimpeded in low visibility for as long as four hours at a time. The alarmed crews of the ships have no idea where they came from or what their purpose is.

This isn't the plot of an up-and-coming spy thriller, but a series of actual events that took place in July 2019.

The chilling encounters raised alarms throughout the Navy and brought forth an investigative apparatus composed of elements of the U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and FBI. Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commander of the Pacific Fleet were kept primed with updates on the situ-

"If the drones were not operated by the American military, these incidents represent a highly significant security breach," reads one investigative report based on the

YEARS

Bejing has a vessel

designed

to deploy

underwater

drones that

not likely to

own for six more years.

the United

States is

airborne

various

and

Yet the nature of the drones, where they came from, and who deployed them remained a mystery for more than two years.

However, a new investigative report published in June by The Drive shed light on the incidents, which totaled at least eight encounters involving several unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that were previously simply referred to as UFOs in the press.

The report, based on Navy materials newly obtained through multiple Freedom of Information Act requests, pinpoints the launching point of the drones as a civilian bulk carrier operating in the area at the time. That ship, the MV Bass Strait, is owned and operated by Pacific Basin, flagged out of Hong Kong.

"The Navy assessed that the commercial cargo ship was likely conducting surveillance on Navy vessels using drones," the report reads.

During its first-ever operational voyage, the ship may have been linked to previously unknown incidents in March and April 2019, including "intelligence collection operations" targeting the USS Zumwalt, America's most advanced surface combatant.

"Active surveillance of key naval assets is being conducted in areas where they train and employ their most sensitive systems, often within close proximity to American shores," the report reads.

A drone towing a cable flies over the Dadu River to the other side of the Ya'an-Kangding expressway bridge under construction in Ya'an. Sichuan Province, China on Dec. 20, 2016

Drones appear to play a central role in the Chinese regime's focus on the forced unification of Taiwan with the mainland.



A drone carrying a passenger flies into a stadium in the back in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, The "Yi Long" drone by China Aviation Industry Corp., on display at the 9th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China, on Nov. 13, 2012.

China's Growing Drone Force

crew of the Bass Strait, Pacific Basin, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) share. Nevertheless, the incident underscores the central role that drones are to play in the next stage of modern warfare and how they're already shaping the battlefield and intelligence gathering processes.

on drone warfare. The regime has invested heavily for more than a decade into everything from cheap and expendable commercial quadcopters to resource-heavy high-altitude long-endurance drones. Indeed, the CCP and its military wing,



A drone carrying a

20, 2021.

passenger flies into a

stadium in the back in

Guangzhou, Guangdong

Province, China, on April

the People's Liberation Army (PLA), have undertaken numerous unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) projects since the early 2000s. However, the first appearance of a large-

shortly into CCP leader Xi Jinping's tenure. Likely built from data obtained from the Iranian capture of an advanced U.S. drone in 2011, China's "Sharp Sword" was just the first of many advanced UAVs, built through the assistance of foreign technologies gathered as part of the regime's comprehensive program of technology theft.

of varieties of UAVs using a plethora of state-owned corporations that also build the regime's space and missile technologies. From larger combat drones, such thing drone-related.

drone capabilities across the spectrum of its military assets, deploying those capabilities in some of the world's most contested regions.

the Fujian, is expected to host a variety of drones. Its electromagnetic catapult system will prove invaluable for quickly launching differently weighted drones with adjustable

lessons learned from the past several years, as China's second aircraft carrier, the Shandong, was spotted in early June with a small fleet of "commercial or commercial-derivative drones" on its flight deck, according to one report's analysis of images that appeared on Chinese social media platform Weibo.

"[The images] do underscore the Chinese



A drone used by the police, on display at the 2014 China International Industry Fair in Shanghai on Nov. 4, 2014.

People's Liberation Army's ever-increasing

efforts to develop and field various types of

can operate together in networked swarms,

In the words of its manufacturer, it's the

that mothership as a maritime research

tool, a South China Morning Post re-

besiege, and expel invasive targets."

its own such vessel for six more years.

As the pace of China's military drone

development has accelerated, the rate of

international incidents related to drones

led multiple sorties of fighter jets over

In August 2021, Japan Self-Defense Forces

several days to intercept PLA drones caught

flying south of Okinawa, Japan. The drones,

Reaper drones, were believed to be collect-

comparable in size to U.S. Predator and

ing strategic intelligence on the Miyako

Strait, which provides the PLA with a

Watching, Learning, Preparing

has also increased.

port stated that the vessel indeed hosts

military capabilities that can "intercept,

That news is likely to displease U.S. mili-

tary leadership, which isn't likely to deploy

unmanned aircraft, including those that

report reads.

mother ship."

of the Zhu Hai Yun.

critical point of entry to the Pacific and has been the site of increasing Chinese military excursions for the past decade.

