

CHINA INSIDER



Disintegrate

Chinese Communist Party

**400 MILLION
QUIT THE CCP**

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CCP ABUSES

400 Million Cut Their Ties With the CCP in Defiance of Communist Control

EVA FU

NEW YORK—Chinese entrepreneur Chen Quanhong had one message he wanted to tell the world: “Tuidang.”

It’s a Chinese phrase that means “quit the Party.”

The words were emblazoned on a yellow flag Chen held up at a parade in Washington on July 21 to draw attention to the Chinese communist regime’s myriad human rights abuses.

Chen is now one of 400 million Chinese people who have renounced their ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its affiliate organizations.

In June, the business owner from China’s eastern Shandong Province made a statement formally breaking his ties with the Party, participating in a nearly two-decades-long grassroots movement that has sought to expose the communist regime’s history of deceit and killing, and to give people an opportunity to disassociate from it.

“In China, I was no different from a worm trampled upon by the authoritarian power, not daring to stir a bit,” Chen told The Epoch Times. “Only when I came to America did I begin to feel like a person, because finally there’s no fear from the Communist Party.”

The Washington parade was the first Chen had joined in his 50-plus years of life. It came ahead of a major milestone for the Tuidang movement: 400 million people have now renounced their CCP affiliations. The number surpassed that mark on Aug. 3.

“Four hundred million—this number is greater than some countries’ entire population,” Yi Rong, president of the Global Tuidang Center in Queens, New York, told The Epoch Times. “With such a large group abandoning the CCP and steering clear from its crimes, it will spur a positive change in Chinese society.”

As more people join the quest for freedom, a “new China” free of communist control appears ever closer to reality, she added.

Dark Memories

The Party’s history of killing during its rule over China has left generations of families broken and scarred, including Chen’s own.

Chen’s mother was about 21 years old when she lost her mother during the Great Famine, a manmade disaster from 1959 to 1961 resulting from then-CCP leader Mao Zedong’s industrial policies that saw tens of millions die of starvation.

Driven by hunger, Chen’s grandmother and his mother’s 17-year-old sister took about half a sack of mung bean pods from the land the regime had collectivized. After their deed was discovered, the authorities publicly denounced the two and beat them. Chen’s grandmother, who was blindfolded and surrounded by a group of thugs who punched and slapped her, died about 10 days later.

Dark memories like these, either retold by Chen’s mother in bits and pieces over the years or gleaned through reading into history, helped the businessman see the nature of the Party despite its repeated claim of being the “savior of the people,” he said.



Falun Gong practitioners take part in a parade marking the 30th anniversary of the spiritual discipline’s introduction to the public, in New York on May 13, 2022.

Tuidang Movement

The Tuidang movement began in 2004, spurred by the release of the “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” a book first published by the Chinese language edition of The Epoch Times detailing the brutality and deception perpetrated under the totalitarian regime.

Since then, millions of copies of the book have made their way into China. Many who helped distribute these copies were adherents of Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline the regime has sought to wipe out with a campaign of arrest, torture, and vilification for the past 23 years and counting.

Falun Gong is a meditation practice consisting of a set of moral beliefs centered around the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. The practice became a political target after the Chinese regime deemed its huge popularity—with up to 100 million practicing by 1999—a threat to its authoritarian grip on power.

As a restaurant owner in Shandong, Chen

once received informational materials about Falun Gong from two adherents who dined at his establishment, who were, he said, “incredibly peaceful and kind.”

“Their persistence despite the relentless state suppression awed him then, and again in Queens in July, when he came across a Falun Gong information booth encouraging people to withdraw from the Party and its affiliates.

“I just thought: ‘What kind of people would arrest those who pursue truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance? Definitely not good people,’” he said.

At the Global Tuidang Center, a volunteer gifted Chen a copy of the “Nine Commentaries.” He read it three times and knew he no longer wanted to be affiliated with the Party.

Breaking From the Party’s Control

The CCP maintains three organizations for different age groups: the Young Pio-

neers, for children aged 14 and younger; the Communist Youth League, for those between 14 and 28 years old; and Party membership.

While the latter two aren’t mandatory, Party membership is still considered a necessary credential for anyone aspiring for a career in government or state-owned enterprises. As of 2021, China had about 110.4 million Young Pioneers, 73.7 million Youth League members, and 96.7 million Party members, according to state data.

This adds up to a total of 280.8 million—one-fifth of the total Chinese population.

