

WEEK 30, 2022

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

ESG'S CHINA PROBLEM

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Candlelight Vigil in Washington Mourns Those Killed in Persecution of Falun Gong in China

Falun Gong practitioners gather in the nation's capital to call for an end to the Chinese regime's suppression of the faith group

TERRI WU

WASHINGTON—The air was fresh after a sweltering July day in the nation's boggy capital. An evening storm had cut up the sticky heat, paving the way for brilliantly colored clouds as the sun set over the Washington Monument.

Serene Chinese instrumentals rippled through the air, as more than 1,000 candle flames dotted the lawn in front of the towering obelisk that pierced the darkening sky.

The scene ushered in a somber mood. Each candle held by a seated Falun Gong practitioner was lit in memory of the untold number of those killed by the Chinese communist regime for nothing other than practicing their faith.

The previous day, July 20, marked 23 years since the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched its nationwide persecution of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice involving meditative exercises and a set of moral teachings based on the tenets of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.

The practice's immense popularity, drawing an estimated 70 million to 100 million adherents in China by 1999, was perceived as a threat to the Party's authoritarian control over society.

Since July 1999, millions of adherents have been detained in jails, detention centers, labor camps, and other facilities across the country, where they're subjected to torture, slave labor, indoctrination, and forced organ harvesting.

There are more than 4,700 documented cases of Falun Gong practitioners dying as a result of torture and abuse in police custody since 1999, yet the true number is likely many times higher because of the extreme difficulty in verifying information in China, according to the Falun Dafa Information Center.

Family Torn Apart

At the vigil, Yu Ping, from New York state, and her mother Wang Chunyan, a local from Fairfax, Virginia, had a special loved one in mind. Ping's father Yu Yefu died in 2002 as a result of the persecution, she said.

Ping, now 39, was then a 19-year-old freshman at the China Medical University in Shenyang, the capital of China's northeastern Liaoning Province, when her father died during winter break.

After the persecution began, Ping had expected the loss of some freedoms but not death in the family, especially since her father wasn't a Falun Gong practitioner.

"It felt so unreal that I was detached in a weird way," she told The Epoch Times. "It was almost like my feet didn't step on solid ground and my hands didn't touch anything real."

During most of her high school years in her home city of Dalian, Ping's mother, a Falun Gong practitioner, was forced to leave home to avoid being captured and forced to give up her belief. Therefore, Ping's father was the one who took care of her.

Every day, he rode a bike to drop her off and pick her up from school. On their way home, she would sit on the back of his bike, enjoying an ice cream bar he bought for her. Sometimes, seeing him making much effort riding uphill, she would ask him, "Am I too heavy, dad?"

"No. You are not heavy at all," he would reply, Ping said.

She still remembers the morning when he died. He had been in a coma for half a month. She was back in Dalian during her winter break and staying at her cousin's house near the hospital. During that period, she wasn't able to sleep well because of her worries for her father. She didn't even bother changing into her pajamas at night.

In the early hours of Jan. 3, 2002, Ping got a call from her aunt who worked at the Dalian Central Hospital, where her father was hospitalized, telling her that he was in critical condition.

She jumped out of the bed and started running out to get a taxi.

Ping said she remembers seeing this dark hallway when she arrived at the hospital at about 3 a.m. She felt so lonely and sad. For some reason, she didn't recall seeing anyone else. And the hallway seemed neverending.

As she was running, she comforted herself: "If I could make it to the ward, dad would be okay."

However, he passed away within the next two hours.

During the first three years after her father's death, Ping was still in shock. Other family members dreamed of her father, but he never visited Ping in her dreams.

It wasn't until 2003, when Ping went back home to Dalian for the first time after her father's death, that everything began sinking in. Seeing the familiar home apartment, she was overwhelmed by sorrow. Then, her father appeared in her dream. He told her that he was in a good place.

"I then realized that father hadn't come into my dreams because he didn't want me to be sad," said Ping, with tears in her eyes.

On Jan. 9, 2002, Ping's family went to the crematorium to collect her father's ashes. In his remains, her aunt showed her a black area on the skull with a diameter of about four inches, and told her, "Ping, remember, your father didn't die a natural death."

Even though the official cause of death was gas poisoning, the family doesn't believe that.

In mid-December 2001, the family lost contact with Ping's father for three days and then reported the case to the police. Eventually, he was found unconscious at home with the gas turned on.