The incident serves as a poignant re-

and often with an eye toward performing minder of what so much of China's drone various roles in the maritime domain," one fleet serves to do: secure vital strategic intelligence for the coordination of military If that weren't enough to underscore the It's this point that brings one back to the regime's ambition to dominate the strategic

issue of just what several groups of drones space with a new, drone-first approach to military engagement, there's now the case launched from a Hong Kong freight ship were doing spying on U.S. Navy vessels near the coast of California. If such ac-The Zhu Hai Yun is a 290-foot ocean research vessel designed to deploy various tions were directly or indirectly tied to the underwater and airborne drones for varisprawling military-security apparatus of ous purposes. The ship is also a drone and China's communist government, what can either be remotely controlled by a pilot would be the end goal for the intelligence or left to navigate the open seas autonogathered? What's the action in "actionable intelligence"?

To that question, one analysis found that "world's first intelligent unmanned system 2019's "adversary drones" were "meant to stimulate America's most capable air Although Beijing has officially described defense systems and collect extremely high-quality electronic intelligence data on them."

"By gathering comprehensive electronic intelligence information on these systems, countermeasures and electronic warfare tactics can be developed to disrupt or defeat them," the report reads. "Capabilities can also be accurately estimated and even cloned, and tactics can be recorded and

exploited. "That swarm could have been, and likely was, sucking up, or helping another nearby platform suck up, all that sensitive ... data on the most capable warships on earth and at very close range."

In essence, the drones were achieving two things. The first was the blanket intelligence gathered from spying on U.S. Navy vessels up close. The second was learning what would draw a U.S. response and what that response would be.

In this way, the drones were baiting U.S.

naval vessels, soaking up intelligence about their response (or lack thereof) for future actions that could not only inform the Chinese military about the technical specifications of the U.S. ships, but also how to manipulate their crews and protocols to learn how U.S. forces would behave in

Chinese aircraft carrier Liaoning arrives in Hong Kong on July 7, 2017.

Winning the Next War

conflict.

Such tools have very real consequences for the United States, its allies and partners, and the greater liberal international order. Perhaps nowhere is this more true than in the acute threat of a CCP invasion of democratic Taiwan, which has maintained its de facto independence since 1949.

Despite that independence—and despite the fact that the CCP has never ruled the island—the regime has made the forced unification of Taiwan with the mainland a central point of its current focus. Drones are to play a central role in that endeavor, it appears.

In late 2021, the PLA launched a miniature aircraft carrier designed to deploy and recover swarms of drones. Such staging vehicles are designed to work alongside surface combatants to disrupt military operations in the maritime domain by swarming enemy targets or rendering them less effective through distraction.

One examination of China's drone capabilities by The Drive found that "drone swarms of various kinds are only more and more likely to be a component of future conflicts that China might find itself involved in, whether these being operated by Chinese forces or other parties."

Such drone technologies would offer "decisive advantages ... in scenarios revolving around the defense of Taiwan against a Chinese invasion," according to the report. As such, it shouldn't be thought of as surprising that the regime would focus

so much strategic thought on a myriad of drone types for military use.

Indeed, according to the results of a wargame conducted by the U.S. Air Force, China would likely deploy hundreds if not thousands of drones in autonomous swarms during an invasion of Taiwan. Designed to collaborate with other drones in the network, such swarms offer both resiliency and an offensive capability unmatched by many of China's more conventional arms.

This is particularly true when it comes to China's strategic ambition to drive the United States out of the Indo-Pacific and away from defending Taiwan.