The 400 million figure, representing people who have withdrawn their Party affiliations, covers anyone who was once part of the Party or its affiliated entities, including those who’ve been automatically unenrolled as they’ve grown older. Many from mainland China or who have relations there also choose to use a pseudonym for fear of the regime’s retaliation.



Women at the Global Service Center for Quitting the Chinese Communist Party in the Flushing neighborhood of Queens, N.Y., on June 25, 2014.

the individual must make a vow to devote their life to the Party. Such a promise essentially binds the person to the regime even if age automatically unenrolls them from the youth groups, Yi said.

To rescind the oath requires a formal statement, she said.

“Because you gave your life to the Party, you are no longer a free person. You can’t control your own life,” Yi said. “For this reason, the Communist Party has the free rein to slaughter Chinese people, brainwash, deceive, and persecute them as they please.”

At the moment, the Global Tuidang Center each day receives about 50,000 requests from people to quit the Party, according to the center’s estimates.

Change of Attitude

In Taiwan, there are about 3,000 volunteers supporting the Tuidang movement. Each month, about 20,000 mainland Chinese agree to renounce their Party affiliations after talking with the volunteers over the phone or in person, according to one coordinator, Bai Dexiong.

Bai recounted a recent case of a man from Shandong who sought out one of the Tuidang centers for assistance. The man looked somewhere between 20 and 30 years old. He described himself as a former nationalist who would be stirred at the slightest criticism of the CCP.

His attitude changed, however, when he tested positive for COVID-19 and authorities sealed the door of his apartment and locked him inside, barring him from basic activities such as buying food. He lost his job during the quarantine period. He spent his new free time on the internet, and by using a virtual private network to bypass the CCP’s digital censorship, he read voraciously about the regime’s

past. He became ashamed of his former ignorance, he told the volunteer, according to Bai.

The regime has only itself to blame for the Tuidang movement’s growing appeal, Yi said, citing Beijing’s draconian lockdown policies as the latest demonstration of its disregard for human life.

Globally, the sentiment appears to be tilting against the regime as well. A petition organized by the Global Tuidang Center calling for support to “end the CCP” has collected more than 2.5 million signatures.

‘Down With the Communist Party’

The movement is also having an impact inside mainland China.

Zeng Hanxiao, a 26-year-old from Sichuan Province in southwestern China, suffered four months of detention after voicing support for a dissident on the Party’s wanted list.

He asked to quit the Young Pioneers in April after learning about Tuidang. “Tuidang is a kind of rebirth and redemption,” Zeng told The Epoch Times at the time about his decision, adding that his soul was now “clean.”

Shortly after, Zeng was detained again for shouting slogans such as “Down With the Communist Party” in front of the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou. He was released on bail on July 28 after receiving beatings from police and prolonged solitary confinement.

After his release, Zeng said he was encouraged to learn about Tuidang’s continued momentum.

“It shows how many people are standing with me against the CCP,” he said.

Zhong Yuan and Gu Xiaohua contributed to this report.

Chinese Young Pioneers gather for a photo after a flag-raising ceremony at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on Oct. 1, 2020.



LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY IMAGES

PANDEMIC

CCP Used COVID-19 for ‘Biological Warfare,’ Research Group Says

JACKSON ELLIOTT

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) used COVID-19 for biological warfare, according to a new report by nine experts with the Washington-based Center for Security Policy (CSP).

Generals, medical experts, and foreign policy experts including former U.S. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Pete Hoekstra and retired Army Lt. Gen. William “Jerry” Boykin, a former deputy undersecretary of defense, contributed to the report, which is available in book form on Amazon.

The report, titled “The CCP is at War with America,” asserts that there’s no evidence that COVID-19 was a natural virus, arguing that there’s significant evidence it emerged from a government biological weapons lab in China. It also states that the CCP deliberately allowed the virus to spread worldwide by allowing international flights while locking down movement within China.

The CSP describes its report as an “exercise in competitive analysis that strongly challenges the Director of National Intelligence’s September 2021 conclusion.”

The Plague War

While U.S. intelligence experts in 2021 concluded that they might never know for certain where COVID-19 originated, the CSP puts the blame squarely on the Chinese regime.

“The preponderance of evidence indicates

Workers inside the P4 laboratory in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 23, 2017.



It is not the time to openly break with [America], our reform and opening to the outside world still rely on their capital and technology.

Chi Haotian, retired general, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.



JOHANNES EISELE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

that SARS-CoV-2 was lab-manufactured,” the report states. “In any event, Beijing acted with murderous intent in spreading the disease beyond China’s borders.”