When the family demanded an answer from local police, they were told: "If you want to know the reason for this man's death, ask his wife to check in with us."

It felt like a trap to capture her mother who was in hiding, Ping said. Surely, the death cause could be shared with her grandparents, the parents of the deceased, she thought. The police, according to Ping, were trying to bait their family; if they didn't turn in her mother, they would have to live with the regret of not knowing the truth of the father's death.

The family found the circumstances around her father's death to be suspicious. Several days before he was found unconscious at home, a police officer visited him at his workplace, then the Dalian Shipyard and now Da-



Over a thousand Falun Gong practitioners hold a candlelight vigil at the Washington Monument on July 21.

My practice of Falun Gong helped me stay positive throughout the difficulties and maintain the belief in good people.

Yu Ping, Falun Gong adherent

lian Shipbuilding Industry Company, to find out the whereabouts of his wife Wang. The officer hit Ping's father, who fought back. Then, the officer threatened to take revenge on him.

Even after more than 20 years, Ping still couldn't hold back tears when sharing memories of her father. However, the sorrow has subsided and has been replaced by peace knowing that he was in a good place.

She now works as operational support at an e-commerce company in upstate New York, years after she first made it to the United States in February 2008 through an au pair care program. Before her mom joined her in the country in 2015 through a U.N. refugee program, she practically lived as an orphan for years.

Ping credited her practice for not sinking into an abyss of depression or resentment: "My practice of Falun Gong helped me stay positive throughout the difficulties and maintain the belief in good people."

'Something Has to Be Done'

Makai Allbert, a 21-year-old senior at Fei Tian College in upstate New York, attended the vigil. He said he would never forget how he found out about the Chinese regime's repression of Falun Gong.

"This must be a joke," the then-high school student thought to himself in February 2018, when he first searched "Falun Gong" online and watched a video about the persecution.

Makai and his twin brother Rumi had practiced Falun Gong since their sophomore year in high school in Arizona.

Prior to this, Makai, in particular, thought there might be more to life than alcohol,



SAMIRA BOUADOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

drugs, and parties. So he began searching for answers in philosophical books.

That search ended in the summer of 2017, when a friend of his mom gave him a box of books. Among them was "Zhuan Falun," the main text of Falun Gong, and a DVD teaching the practice's meditative exercises. The book caught his attention because "it had a powerful aura," he said.

Within a week of practicing the exercises and reading "Zhuan Falun," Makai said he became a version of himself that he thought was "unreachable or just didn't exist." As a result, the teen's relationship with his family improved, and his health improved.

After practicing with his twin brother for about half a year, Makai thought they should search online.

"There might be more people like us out there," he told Rumi.

Sure, there were. And they were persecuted, according to the first video they found online. "As the video was playing, I had to stop halfway because I could not believe my eyes," Makai said.

After the video finished, the twin brothers just sat there. None of them said anything. Then they played the same video again.

"I remembered clearly, by the time the video finished, my face was completely wet because I was not necessarily crying, but tears flowed down my cheeks. I felt so much pity, so much sadness that people like me, just because they were meditating, just because they wanted

to be better people, were killed," Makai said.

He said it became clear to him that the persecution was real after watching a second video. He continued his research online. And later in the day, he also learned about the Chinese regime's forced organ harvesting of detained Falun Gong practitioners and that it wasn't something that only occurred in the past but was still going on.

In 2019, an independent tribunal found that Beijing has killed prisoners of conscience for their organs for years in order to supply the state's organ transplant system on a "significant scale." The main source of these organs is Falun Gong practitioners, the tribunal found, noting that the practice continues today.

"That just broke my heart," Makai said. "Just thinking about people being worried about their organs. It's unfathomable and made me very sick to my stomach."

To him, July 20 marks another year of suffering. And the persecution doesn't only involve Falun Gong practitioners; it also involves police officers and everyone in China's national apparatus. So, in a way, it affects the entire Chinese population and the rest of the world, he said.

A biomedical science major, Makai has volunteered for Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, an advocacy group consisting of medical professionals. He said he wanted to tell more people about the persecution.

"It was very clear to me that something had to be done," he said.

Li Xiaohua and her mother Ju Reihong. Ju holds a photo of her husband and Li's father, Li Delong, who died in the persecution.

People like me, just because they were meditating, just because they wanted to be better people, were killed.