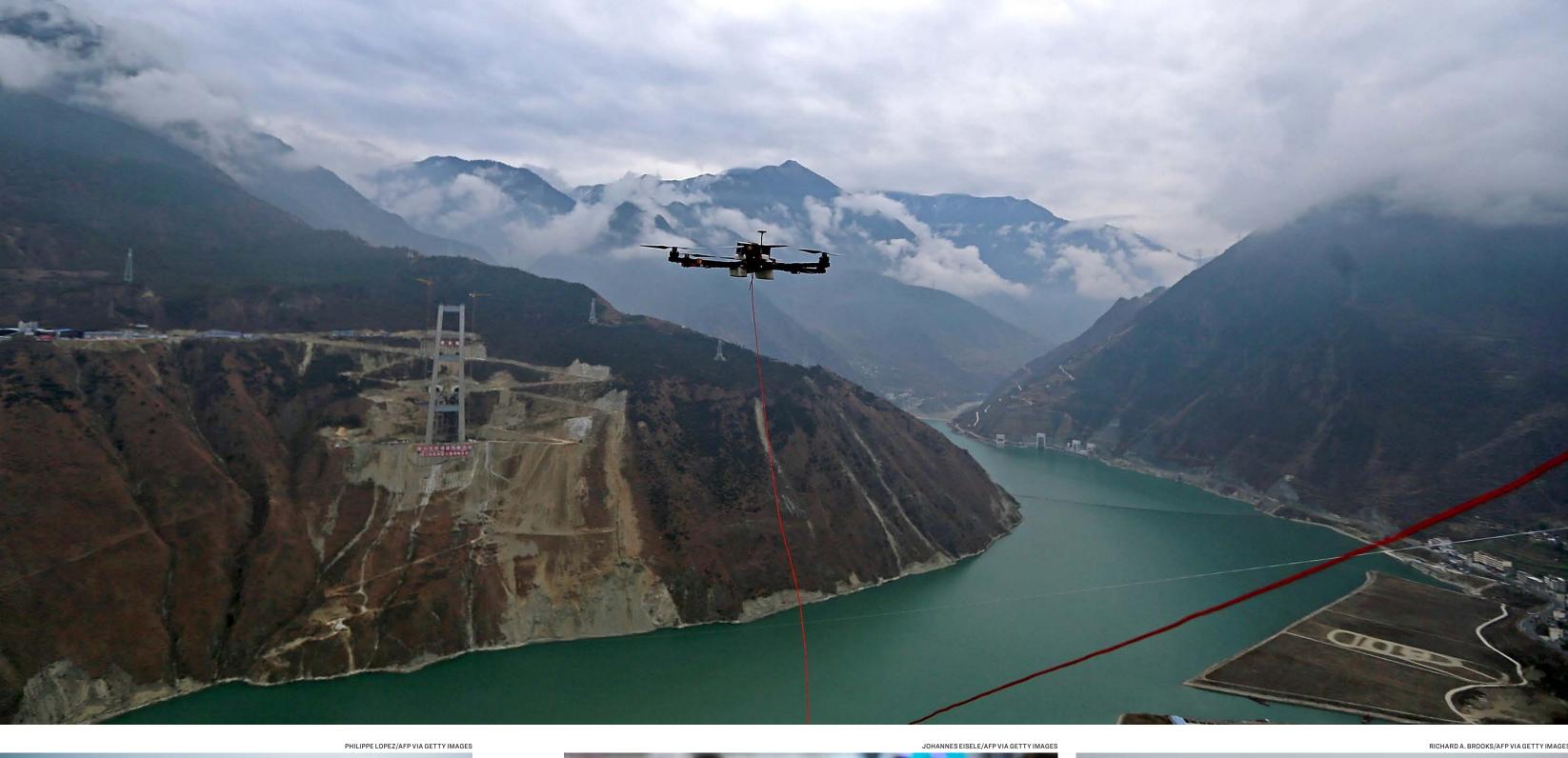
All isn't without hope for Taiwan and the United States, however. Indeed, after years of wargames demonstrating resounding U.S. losses over a hypothetical defense of Taiwan, the United States scored a sure, albeit pyrrhic, victory in its most recent

wargame in 2021. What would be the key to victory in repelling a CCP invasion of Taiwan? Drone swarms of its own.

As one summary reads, "Swarming capabilities are seen even by top U.S. think tanks and the Pentagon as being so critical to future conflicts that they could be decisive in a major peer-state battle, such as one over Taiwan."

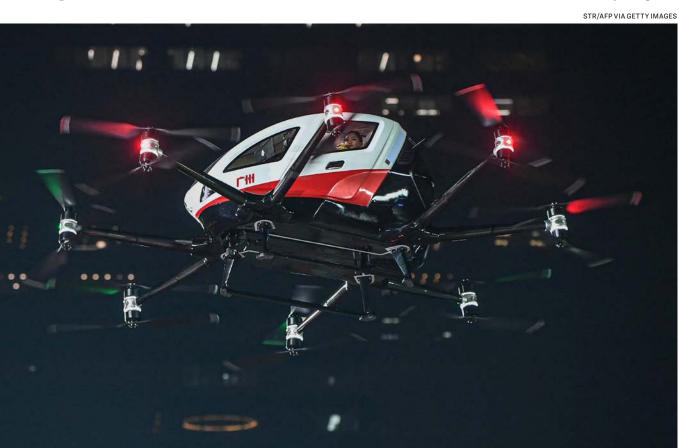
What must be at the forefront of the minds of strategists everywhere is the fact that the U.S. Air Force fought its hypothetical war with China with a notional force. That is, one that had drone technologies that the United States hasn't actually de-

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It's too early to say what connection the

As it so happens, the CCP is betting big



scale Chinese-built stealth drone came

Since then, the CCP has funded dozens as the Sharp Sword, to small quadcopter drones, such as those spotted near California, to rocket-powered supersonic vehicles intended to zip through the sky gathering targeting information, the CCP buys every-

The CCP is also already building out its

China's third and newest aircraft carrier,

That effort will likely build on operational

OPINION

ESG Has Hit the Human Rights Iceberg

KEITH KRACH



Throughout my career, I often said "corporate responsibility is social responsibility." Nothing exemplifies an attempt to make that a reality

today as much as ESG, or "Environmental, Social, and Governance" criteria, that an increasing number of companies and corporations are signing up for.