As proof of these claims, the report points to genetic features of COVID-19 that aren’t found in natural viruses. It noted that China’s military has a biological warfare program.

Finally, it highlights that the Chinese regime restricted internal travel to stop the spread of COVID-19, but kept its inter-

national borders open. At the same time, it bought up global supplies of personal protective gear.

Even if the original release of the virus was accidental, its worldwide spread was intentional, the report states. The likely motive was to ensure that the rest of the world would be set back economically by the virus to the same degree as China.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s regime “clearly saw the imperative need to ensure that it would not suffer economic privation alone,

to the advantage of its enemies, especially the United States,” the report states. “Actively spreading the virus was, thus, a means of waging economic warfare, and the Chinese Communists applied themselves to doing so with a vengeance.”

According to the report, the CCP worked to spread its COVID-19 quarantine policies around the world so it could weather the pandemic at an advantage. The damage COVID-19 measures did to the U.S. economy put the CCP ahead.

“A principal beneficiary of such economic trauma would be the Chinese Communist Party,” the report reads.

Weapons of Choice

The report also states that the Chinese regime has a history of biological warfare. In the early 1990s, Gen. Chi Haotian told China’s biological weapons program that it should seek to depopulate the United States through the use of non-destructive weapons so that China could take it over, according to the report. But China kept that plan secret.

“Right now, it is not the time to openly break with [America],” Chi said. “Our reform and opening to the outside world still rely on their capital and technology.”

Biological weapons could be China’s road to world domination, the report states. Chinese military journals have openly published articles about genetically targeted biological warfare. China has collected genetic data on foreigners while keeping a close guard on the genetic profiles of Chinese people, it added.

“If Chinese scientists succeed in designing pathogens targeting only foreigners, the next germ, virus, or microbe from China could end non-Chinese societies,” the report states.

“Xi will be the first supreme to possess a weapon making worldwide Chinese rule possible,” it reads.



STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Staff members line up at attention as they prepare to spray disinfectant at Wuhan Railway Station in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on March 24, 2020.

The report suggests that COVID-19 fatalities outside China should be considered “murder victims.”

The paper offers several conclusions, including that the CCP and any who colluded with it must be held accountable for the pandemic’s results; the government shouldn’t impose vaccine mandates on the vulnerable; the United States should develop deterrents against Chinese bio-weapons; and future public health measures shouldn’t follow Chinese totalitarian lockdown advice.

“We must never again allow our constitutional freedoms to be denied on the pretext

of a public health emergency, especially at the insistence of foreign powers, let alone our mortal enemy.”

Jackson Elliott reports on small-town America for The Epoch Times. He learned to write and seek truth at Northwestern University. He believes that the most important actions are small and that as Dostoevsky says, everyone is responsible for everyone and for everything. When he isn’t writing, he enjoys running, reading, and spending time with friends. Contact Jackson by emailing jackson.elliott@epochtimes.us

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SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ANALYSIS

Semiconductors Emerge as Battleground in US-China Race to Make Global Tech Norms in Their Image

Chinese chipmakers dealt blow by US sanctions and alliances

JESSICA MAO



As every aspect of modern life becomes more and more digitized, not just the economies of nations but their sovereign influence will

rely more and more on the command of technology.

Although the United States and China are not engaged in traditional warfare, they are engaged in a war of ideas, trade, and technology, especially in semiconductor hegemony, where both sides are battling for supply and advancement.

In recent years, the United States has made a series of moves to hinder and outpace Chinese development in semiconductors, including persuading Asian semiconductor powerhouses to join its alliance, passing a massive spending bill to aid domestic chip production, and banning exports of high-end chipmaking equipment to China.

In late July, the United States expanded its bans on exports to China of equipment that can make semicon-

Semiconductors on a circuit board that powers a Samsung video camera at the Samsung MOBILE-ization media and analyst event in San Jose, Calif., on March 23, 2011.

ductors up to 14 nanometers in size, according to major U.S. chipmaking equipment suppliers, such as Lam Research Corp. and KLA, who were notified by the government about the expanded restrictions.

Previously, the United States had banned the sale of equipment that can produce chips of 10 nm or smaller to Chinese chip manufacturers.

Generally in semiconductor fabrication, the smaller the process technology, the more advanced the chip. The smaller the technology node, the higher the transistor density and the lower the chip power consumption, resulting in higher performance. However, the smaller manufacturing process requires more advanced material and equipment, and will incur a greater cost in R&D and production.