Makai Allbert, Falun Gong adherent



LISA FAN/THE EPOCH TIMES



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(Above right) Yu Ping's mother, Wang Chunyan holds a wreath remembering a Falun Gong practitioner who was killed in China for their belief.

(Middle right) Yu Ping at a rally held on the National Mall in Washington on July 21, 2022, holding a picture of a Falun Gong practitioner killed in the persecution in China.

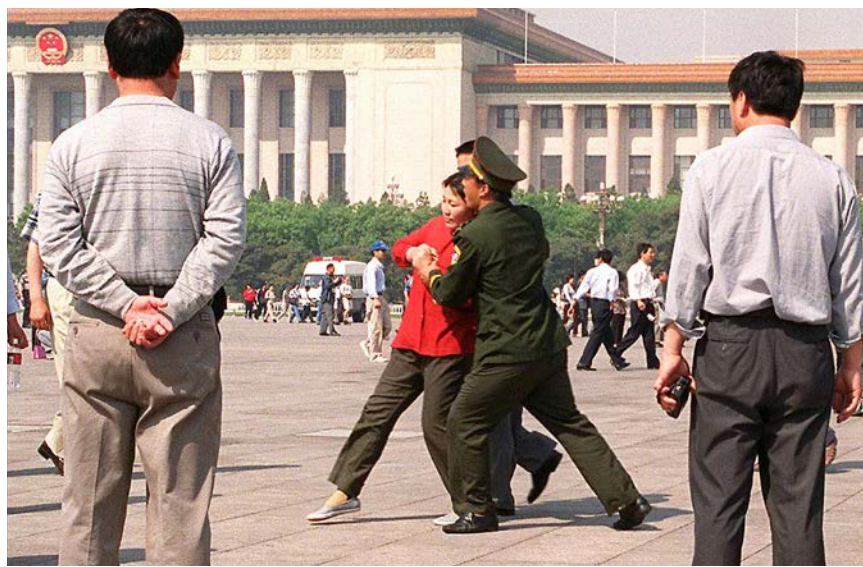
(Right) Makai Allbert, a 21-year-old senior at Fei Tian College in upstate New York, at the candlelight vigil commemorating those killed in the persecution of Falun Gong at Washington Monument on July 21, 2022.

4,700 CASES

There are over 4,700 documented cases of Falun Gong practitioners dying as a result of torture and abuse in police custody since 1999, yet the true number is likely many times higher, according to the Falun Dafa Information Center.



MINHUORIG



STEPHEN SHAVER/APF VIA GETTY IMAGES

NATIONAL SECURITY

Unprecedented FBI, MI5, Joint Warning on CCP Is Equal to ‘Break Glass in Case of Emergency’: Expert



Soldiers stand onboard a Taiwan Navy minelayer in Keelung, Taiwan, on Jan. 7, 2022.

ELLA KIETLINSKA & JOSHUA PHILIPP

A rare joint warning delivered by the directors of the FBI and MI5 at a recent international forum was equivalent to a “break glass in case of emergency” message, said Casey Fleming, CEO of BlackOps Partners.

On July 6, FBI Director Christopher Wray spoke alongside MI5 Director Gen. Ken McCallum in London to warn against the global threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

“The message and the detail is pivotal,” Fleming said during an interview with EpochTV’s “Crossroads.”

“Wray began making statements like this about three years ago. Then he started making more frequent warnings, but they were all basically high-level warnings. This time, the level of detail, the level of urgency and immediacy, and significance, is the equivalent of ‘break glass in case of emergency.’

“The glass is broken.”

Both intelligence directors warned that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the greatest threat to the international order.

Wray said the CCP poses the “biggest long-term threat” to the economic and national security of the United States and the UK, and their allies and partners.

McCallum described the CCP’s aggression as a “massive shared challenge” for the UK and the United States, adding that the communist regime is organizing the whole of China’s state apparatus to systematically undermine the West and steal advanced technologies. He provided examples of companies compromised by the CCP’s espionage and clandestine activities in the UK and Europe.

Although both FBI and MI5 have been closely partnered for decades—the FBI office in London opened in 1942—McCallum stressed that July 6 marks the first time the heads of both agencies have delivered a speech together.

In his speech Wray described details of how the Chinese regime interfered with a congressional candidate in New York, who was a previous Tiananmen Square protester and critic of the regime, as it tried to prevent him from getting elected.

First, a former Chinese intelligence officer hired a private investigator to dig up derogatory information on the candidate, Wray said. When they could not find any-

OLIVIER DOULIERY/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher Wray during a press conference at the Department of Justice in Washington on Sept. 22, 2020.