Essentially, if a company signs up for ESG, it agrees to conduct itself in a way that respects the environment, contributes to local communities, and is honest and transparent in its financial practices. This enables conscientious investors to invest their money in companies that don't violate their values and contribute to making the world a better place.

ESG began approximately fifteen years ago with companies operating by its standards collectively worth around \$17 billion. Today, that number is nearly \$20 trillion. The power of the ESG community cannot be underestimated.

But there's a huge flaw in how ESG is currently structured, and I can sum it up in one word: China.

Americans Unwittingly Fund Communist Genocide

The reality is that China, under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is engaged in genocide of the Uyghur people in its Xinjiang province. As Under Secretary of State, I wrote three letters to CEOs, the governing boards of American universities, and civil society partners on this tragedy, and their responsibility for ensuring their organizations were not unwittingly supporting it with their investments or supply chains.

The blunt reality is that the average American investor is unknowingly financing the CCP's human rights abuses, surveillance state, and military-civil fusion because the CCP has infiltrated American capital markets through the back door. They've managed to get around the financial transparency laws that American and other companies must follow in order to enjoy the same access, and are often buried in various index bonds, which are then incorporated into hundreds of products, ETFs, and mutual funds.

The Hole in ESG

During my time at the State Department, we championed the Trust Principle. The idea is simple: if you are going to participate in our markets, you must also agree to abide by a set of trust principles that we, in the free world, respect. This includes things like transparency, integrity, respect for human rights, the environment, rule of law, etc.

The authoritarian alternative is the Power Principle, which relies on bullying, cheating, and coercion.

By insisting that all participants in our markets abide by the Trust Principle, we were able to defeat China, Inc.'s 5G master plan, which was on the brink of wresting control over international 5G networks and handing it to the CCP. The bully backed down.

ESG must now do the same thing. That will mean simply living up to its own standards. When you think about it, ESG itself is based on the Trust Principle. For a company to qualify for ESG, it must comply with ESG standards. In many ways, those standards align with the Trust Principle I championed at the State Department.

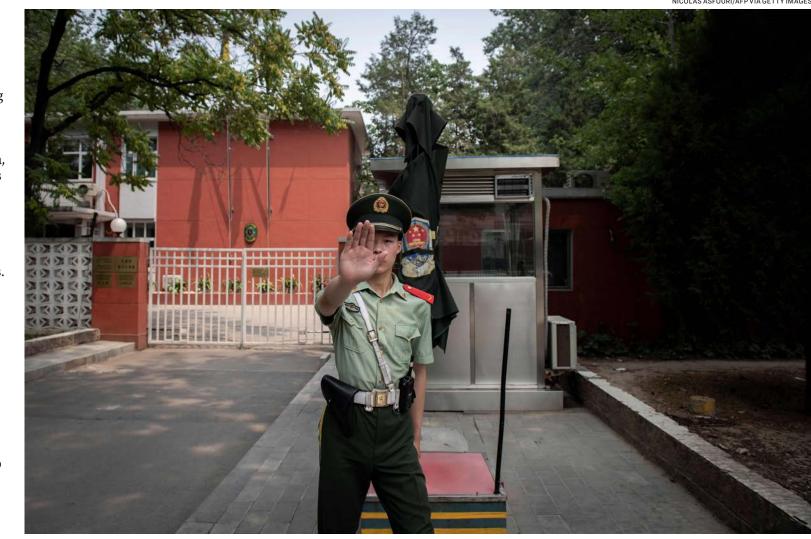
But among those principles are transparency and reciprocity. If we're going to shine the light of transparency on Xinjiang, we must reciprocate and also shine it on ourselves.

After the Holocaust, the world said, "never again." Did we mean it? As House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-

Calif.) recently observed about corporate sponsors of the recent Beijing Olympics, "If we don't speak out against human rights violations in China for commercial reasons, we lose all moral authority to speak out for human rights anywhere." That's a polite way of saying there's a conflict of interest, and it seems that for some corporations there's simply too much money on the table to do anything about genocide.

An Appeal to the World Economic

Then there are forums like the World Economic Forum (WEF), which is the preeminent gathering for government



A paramilitary police officer gestures outside the Belgium embassy in Beijing on June 19, 2019.

Is remaining silent

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eye to genocide,

but passively

profit from it?

Keith Krach testifies

March 27, 2019.

before the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee on

and intellectual

and corporate leaders who seek to uphold the high standards outlined in ESG. WEF asset managers collectively manage trillions of dollars. They have the power, the wealth, and the prestige to speak out.

But they've said nothing. Why isn't the Uyghur genocide among the lengthy list of topics the WEF is actively addressing? Indeed, its own mission, as stated on its own website, declares that "the Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does."

Is remaining silent on Xinjiang "in the global public interest"? Can any of us claim "moral and intellectual integrity" is at the heart of everything we do when we not only turn a blind eye to genocide, but passively profit from it?