The development follows a historic \$52 billion bill passed by U.S. congress on July 27 to aid domestic chip makers in research, development, and production volume. One of the conditions is that the companies receiving the funds will not increase advanced chip production in mainland China.

The U.S. Department of Commerce said the tightening policies impair "PRC efforts to manufacture advanced semiconductors to address significant national security risks to the United States."

Meanwhile, the United States is also reportedly planning to ban the exports of

U.S. chipmaking equipment that produces advanced NAND chips to major Chinese chipmakers, such as Yangtze Memory Technologies Corp (YMTC).

YMTC is a state-owned company and China's only storage NAND flash memory manufacturer competing with major U.S. manufacturers. Its global market share is about 5 percent. In a report released by the White House in June 2021, YMTC was identified as the "national champion" enterprise of the Chinese regime, having received \$24 billion in subsidies from the Chinese government.

NAND chips are used to store data in a wide range of electronic devices such as smartphones and personal computers, as well as in the data centers of companies such as Amazon, Facebook, and Google.

If the NAND chip initiatives are officially issued, they will be the first time that the United States uses trade restrictions to contain China's ability to produce non-military use memory chips, broadening the scope of protecting the U.S.'s national security and dealing a massive blow to China's memory chip industry.

On Aug. 1, U.S. senators, including Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), requested that the Department of Commerce add YMTC to the U.S. trade blacklist.

The move could further hamper the growth of China's semiconductor indus-

try and protect American companies; the only two U.S. memory chip makers, Western Digital and Micron Technology. The two account for about a quarter of the NAND chip market share.

According to a Bloomberg report, the United States is also pushing the Netherlands and Japan to stop the chipmaking equipment suppliers, ASML and Nikon, from selling lithography machines to China. The move could potentially deal a severe blow to major Chinese chipmakers such as Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. (SMIC) and Hua Hong Semiconductor Ltd.

US CHIPS Act

On July 26, the U.S. Senate voted to advance its Chips and Science Bill aimed at boosting domestic semiconductor production and improving technological competitiveness with China.

The bill was later passed in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 28 and sent it to Biden's desk for signature.

The legislation will provide \$280 billion in funding to prop up and kickstart domestic semiconductor manufacturing and research; the price tag is far above previous legislation that aimed to provide just \$52 billion to manufacturers.

Officially dubbed the CHIPS [Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors for America] Act of 2022, the measure would provide tens of billions of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks to technology corporations in an effort to spur new market growth, as well as funding for government-backed tech research.

Proponents of the legislation have long said that it's necessary in order to maintain a competitive edge with China, which is pouring money into its own domestic chip production.

The legislation also clarifies that entities receiving U.S. government funding are prohibited from engaging in transactions involving substantial expansion of semiconductor manufacturing in China or any other foreign country of concern for at least ten years after the Act takes effect.

These restrictions are designed to prevent chipmakers from significantly expanding the production of chips more advanced than 28nm in China within the next decade.

Even though the 28-nanometer chips are a few generations behind today's advanced semiconductors, they are still widely used in cars, lower-end smartphones, appliances, and more.

Chip 4 Alliance

The United States has also been working to persuade Asian semiconductor powerhouses to participate in its "Chip 4" alliance.

The U.S.-led alliance aims to strengthen cooperation in the semiconductors industry among the United States and the East Asian powerhouses of Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan to build a secure supply chain that excludes China.

Taiwan and Japan have already agreed to participate in the Chip 4 alliance proposed by the United States this March, pending South Korea's decision to join.

The United States has reportedly given South Korea a deadline to decide whether it will join the "Chip 4" alliance by Aug. 31, according to local South Korean reports citing unnamed sources in Washington.

Despite mounting pressure from China, its biggest trading partner, South Korean experts and public opinion say the country is likely to participate in the proposed chip alliance.

"The United States is leading the equipment and software segments of the industry, Taiwan is the very foundry leader, Japan is taking the lead on the component and material sides, and South Korea cannot produce chips without them," a South Korean expert told Business Korea in a July 15 report.

During the recent U.S.-South Korea summit, Biden and President Yoon Suk-yeol pledged to strengthen semiconductor alliances among the world's largest chipmaking countries to ease global shortages.

As part of the economic partnership, South Korea also formally announced participation in the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), a framework outlining the United States' key priorities to align with allies and partners to compete more effectively against communist China in the race to lead global technology development and norms.