UK GOVERNMENT/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS



MI5 Director General Ken McCallum is photographed in London, Britain October 14, 2020.

The FBI is basically warning business leaders that the CCP has been coming after you with all means necessary, both cyber as well as physical espionage, to steal your IP and to put you out of business.

Casey Fleming, CEO, BlackOps Partners



Pigeons fly past the company logo of Sinovel Wind Co., Ltd. outside its head office in Beijing on Jan. 6, 2011.

thing, they used a prostitute to manufacture some controversy about the candidate, and when this did not succeed, arranged for a vehicle to run the candidate down and make it look like an accident.

Wray also mentioned that American companies operating in China are required by Chinese law to install on their systems a tax software provided by the CCP; but this software also installs backdoors that allow the CCP to hack into the companies’ private networks.

How the CCP Steals Intellectual Property

“The FBI is basically warning business leaders that the CCP has been coming after you with all means necessary, both cyber as well as physical espionage, to steal your IP [intellectual property] and to put you out of business.”

The CCP takes the stolen intellectual property to China to produce the product that the American company produces and to sell it back to the company and its customers at 45 cents on the dollar because the Chinese counterpart has no research and development costs and no time cost, Fleming explained.

The American company’s customer list can be stolen through cyber means or physical espionage like blackmail or subversion, the expert explained. Theft of IP does occur through cyber means, but the physical side of espionage has not gone away, so it cannot be ignored, he added.

The CCP’s goal is to take an American company’s business and revenue, take them to China to build its economy, and then shut down that American company, shut down its competitors, shut down the industry in America, and dominate the market from China, Fleming said.

Stealing intellectual property by Sinovel, a Chinese wind turbine maker from American Superconductor (AMSC), is one example of the CCP’s illicit activities, Fleming said.

The CCP ordered, through Chinese companies, more than \$800 million worth of windmill products and services from AMSC, then took the first \$100 million dollars of products and reverse-engineered them. But it could not run the windmills without the source code, Fleming explained. Since only seven people at AMSC had access to the source code, the CCP compromised one person using a honey trap and obtained the source code, he said. Sinovel then canceled the rest of the order in 2011, which caused AMSC stock price to tumble.

“AMSC ... lost more than \$1 billion in shareholder equity and almost 700 jobs, over half its global workforce,” according to the Department of Justice.

“Today, the electronic windmill or energy windmill industry is 77 percent driven by the Chinese Communist Party when it was 100 percent U.S. technology,” Fleming said.

America Is in Hybrid War With China

The Chinese covert operations started in 1986 when the CCP launched Program 863, the expert said. Program 863 is aimed at accelerating the acquisition and development of science and technology, according to a congressional report released in 1999, known as the “Cox Report”.

Fleming paraphrased the mission of the initiative: “It’s we will lie, cheat, and steal to completely take over the West ... and overturn the rules-based order of the economy, and make it a Chinese communist economy globally.”

Fleming, a cybersecurity expert, compared the launch of Program 863 to cyber 9/11. “The cyber 9/11 has been happening every day since 1986 and ... it’s happening in thousands and thousands of thefts, which is death by a thousand cuts.” It has almost been reached, “850 to 900 into those 1000 cuts towards death,” Fleming assessed.

The FBI and military do not use the term war in relation to hybrid war “because war means conventional war ... They like to term it as the China threat,” Fleming said. But he believes that America is in a hybrid war with China.

“We’re in an absolute war. And it’s all these different factors, which are hybrid warfare, drug warfare, economic warfare, religious warfare, education warfare, telecommunications warfare, so on and so forth, over 100 different methods.”

The CCP calls the United States its enemy, and “every act that we take, every punch or kick that we make—they use that energy to use it against us, to hurt us back. And they’re doing that with everything, with our laws, with our schools, our universities,” Fleming said, and likened this tactic to Asian martial arts.

What People Can Do

“If you’re at war, you have to be intimate in understanding your enemy, and they’re very intimate in understanding us. The one thing that they don’t understand is just our resolve. And they won’t understand that piece of it because there’s a thing called patriotism, and then there’s a thing called communism—on how you fight.”

Fleming suggested that first of all, people need to understand that America is at war. People are seeing gas prices going up, which started before the war on Ukraine, and the pandemic exposed supply chain issues in China, he said.