The WEF has done great work on many rights, let alone genocide, it hasn't stood by its espoused principles. It's been silent when it comes to China.

Call to Action: Wake Up ESG!

The truth is many have been silent for decades. The free world not only turned a blind eye to the CCP's crimes, but we financed them by providing access to our capital markets. We not only sent over a treasure trove of our best investment bankers, lawyers, money managers, private equity investors, and venture capitalists, but we funded China, Inc. through our pension funds, university endowments, foundations, mutual funds, and bond portfolios. We all did—on a bipartisan basis. We espoused the Trust Principle with our words, but constantly sat by as it was violated and abused by those who only value the Power Principle.

Now, we must do something about it. So I call upon the ESG community, the World Economic Forum, and financial managers like Black Rock, to wake up, to be consistent, and to practice what you preach with respect to China. Do not turn a blind eye to the CCP bully. Stand up to the Power Principle with the Trust Principle.

The ESG community—including the

World Economic Forum—is a powerful group, one that has a great human heart. If it spoke out against CCP human rights abuses with one voice, the world would

As one former CEO to other CEOs, I call on you to make your supply chains clean.

To financial institutions: you have a moral responsibility, and a fiduciary duty, to disclose if you're investing in Chinese companies, particularly ones that are involved in the surveillance state, human rights abuses, and military-civil fusion—especially if they are involved in an emerging index like the MSCI or FTSE emerging index funds, as they recently added 250 Chinese companies to the mix as of last June.

And finally, to my fellow citizens: let your voice be heard. There's strength in numbers, especially when pocketbooks are involved. Use yours to bring awareness about this issue. If you have a pension plan, contribute to your university's endowment fund, or are invested in a mutual fund or ETF (especially an emerging market index fund), ask if they follow ESG guidelines on human rights. Ask if they disclose their Chinese investments. If they don't, ask them when they will. If they don't have a good answer, consider putting your money elsewhere.

As I wrote with my colleague Ellie Cohanim, "the sound of emptying the cash register will be heard loud and clear on the other side of the world in Xinjiang." Whether or not we meant "never again"

will be confirmed in Xinjiang. No one should bend the knee to the CCP. We have the moral high ground of democratic values. Our Trust Principle is greater than their Power Principle.

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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OPINION

When Will the Chinese Regime Start Shooting Down Taiwanese, American, Japanese, and Australian Aircraft?

RICK FISHER



A dangerous May 26 close-in harassing maneuver by a Chinese jet fighter against an Australian patrol aircraft operating near the Paracel

Islands in the South China Sea reminds us that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its People's Liberation Army (PLA) are prone to calculated endangerment in their pursuit of military coer-

This derives from the CCP's penchant for fighting "wars of decision"—initiating offensive wars that, by their shocking violence, cause fear and self-deterrence in opponents that help create future strategic options for the CCP.

In late 1950, Mao Zedong unleashed 260,000 troops to attack U.S. and allied forces in Korea, forcing a great retreat that would deter Washington from considering real attacks against his fragile revolution. By joining Joseph Stalin's plans, Mao gained a massive windfall of then-modern Soviet military and industrial technology.

Then in 1979, Deng Xiaoping led a brief punitive war against Vietnam. On the surface, it was disastrous for the PLA. Still, it helped convince the Carter and Reagan administrations that Deng was opposed to the Soviet Union and deserving of the cornucopia of new military technology and investment that started communist China's current "rise."

The CCP and its PLA have initiated a number of smaller but still violent skirmishes also designed to shape China's strategic environment to benefit the CCP.

In the mid-1970s and late-1980s, the Chinese regime used violent attacks to contain Vietnam and began its conquest of the South China Sea. In January 1974, the regime attacked a weakened South Vietnam, killing 75 Vietnamese troops to capture the Paracel Islands.

Then, in January 1988, Chinese forces attacked the Vietnamese-occupied Johnson Reef in the Spratly Islands group, using 37mm cannon on ships to obliterate Vietnamese soldiers standing in the water, helping to deter Vietnam from opposing Beijing's encroachments in the Spratly Islands.

On the night of June 15, 2020, in the disputed India-China border area of the Galwan Valley, Chinese troops, taking advantage of longstanding agreements not to use firearms during border clashes, made surprise use of nailed clubs to attack Indian soldiers, killing at least 20.

This tradition of optional offensive wars will position the CCP well as it seeks global strategic hegemony. This requires a reflexive capacity to intervene in countries around the world in support of favored factions, even to support their wars to assure long-term military access to their territory.

But to be able to project military power globally, the CCP will first require control of Taiwan.

Taiwan is essential for next-generation warships, nuclear ballistic missile submarines, strategic nuclear missiles, and naval/air projection force bases, already positioned to dominate naval and air

by China's Xinhua News Agency, two Chinese SU-30 fighter jets take off from an unspecified location to fly a patrol over the South China Sea.