China's 'Big Fund' Plan

For many years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has invested heavily in solving the problem of its disrupted semiconductor supply.

In 2014, Beijing pledged to invest between \$100 billion and \$150 billion in public and private funds to enable the country to overtake the world's leading companies in semiconductor technology, including chip design, assembly, and packaging, by 2030.

In September 2014, the regime established China's National Semiconductor Industry Investment Fund, known as the "Big Fund." The initial investment was 138.7 billion yuan (about \$22.19 billion), focusing on integrated circuit manufacturing, including equipment, materials, sealing, and testing.

In October 2019, facing U.S. sanctions on Chinese technology companies, a second "Big Fund" was announced, with a scale of 204.1 billion yuan (ap-

prox. \$32.66 billion).

However, according to Liu Pei-chen, a researcher at the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research, the CCP's semiconductor development process is still slower than expected despite massive government investment, especially in advanced manufacturing processes or independent R&D.

Liu told The Epoch Times that China's slow development was primarily due to European and American sanctions, making obtaining key semiconductor equipment and chips difficult or near-impossible.

Beijing's "Made in China 2025" plan calls for the domestic production of Chinese chips to reach 70 percent by 2025. However, it is almost impossible to achieve that goal at the current pace of development, Liu added.

China Relied on Poaching Chip Talent from Taiwan

"China is still not capable of making advanced chips," Ren Zhengfei, the founder of Chinese tech giant Huawei, said in September 2020 during a public speech.

Ren said the domestic industry could not produce the advanced chips that the company designed, and it can't make products and chips at the same time.

"The biggest obstacle for China to achieve self-sufficiency in semiconductors is not the lack of funds, but the long-term lack of talents in the industry," Zhang Rujing, the founder of SMIC, China's largest chip foundry, said in a public statement in November 2021.

For decades, China has responded to its talent shortage in high-tech industries by poaching talent from Taiwan, often through illegal means.

"The illegal poaching of Taiwan's high-tech talent by Chinese companies has severely impacted our international competitiveness and endangered our national security," Taiwan's Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau said on May 26.

The security of the chip industry has become a primary concern of authorities in the tech powerhouse of Taiwan, which makes the majority of the world's most advanced semiconductor chips, an indispensable part of everything from mobile phones to military jets.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) is the world's largest and most advanced contract chipmaker. It is by itself responsible for producing more than half of the world's semiconductors.

Despite its leading position, the company has had to grapple with a brain drain to China. Taiwan lost an estimated 3,000 semiconductor engineers—accounting for one-tenth of the island's talents in the chip industry—to China, according to a 2020 research published by Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council.

China's efforts to secure chip engineering talent primarily from Taiwan have intensified in recent years after the CCP set a goal of achieving self-sufficiency in advanced chips, an objective under a 10-year economic program known as Made in China 2025, accompanied by the "Big Fund."

In response, Taiwan's Investigation Bureau has launched investigations into around 100 Chinese companies suspected of illegally poaching semiconductor engineers and other tech talents, according to an April report by Reuters, citing a senior bureau official.

On May 20, Taiwan's legislature passed amendments to its national security act and a law governing relations with China. The amended national security legislation criminalized "economic espionage," setting out a punishment of up to 12 years in prison and a fine of up to \$3.4 million for people illegally transferring core technology from the island.

Taiwan has prohibited Chinese investment in some parts of the semiconductor supply chain, including chip design, and requires reviews for other areas such as chip packaging.