The hybrid warfare with the CCP may eventually turn into kinetic or conventional warfare, and it will probably begin around Taiwan, Fleming said, hoping that his prediction would be “absolutely wrong.”

“If you think inflation is bad now, wait till an invasion of Taiwan,” Fleming warned, alluding that inflation may become worse after that due to potential sanctions and the CCP’s response to those sanctions.

Average Americans need to pay attention to the development of the situation, but they need to realize that mainstream media will not tell them what they need to know, Fleming said. “It’s not going to be found in mainstream media; find your other news sources.”

Fleming recommended voting people into office—state, local, federal—who realize that we are in this war and who will do everything to decouple from China and the CCP, as well as make policies and enact laws to counter espionage and foreign influence.

Andrew Thornebrooke contributed to this report.

OPINION

3 Reasons Chinese Companies Should Be Excluded From ESG

See if your fund manager knows the answer

KEITH KRACH



The exposure of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investors to Russia has already proved something of an (expensive) embarrassment. In hindsight, ESG investors should have held Russia to the same standard as its companies, but it’s not too late to apply that lesson to other countries.

While Russia had a modest allocation in emerging-market ESG funds, China does not. Chinese companies at the end of last year had a weighted average allocation of 28 percent in U.S.-based emerging-market ESG stock mutual funds and exchange-traded funds, according to Morningstar. And China is no less concerning than Russia.

For all practical purposes, if any investment involves a stake in a company that is a major source of pollution, utilizes forced labor in its supply chain or enables human rights abuses in any way, and does not follow generally accepted accounting principles or cannot have its financial records transparently audited, it must not be considered an ESG investment.

By that standard, most Chinese companies would fail ESG criteria on all three fronts: Environmental, Social, and Governance. This is the inconvenient truth of the inconvenient truth.

Environmental

On the environmental front, China is the biggest polluter on the planet. The One Belt One Road Initiative rapes the environment across Asia and Africa, including in wildlife and fisheries.

Another example is solar power, where, unfortunately, China has cornered the market. Approximately 80 percent of the world’s solar panels are made in the coal-rich Xinjiang region of China, where the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is engaged in genocide against the Uyghur people. Manufacturing solar cells is an energy and labor-intensive process, so it’s no surprise that Xinjiang also hosts the world’s two biggest coal-fired power plants.

Social

Many Chinese companies would also fail the social criteria of ESG, given their involvement in ongoing human rights abuses such as slave labor, and even genocide.

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.

Not only the American investor, but investors around the world with stakes in China, need to realize they are under the unpredictable thumb of the CCP



Chinese workers walk past a coal fired power plant in Hanchuan, Hubei Province, on Oct. 13, 2021.

The blunt reality is that the average American investor is unknowingly financing the CCP’s human rights abuses, surveillance state, and their 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 that are then incorporated into hundreds of products, ETFs, and mutual funds.

This includes many companies and funds that currently “meet” ESG standards.

Governance

Likewise, Chinese companies cannot qualify for the governance criteria of ESG.

Chinese companies aren’t transparent, they cannot be audited, they do not abide by consistent and reputable accounting standards, they are consistently corrupt, bribed, subsidized, and maintain flaky books at best.

Chinese companies like DiDi and Luckin Coffee are cautionary tales to the American investor. Both had IPOs on American exchanges, and almost collapsed after actions taken by the Chinese government after obtaining billions from American investors. If they can do that with firms listed on American exchanges, imagine what happens in China itself!

“By a strike of a pen, a bureaucrat in Beijing can wipe out an entire sector,” said ESG pioneer and founder of the advisory firm Blended Capital Group, Paul Clements-Hunt. “If you don’t factor in autocracy and a malevolent government, then you have failed in your ESG assessment.”

Conclusion

At my last press conference as Under Secretary of State on Jan. 14, 2021, I relayed a strong message to the public:

Most Americans have no idea that their own money—held in pension funds, 401ks, and brokerage accounts—is financing Chinese companies that support the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC’s) military, security, and intelligence apparatus, as well as human rights abuses on an epic scale, such as those in Xinjiang [Your] fund manager should notify you if your investments are contributing to the Chinese Party’s military buildup, the surveillance state, and human rights abuses Ask them if you are exposed. If you are exposed, ask them the name of the companies, the amount and when you will be divested. Then ask them why they do not directly and clearly disclose to you. If [you] do not get a satisfactory answer, best to find a new fund manager.