(Bottom Left) The

Chinese and Russian

air forces conduct joint

bomber exercise as U.S.

President Joe Biden was

leaving Asia on May 24,

(Bottom Right) This

video frame grab taken

from footage recorded

in mid-June 2020 and

Television on Feb. 20,

2021, shows Chinese

(foreground) and Indian

soldiers (R, background)

where troops from both

countries clashed in the

Line of Actual Control in

the Galwan Valley, in the

Karakoram Mountains in

during an incident

the Himalayas.

released by China Central

In this undated file photo

transport routes across Asia. Chinese control of Taiwan will largely result in the deaths of "democratic" Taiwanese should the United States and others retaliate against these bases.

Killing "democratic" Taiwan is also necessary to destroy the credibility of U.S. alliance guarantees and to create a political "moral" authority for the CCP to destroy other democracies unwilling to subordinate themselves to the CCP.

But on the way to its war over Taiwan, which shows no desire to surrender to CCP slave status, the CPP has to prove to the world that it is willing to kill as part of an escalating coercive campaign to prevent the United States from forming a military coalition to defend Taiwan.

For about a decade, the United States has waged a largely unpublicized virtual war against increasingly aggressive military posturing by the PLA that increasingly includes Russian forces, conducting harassment maneuvers against Taiwan and Japan, and training their troops for future blockades and combat.

American and increasingly Japanese forces have established a pattern of naval and air deployments that respond to China's increasing naval-air deployments; in 2021, Japan intercepted 772 Chinese and 226 Russian aircraft probing its aid defense

In May, the PLA conducted its first joint maneuvers with a PLA Navy carrier battle group and successive groups of PLA Taiwan, with the addition on May 25 of the fourth joint China-Russia nuclear-capable bomber patrol over likely interdiction routes to be used by U.S. forces that would assist Taiwan.

In behavior reminiscent of many Cold War-era "incidents at sea" involving Soviet and U.S. Navy ships, during May, the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force used its largest helicopter carrier to visibly track the PLA Navy aircraft carrier battle group.

But it was the May 26 incident—in which a PLA Air Force (PLAAF) J-16 fighter fired infrared jamming flares very close to the Royal Australian Air Force P-8A anti-submarine and maritime patrol aircraft—that indicated the PLA might try to get away with either captur-

ing a P-8A or killing it and its crew. Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles called the incident "very dangerous." China could easily modify its flares, which bloom hair-thin aluminum strands with much thicker strands that may cause real damage when ingested into one of the P-8A's two turbofan engines.

A potential future Chinese "attack"

China's new South China Sea bases, allowing intelligence exploitation of this cutting-edge anti-submarine aircraft. This would be similar to China's concocting of the "accident" that forced the emergency landing of a U.S. Navy EP-3 electronic surveillance aircraft on Hainan Island on April 1, 2001.

On June 7, a Chinese defense ministry spokesman said, "The Australian warplane has seriously threatened China's sovereignty and security, and the countermeasures taken by the Chinese military are professional, safe, reasonable, and legitimate." In reality, the regime will continue its dangerous harassments. Just days before, on June 1, the Canadian defense ministry revealed that during its deployment of the Royal Canadian Air Force CP-140 anti-submarine and patrol aircraft to Japan from April 26 to May 26, patrolling near North Korea to enforce economic and military sanctions, a PLA aircraft had harassed the Canadian aircraft on "several occasions."

On two recent occasions, the PLAAF deployed combat aircraft for intimidation missions near Taiwan simultaneously with the arrival of visiting members of the U.S. Congress.

On Nov. 9, 2021, the PLAAF sent four J-11 fighters into the Taiwan Strait area as a U.S. delegation landed in Taiwan on a U.S. military flight.

And on April 15, 2022, the PLAAF sent six J-11 and J-16 fighters in reaction to a visitng delegation led by Sens. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

There is a point when the Chinese regime will decide that it can get away with "killing" or shooting down a Taiwanese, Japanese, Canadian, Australian, or American aircraft. That event is just as likely to be a "surprise" strike or designed to follow an alleged "provocation" by any of these countries.

The regime will craft the attack for maximum shock impact—with no regard at all for the loss of life—to produce a deterrent effect, one that likely causes a limitation in U.S. support for Taiwan, Japan, or South Korea in the event of a Chinese, Russian, and North Korean attack.

But the timing of such an attack may also be determined by China's growing confidence that it can quickly establish military superiority over the area of the incident. In other words, the CCP would be more willing to use its PLA for deadly effects if it becomes larger and more effective.

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







OPINION

CCP's Drug Warfare and Other Illegal Activities in Latin America

GUERMANTES LAILARI



and insidious activities against the United States and the Western Hemisphere, including transnational criminal organizations and Chinese fentanyl traffickers.

"Transnational criminal organizations—including gangs and cartels perpetuate violence and corruption and threaten the stability of Central American states including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador," the NSS report

Chinese fentanyl traffickers, along with drug cartels, feed the illicit opioid epidemic, which "kills tens of thousands of Americans each year," according to

(Note: The Biden administration has not published an NSS yet.)