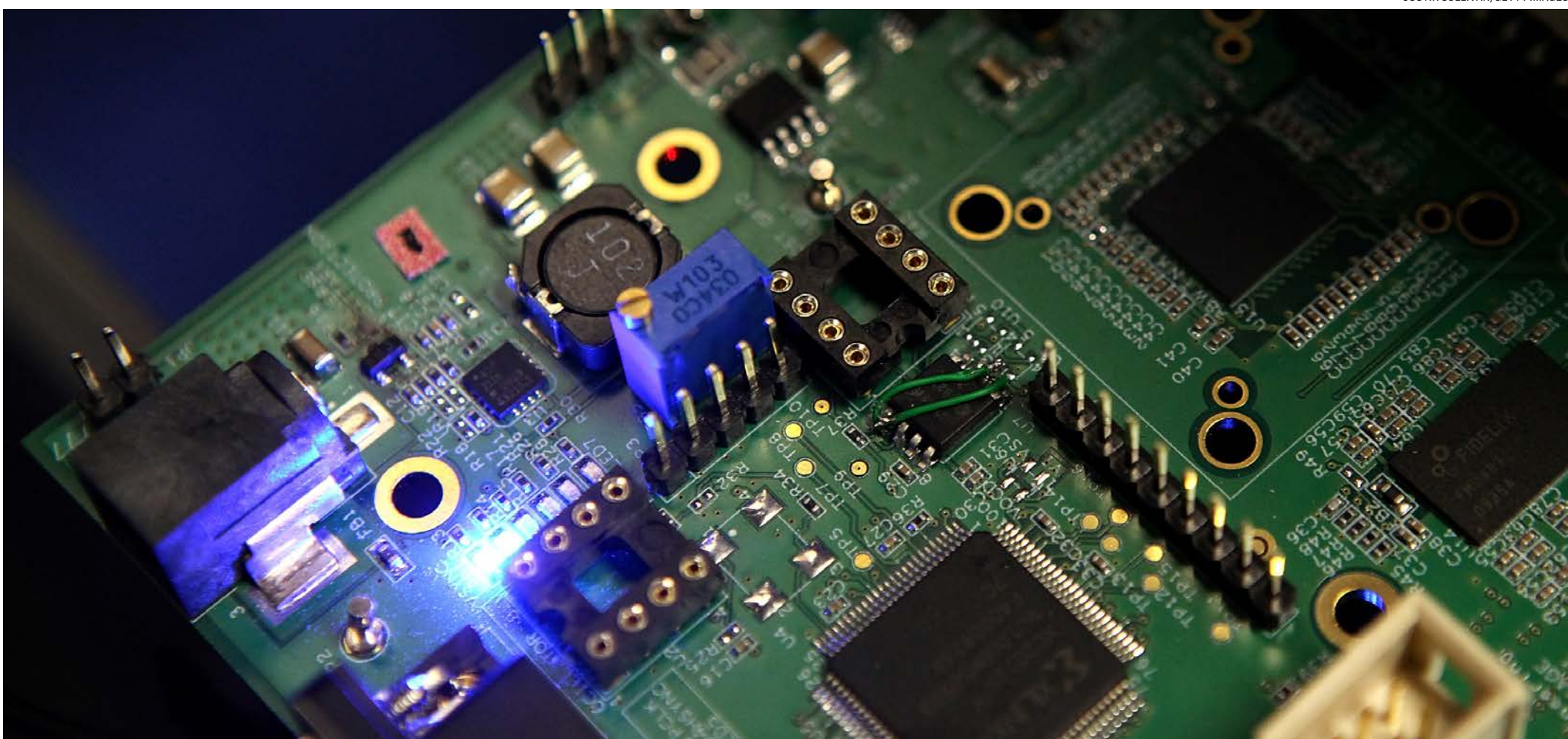
Alex Wu, Andrew Thornebrooke, and Dorothy Li contributed to this report.



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) speaks alongside a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators, including (L-R) Roger Wicker (R-Miss.); Mark Warner (D-Va.); Todd Young (R-Ind.); and Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), following the passage of the CHIPS Act, providing domestic semiconductor manufacturers with \$52 billion in subsidies to cut reliance on foreign sourcing, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., on July 27, 2022.

Mass production of semiconductor chips at the Bosch's semiconductor plant in Dresden, Germany, on July 12, 2022.

JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES



WUHAN LAB

US University Concedes It May Have Broken Law in Contract With Wuhan Lab

EVA FU

A top U.S. biosecurity lab is taking responsibility for signing “poorly drafted” agreements with three high-level biosecurity labs in China that they concede may have broken the law.

The three contracts, including one with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), gave the Chinese labs the power to destroy “secret files” from any stage of their collaboration.

“The party is entitled to ask the other to destroy and/or return the secret files, materials, and equipment without any backups,” reads the 2017 memorandum of understanding (MOU) that the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) signed with the Wuhan lab, which was revealed in April.

The broad confidentiality obligation, renewable every five years, applies to “all cooperation and exchange documents, data, details and materials,” according to the document.

Located in the city where COVID-19 began its spread, the WIV, which for years conducted coronavirus research with U.S. funding, has attracted global attention as a possible source of the virus. The confidentiality agreements, coupled with Beijing’s pattern of suppression of discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic’s origin, has raised questions over whether crucial data may have been erased from the public eye.

The Texas medical university recently acknowledged that these confidentiality terms may have violated state laws.