Not only the American investor, but investors around the world with stakes in China, need to realize they are under the unpredictable thumb of the CCP. That includes many who believe ESG protects them. It doesn’t.

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

Keith Krach is an Epoch Times contributor who was unanimously confirmed as under secretary of state and is currently the chairman of the Krach Institute for Tech Diplomacy. He served as chairman and CEO of DocuSign and Ariba and chairman of the Purdue Board of Trustees. Krach was nominated for the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize.

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ANALYSIS

Where in the World Is China’s Military?

Mapping the PLA’s foreign operations

GUERMANTES LAILARI



The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is developing infrastructure and access all around the world. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) created a unique process to get countries to agree to give the PLA access to key ports and bases via several methods, including the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

For example, this process can be seen in the first official overseas base—the Doraleh Naval Base in Djibouti, which opened in August 2017.

What else has the PLA been up to? This article gathers and highlights some details on PLA overseas locations.

The article will discuss three kinds of PLA forward deployments: “permanent,” “as needed,” and “in development.”

Note: The PLA’s Strategic Support Force (SSF) is responsible for the telemetry, tracking, and control (TT&C) system for all Chinese satellites with overseas ground stations located in the following: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Greenland, Kenya, Kiribati, Namibia, Norway, Pakistan, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and four sites in Antarctica. Some of these sites are discussed below. For more details on Chinese Space and the SSF, see #1, #2, and #3.

Permanent Bases by Region

Latin America

Argentina: The PLA operates a “satellite tracking station” in Argentina’s Patagonia region near Neuquén. The site is a de facto PLA military base under the operational control of the PLA’s SSF.

The SSF is responsible for centralizing “the PLA’s strategic space, cyber, electronic, information, communications, and psychological warfare missions and capabilities,” including cyber warfare and signals intelligence. In other words, the PLA site may also be used to intercept communications of other countries, companies, and individuals.

A recent U.S. government alert asserts the PLA’s capability to conduct cyber operations, which “is a major threat to U.S. and Allied cyberspace assets. Chinese state-sponsored cyber actors aggressively target U.S. and allied political, economic, military, educational, and critical infrastructure, personnel, and organizations to steal sensitive data, critical and emerging key technologies, intellectual property, and personally identifiable information.” The PLA can conduct cyberattacks when directed.

Venezuela: The PLA has another “satellite tracking facility” at the Capitán Manuel Rios Air Base in Guárico state, ostensibly to track Chinese-made satellites purchased by Venezuela. This facility could also have capabilities and missions like those at the PLA site in Argentina.

According to a 2022 American Foreign Policy Council report, the PLA’s 76th Group Army “has been training jointly with Venezuelan Special Forces on language, diving, sniping, and helicopter landing operations.”

Cuba: The PLA is embedded in three signals intelligence collection sites at Lourdes, Bejucal, and Santiago de Cuba.



Cuban special forces, called the Black Berets, pose alongside their Chinese trainers in a government-run training school in Cuba in an undated photo.



Members of the Chinese regime’s People’s Liberation Army Navy stand guard at Qingdao Port in Shandong Province, China, on April 22, 2009. The Chinese regime may soon build its first overseas military base.

According to an April MIT research report, “Chinese firms own or operate terminal assets in ninety-six ports in fifty-three countries.”

Bejucal also is reported to be a satellite intercept facility.

Africa

The PLA’s support, especially in manpower, to United Nations peacekeeping missions is the largest of any country in the world and second in terms of total funding (15 percent). The PLA’s support for peacekeeping missions includes deployments to South Sudan, Lebanon, Mali, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Lebanon, and Cyprus.

According to the 2021 U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) report “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China” (MSD-PRC), “in 2020, the PRC [People’s Republic of China] pledged to take a bigger peacekeeping role in the Sahel and West Africa.”

One consequence of China’s growing participation in U.N. peacekeeping missions is that each PLA deployment provides insight and access to places the CCP did not have before the deployment.

Namibia: The PLA operates the China TT&C station in Swakopmund, Namibia (Southwest Africa), which opened in 2001. The CCP claims that this station supports manned space flight in conjunction with stations in Karachi, Pakistan, and Malindi in Kenya.

According to a Global Security report, “China’s Xi’an Satellite Control Center in Shaanxi operates the Swakopmund ground station. ... The station houses 20 permanent staff during a mission phase, while about five personnel stay there continuously to maintain the equipment.”