This article will explore a few current examples of CCP illicit activities through Chinese criminal cartels in Latin America and the implications of these illicit activities for the United States, Latin America, and the rest of the world.

Legal Trade: China Versus US

The CCP has made major inroads into Latin America, literally. Of the 31 Latin American countries, 20 are part of the CCP's Belt and Road Initiative's \$160 billion investment. In 2021, China's Latin American trade exceeded \$400 billion compared to just \$295 billion for the United States.

During the June 6-10 botched Summit of the Americas, the Biden administration offered \$617 million in aid for the 31 countries in Latin America, which averages less than \$20 million a country. Meanwhile, the administration seeks to give \$40 billion in military aid to Ukraine. At a May 2022 ASEAN summit meeting, the administration offered \$150 million for the 10 ASEAN countries; China offered \$1.5

Latin America is rich in natural resources. It includes the Amazon region the world's largest forest and jungle. Many Latin American countries depend on mining as a major source of exports.

The CCP is leveraging its superior economic influence in Latin America to demonstrate it is winning Latin American hearts and minds, as well as capturing their elites politically and economically.

In recent interviews, U.S. Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.) stated: "This is our hemisphere that we're talking about. China is literally eating our lunch." And Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) said:

"China has a plan. We don't have a plan." Not only is the CCP "eating our lunch," but the CCP also aids and abets Chinese criminal groups in Latin America that conduct drug warfare against the United

China's Organized Criminal Group Activities

Maria Zuppello recently wrote an article in Militant Wire documenting many illicit activities that Chinese criminal groups conduct throughout Latin America. She describes the breadth and depth of the illegal drug trade in fentanyl, marijuana, and the emerging market of "non-fentanyl synthetic opioids such as nitazenes, also known as benzimidazole opioids such as the synthetic opioid derivative Isotonitazene (ISO), which are

Members of the National Aeronaval Service guard displayed during a press

conference at a base in

Panama City on Oct. 30,

The leading money

laundering entities

in Latin America are

Chinese-organized

crime groups.

A Drug Enforcement

checks confiscated

fentanyl at the DEA

Northeast Regional

Laboratory in New York on

powder containing

Administration chemist

2021.

is known throughout the region generically as Red Dragon. Some of the more prominent groups (Chinese triads) are A.C, Pi Xiu, Panda, Wan Ke, and Xin. Some gangs have Spanish names, such as "Amistad" (Spanish for "friendship"). In the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, Chinese gangs Fuk Ching, Flying Dragons, and Tai Chen engage in human trafficking.

20 times more potent than fentanyl."

I interviewed her about her research

Fentanyl is the leading cause of death among U.S. adults between the ages of 18 and 45. Fentanyl has killed more Americans in this age group than COVID-19.

According to U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy (D-N.C.), the only serving member of the House of Representatives who is a surgeon), from April 2020 to April 2021, the following deaths were reported in the 18–45 age range:

- Fentanyl deaths: 40,010
- COVID-19 deaths: 21,335 • Cancer deaths: 17,114
- Car accidents deaths: 22,442
- Suicide deaths: 21,678

Fentanyl and drugs mixed with fentanyl (such as cocaine and methamphetamine) caused the deaths of more than 64,000 out of the over 100,000 overdose deaths in the United States. In other words, fentanyl and drugs mixed with fentanyl cause more deaths than the combined deaths caused by COVID, car accidents, and suicides of the same age

Had the CCP enforced its own laws on trafficking illegal narcotics against Chinese crime groups smuggling fentanyl or its precursor chemicals to Mexico, the CCP could have prevented many of these fentanyl-related deaths.

Why do Criminal Cartels Prefer Fentanyl, ISO?

Drug cartels are profit-maximizing organizations; drug potency and production costs are key factors in choosing which drugs to produce and distribute. Fentanyl is cheaper than heroin to produce, and fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin. Drug cartels have smuggled that the price has dropped 50 percent

The Biden administration's policy to relax or eliminate restrictions on transit between Mexico and the United States has also benefited drug traffickers. In 2021, the Drug Enforcement Agency seized "11,201 pounds of fentanyl—a 134 percent increase from fiscal year 2020, and a 400 percent increase since fiscal year 2018."

ISO is a synthetic opioid derivative that is 20 times more potent than fentanyl and is the newest poison that drug cartels are smuggling into the United States. This means that ISO, the new drug, is 1,000 times more potent than heroin!

Chinese Criminal Groups

The leading money laundering entities in Latin America are Chinese-organized crime groups. Zuppello notes that these Chinese criminal groups are a greater threat to Latin America and the United States than non-Chinese organized criminal groups. Chinese gangs operate within a global framework that combines crime, politics, corruption, and economics, and allows the gangs to operate in many different countries. Other organized criminal groups do not have a global framework or have the support of a superpower.