‘Oversight’

The university recently disclosed that it had signed contracts with identical confidentiality provisions with two other top-level biosecurity labs in China—the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute in China’s Heilongjiang Province and the Institute of Medical Biology in Kunming, the capital of China’s Yunnan Province—documents first obtained by the investigative research group U.S. Right to Know show. The two facilities, together with the WIV, house China’s only three labs certified at the highest biosafety levels.

The university attributed the inclusion of the “poorly drafted” provision to an “oversight” on its part.

“The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) takes responsibility for the oversight in allowing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to include a poorly drafted confidentiality provision in potential conflict with applicable state laws,” a university spokesperson told The Epoch Times.

The university noted that they “immediately terminated any MOU that contained language that conflicts with law and policy” upon learning of the error.

“A review of processes and practices at UTMB is underway, and new levels of oversight for procedures are being implemented,” the spokesperson said.

The UTMB wouldn’t specify when it discovered the “error” nor when it put an end to the MOUs. However, the documents had stated that the confidentiality terms would stay in force even “after it has been terminated.”

The UTMB’s Galveston National Laboratory, one of two national biocontainment laboratories built with U.S. federal grants, had years of partnership with the three Chinese facilities, providing Chinese scientists with biosecurity training and conducting joint research projects. It began collaborating with the WIV in 2013.

The university stated that the agreements have resulted in minimal material consequences.

“UTMB confirms no documents or confidential information has been destroyed, nor was there ever any request that any documents be destroyed,” the spokesperson said. “There was no financial engagement with any of the Chinese institutions in question or collaboration with Chinese scientists concerning coronavirus research.”

Edward Hammond, a biosafety activist who has called for greater transparency at the Galveston lab, was unconvinced by the university’s stance.

“It is mystifying to me that this could have happened at all,” he told The Epoch Times. “Is it sloppiness, as UTMB suggests, or is something else going on?”

LeDuc

James LeDuc, director at the time for the Galveston lab, signed all three contracts.



AP PHOTO/NGHAN GUAN

Security personnel gather near the entrance of the Wuhan Institute of Virology during a visit by the World Health Organization team in Wuhan in China’s Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 3, 2021.

It is mystifying to me that this could have happened at all. Is it sloppiness, as UTMB suggests, or is something else going on?

Edward Hammond, biosafety activist

In the months after COVID-19 broke out, LeDuc reached out to prominent WIV scientists overseeing bat coronavirus projects in a bid to help them tamp down scrutiny over the facility’s role in the pandemic, according to recently released emails analyzed by The Epoch Times.

In April 2020, he wrote an email to virologist Shi Zhengli, deputy director for WIV’s P4 lab, sharing a document he prepared for the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations to discuss the lab leak hypothesis.

“Please review carefully and make any changes that you would like. I want this to be as accurate as possible and I certainly do not want to misrepresent any of your valuable contributions,” he told Shi, who later emailed back a document with her edits.

LeDuc appears to have shifted his stance on the issue. In June, he was one of roughly three dozen scientists and public health experts called for more rigorous oversight for funding on pathogenic experiments that could start a pandemic.

‘Memory Hole’

The UTMB’s collaboration with the Chinese

lab has attracted attention in Congress.

In July, Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas) wrote to LeDuc raising alarm about the UTMB contract.

“Though UTMB may not be alone, it raises serious concerns that a prominent recipient of federal taxpayer dollars would enter into an agreement with any foreign entity—but especially an adversary—with such a glaring ‘memory hole’ provision that authorizes research materials and files to be destroyed upon request,” he wrote in the letter.