According to the DOD MSD-PRC report, “the SSF operates tracking, telemetry, and command stations in Namibia, Pakistan, and Argentina. The SSF also operates Yuan Wang space support ships that track the satellite and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches.”

Thus, the Namibia site houses PLA personnel that support manned space flight, satellite tracking, and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches.

Kenya: The PLA operates a manned space flight support at the TT&C station in Malindi, Kenya. This facility performs similar functions to sites in Pakistan and Namibia.

Equatorial Guinea (EG): Rumors abound regarding the possible agreement between the EG government and the CCP for providing the PLA with access to the Bata port (former EG capital, largest EG city, and one of the deepest seaports—16-18 meters deep—in the region). The BRI project greatly expanded the utility of the port and made Bata port an ideal location for PLA Navy (PLAN) use.

Asia

Cambodia: Building on the initial disclosure in The Wall Street Journal in 2019, The Washington Post reported last month that the PLA is “secretly building a naval facility in Cambodia for the exclusive use of its military” on the northern part of the Ream Naval Base. Potential PLA naval and air facilities along the coast have also been identified.

Burma (Myanmar): PLA operates intelligence collection (signal and maritime) facilities on Sittwe and the Great and Small Coco Islands, located at crucial points along the sea lanes between the Bay of Bengal and the Strait of Malacca.

Laos: The PLA has a SIGINT site near Sop Hau that covers the “Strait area from the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean.”

Pakistan: A Chinese TT&C site for manned space flight is located near Karachi, Pakistan. The SSF operates the Karachi site.

Tajikistan: In Tajikistan, the PLA bases are manned full-time by the People’s Armed Police.

Shaymak base: In October 2021, the Tajik Parliament approved the PLA to start building a military base “in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province near the intersection of the Af-China-Tajik borders arena,” near the Wakhan Corridor. More details are found here.

Another PLA base is under construction or was recently completed near the Tajikistan border with Afghanistan.

As Needed

Solomon Islands

The leaked agreement between China and the Solomon Islands reveals that the CCP is exploring different ways to enable access for their military. The current agreement allows the PLA to access ports in the Solomons. This agreement may be the beginning of a process to eventually allow PLA basing.

Pakistan

The Skardu Air Base is located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) on land disputed with India. Other possible PLAAF deployment locations include Gilgit, Chilas, Muzaffarabad in POK, and Chitral and Mansehra in Pakistan, although they are less developed than Skardu. More details on Skardu and Gilgit can be found here.

China’s 2019 defense white paper tasks the PLA with protecting Chinese cargo ships and developing “overseas logistical facilities.” Currently, the PLAN relies on facilities at overseas ports owned or operated by Chinese state enterprises.

According to an April MIT research report, “Chinese firms own or operate terminal assets in ninety-six ports in

fifty-three countries,” including the assets listed below:

- Gwadar, Pakistan: Deepwater port allows for large PLAN ships and submarines, much like Djibouti. Satellite photographs show a PLA high-security compound being built in 2017 and completed by 2020.
- Chabahar, Iran: First Iranian deepwater port not located in the Persian Gulf.
- Jask and Kish Ports, Iran: Possible intelligence collection site and access control site for Arabian Gulf shipping.
- Hambantota Port and Colombo Port, Sri Lanka: Recent flight of Rajapaksa leadership raises uncertainty regarding domestic support, but the economic crisis may facilitate it. More details here.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In addition to individual countries allowing PLA basing, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provides another means to deploy PLA to alliance countries. The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance. This alliance consists of the following members, observers, and dialogue partners:

- Eight member states: India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- Four observer states: Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia.
- Six dialogue partners: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, and Sri Lanka.

The PLA has used the SCO to deploy the PLA to member states by providing security assistance and counter-terrorist, counter-separatist, and counter-extremist exercises. The SCO is an example of a multilateral alliance that allows for the deployment of military forces in support of member countries.

In Development

According to the current DOD MSD-PRC report, the PLA could be pursuing the following countries for additional “military facilities to support naval, air, ground, cyber, and space power projection”:

- Asia/Indo-Pacific: Cambodia, Indonesia, Kiribati, Burma, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Tajikistan.
- Africa: Angola, Kenya, and Seychelles.
- Middle East: The United States informed the United Arab Emirates that the PLA was building a military compound in the BRI-funded section of the Khalifa Port in Abu Dhabi. The UAE ordered the construction to stop.