The CCP supports licit and illicit activity in Latin America. As the region's electoral politics move left (as seen recently in elections in Colombia and possibly in Brazil this fall), the CCP gains a stronger foothold. In effect, Latin Americans who prefer the United States over China find it difficult to oppose CCP penetration into Latin America's political, economic, social, and illicit systems.

The following are selected reports of activities cited by Zuppello of Chineseorganized criminal groups in Latin America.

Chile

Zuppello noted, "Chilean officials arrested thirteen Chinese nationals in Santiago in September 2021 for cultivation and trafficking, confiscating over

1,600 marijuana plants. The network operated between Valparaiso and the had uncovered over 1,500 plants and 250 kilograms of product in San Antonio, Valparaiso."

She noted that Sergio Muñoz, head of Chile's civil police, said, "We also found guns, cocaine hydrochloride, cocaine paste, and ecstasy and uncovered a vast array of offenses associated with this network, ranging from prostitution to money laundering."

Brazil

Zuppello pointed out that "Brazilian police investigation revealed that the First Command of the Capital (PCC) used a Chinese accountant and Chinese smugglers to launder money through front companies that were continuously opened and shut. In 2015, Brazilian authorities uncovered that the PCC trans-

ferred over \$20 million to bank accounts in the US and China."

Zuppello noted that "in October 2020, the US Justice Department unsealed an indictment accusing six Chinese nationals of laundering approximately \$30 million for Mexican drug traffickers over 12 years. US authorities convicted Chinese national Xianbing Gan, a resident of Guadalajara, Mexico, to 14 years in prison in April 2021 for laundering more than \$500,000 from Mexican cartels into Chinese banks. However, according to the judges, Gan handled a larger sum, between \$25 million and \$65 million over a period of two years."

Other Illicit Activities

Zuppello reported that "cigarettes manufactured in China are the most trafficked items in almost all of Latin America."

These criminal groups also loot natural resources, including timber (rosewood), illegal fishing, wild animals (jaguars), reptiles, sharks, sea cucumbers, totoaba, and abalone. The Chinese criminal groups smuggle these items into China.

Conclusions The CCP has several faces it shows to the world. The most common is that of an aggressive expansionist state that exploits the natural resources of other countries, builds infrastructure to extract those natural resources, and transports them to China. The CCP's connection to criminal groups and illicit businesses is less known. These two faces allow the CCP to coerce global elites to comply with CCP's strategic objectives.

Zuppello's assessment of the Chinese organized criminal groups highlights a problem for democratic governance in Latin America:

"The left-wing political momentum in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Colombia, and most likely Brazil following their 2022 presidential elections, will boost anti-US sentiments and, conversely, strengthen commercial and political ties with China. As a result, some Chinese criminal elements will increase their penetration into local economies accompanying the more legitimate and legal Chinese commercial activity." In late June 2022, Colombia elected

a left-wing government; its leader is a former member of M-19 (an international criminal cartel).

'Known Knowns, Known Unknowns, Unknown Knowns'

"Known" examples of Chinese organized criminal activity encompassed the material discussed above. Yet the known knowns of organized illegal activity entail only a portion of Chinese organized criminal activity. Disguised and hidden Chinese criminal activity comprise a significant component.

Known unknowns:

- Ongoing criminal investigations that are not publicly known.
- Cooperation with illicit organizations, such as Mexican drug cartels and terror organizations like Hezbollah and the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Unknown knowns:

- Corruption, for example, illegal deals to extract natural resources from Latin America, and political manipulations through illicit means, extortion.
- Cooperation among authoritarian governments, such as Iran, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Russia, and Cuba.

Unrestricted Warfare

Chinese organized crime is one of the CCP's tools to achieve global dominance. In the 1999 book "Unrestricted Warfare," the two People's Liberation Army Air Force colonels state that drug warfare, one of 24 types of warfare, is "obtaining sudden and huge illicit profits by spreading disaster in other countries."

The CCP executes this drug warfare to achieve the objective of spreading disaster in the United States and other countries, such as killing over 64,000 young adults every year through fentanyl. Since 1999, the CCP has found i conduct illicit warfare.

We should take note of their nefarious activities and act to counter them. The Biden administration has no feasible plan or strategy to keep Latin America from the CCP's licit and illicit designs, and no plan to curtail the murderous drug trafficking occurring on our southern "open" border. Let us hope this is a temporary problem and that a "reset" will happen soon.

Other countries worldwide should be aware of communist China's use of illicit criminal groups to achieve its strategic objectives. These Chinese criminal groups pose more than a law enforcement challenge—they are a national security threat to any country.

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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An undated picture of the gold mine Yanacocha, in Cajamarca, 621 miles northeast of Lima, Peru. The biggest gold mine in Latin America, located in the north of Peru, was crippled by protests in 2006 from locals who pelieve activity there has polluted the



CHINA INSIDER

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