Chinese soldiers stand at attention during Peace Mission-2016 joint military exercises of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in the Edelweiss training area in Balykchy, Kyrgyzstan, on Sept. 19, 2016.



South China Sea Bases in Development

The PLA has active bases in the South China Sea (SCS) and is building new ones. Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI) summarizes the PLA’s growth in the SCS: “China has 20 outposts in the Paracel Islands and 7 in the Spratlys. It also controls Scarborough Shoal, which it seized in 2012 via a constant coast guard presence, though it has not built any facilities on the feature. Since 2013, China has engaged in unprecedented dredging and artificial island-building in the Spratlys, creating 3,200 acres of new land, along with a substantial expansion of its presence in the Paracels.”

The AMTI provides a list of PLA islands that have been built-up, or are under construction, and includes a link for additional details (highlighted islands are described briefly below):

Spratly Islands: Cuarteron Reef, Fiery Cross Reef, Gaven Reefs, Hughes Reef, Johnson Reef, Mischief Reef, and Subi Reef.

Paracel Islands: Antelope Reef, Bombay Reef, Drummond Island, Duncan Islands, Lincoln Island, Middle Island, Money Island, North Island, North Reef, Observation Bank, Pattie Island, Quanfu Island, Robert Island, South Island, South Sand, Tree Island, Triton Island, West Sand, Woody Island, and Yagong Island.

PLA’s SCS Strategic Bases

Of particular interest are the islands that have runways and large port facilities for the PLAAF and PLAN, respectively. The PLA has four islands in the SCS with 10,000-foot runways: Woody Island (part of the Paracel Islands), Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef, and Subi Reef (all three are part of the Spratly Islands).

The PLA built a SIGINT site on Rocky Island that became a part of Woody Island that covers the “Spratly Islands area, the Philippines, and the Strait of Malacca,” according to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).

On May 26, an Australian Air Force P-8 aircraft flew in international airspace over the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands when the PLAAF J-16 (probably from Woody Island) intercepted it. During the intercept, the J-16 conducted dangerous maneuvers, including discharging chaff and flares that were sucked into the P-8’s jet engines, which could have caused it to crash.

As the PLA expands its locations and the CCP directs the PLA to become more “territorial,” opportunities increase for dangerous incidents.

There are many examples of aggressive behavior by the PLAN, Coast Guard, and auxiliary ships against other countries’ navy and civilian ships.

Scarborough Shoal: Scarborough Shoal is a triangle-shaped chain of reefs and rocks with a 29-mile perimeter and is 120 nautical miles west of the Philippine island of Luzon (well within the 200 nautical miles Philippine EEZ). It is not part of the Spratly nor the Paracel Islands.

The Shoal has the potential to be an important location for the PLA to control the SCS, in part because placing radars and other sensors there would round out the PLA’s SCS coverage, facilitating situational awareness and weapons targeting. Shaped like Mischief Reef and Subi Reef, Scarborough Shoal could be converted easily into another key PLA-occupied island with a 10,000-foot runway and a deepwater port. The PLA is waiting for the opportunity to transform Scarborough Shoal into a base.

Chinese Embassies

The PLA assigns military attachés to 110 diplomatic missions. These military attachés “serve as military advisors to the ambassador, support Ministry of Foreign Affairs and PLA foreign policy objectives and perform a variety of duties tied to PLA military and security cooperation, including counterpart exchanges with host-nation and third-country personnel. Military attachés also conduct clandestine and overt intelligence collection on their countries or areas of assignment,” according to the DOD report.

Each Chinese embassy is a de facto small military base representing the PLA and facilitating PLA access to each country. While this approach is hardly unique, a recent incident at the Pacific Islands Forum in Fiji suggests that China is unusually bold in its use of attachés.

Note: In a follow-on article, the author will analyze indications of PLA and paramilitary deployments and possible basing to ensure China’s global trade is not only disrupted, but also to potentially threaten trade of other countries.

Guermantes Lailari is a retired U.S. Air Force Foreign Area officer specializing in the Middle East and Europe as well as counterterrorism, irregular warfare, and missile defense. He was a USAF attaché in the Middle East, served in Iraq, and holds advanced degrees in international relations and strategic intelligence. He will be a Taiwan fellow in Taipei during 2022.



China’s ambassador to the Solomon Islands, Li Ming (R), and Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare are cutting a ribbon during the opening ceremony of a China-funded national stadium complex in Honiara on April 22, 2022.

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