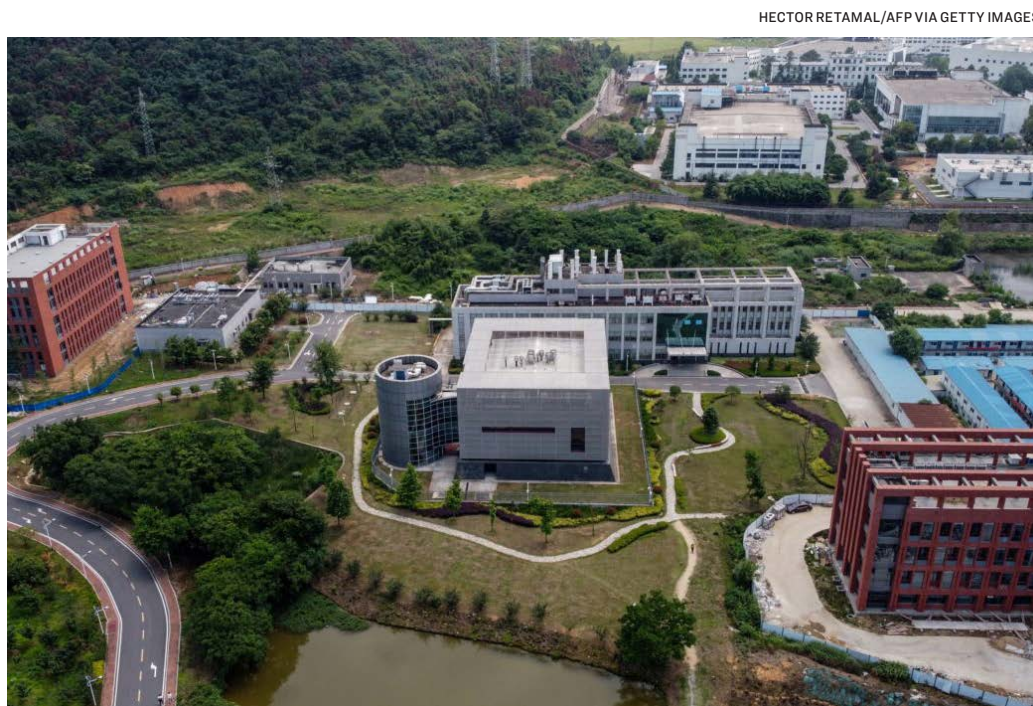
“On its face, this seems to violate record retention laws and requirements on grant recipients at the NIH [National Institutes of Health].”

The lawmaker said he wants to “get to the bottom of COVID-19’s origins and American involvement in Communist China’s extremely dangerous research.”

“Data sharing agreements between the CCP and U.S. entities, including the University of Texas Medical Branch, are deeply concerning,” Roy told The Epoch Times. “Such agreements are especially alarming given the CCP’s demonstrated willingness to twist and subvert scientific research to fit their hostile political agenda.”



BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES



HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

COVID-19 sample vials at a testing lab in Houston on Aug. 13, 2021.

This aerial view shows the P4 laboratory (C) on the campus of the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on May 27, 2020.

OPINION

Is War by Proxy the US Policy Toward Russia and China?

Does Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan reveal a lack of control and unclear US intentions toward Taiwan and China—or is something else going on?

JAMES GORRIE



What should one make of House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s journey to Taiwan?

There are at least a couple of conclusions that one can derive from Pelosi’s semi-official state visit to the self-governed, anti-communist island nation.

One is that there is, apparently, no limit to the delusions of those who fail to grasp reality. Another is that the purpose of Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan may be much worse than you think.

Deliberate Delusions?

Let’s start with Pelosi’s potential delusions. Did she imagine that her visit would demonstrate to China America’s commitment to Taiwan’s independence?

It would appear so. After all, she did say to Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen that “We will not abandon Taiwan.”

To some ears, that could sound a lot like a commitment to the island nation’s independence.

But it’s not. In response to Pelosi’s announcement, the Biden administration asserted that it does not support that aspiration for Taiwan.

So that’s clear as mud. Could it be that the purpose of the meeting was to stabilize relations with Beijing?

That’s not realistic, either. If anything, Pelosi’s visit has agitated and animated Beijing to new levels. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership has already characterized Pelosi’s visit as “provocative.”

Triggering Escalation

And of course, it was. In fact, it was intended to be. As a result, Taiwan now sees a massive presence of both U.S. and Chinese navies in its water in the run-up to the visit. More on that in a moment.

But first, what’s the immediate outcome, now that Pelosi has left the island nation?

One result is the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy’s announcement that they would be engaging in live-fire exercises around Taiwan. It has kept that promise, firing at least 11 missiles into Taiwanese waters, as well as increasing the frequency of violating Taiwan’s airspace with its warplanes. The level of tension between Beijing and Taipei has reached new levels.

There are several other implications that can be derived from Pelosi’s seemingly individual decision to visit Taiwan and none of them are good.

A missile is launched from an unspecified location in China on Aug. 4, 2022. The Chinese military fired live missiles into waters near Taiwan as part of its planned exercises on Aug. 4.



CCTV VIA AP

A Facade of Chaos?

For instance, Pelosi’s “semi-official-but-not-supported-by-Biden visit” to Taiwan could easily be interpreted as a sign of just how divided, uncoordinated, and even non-functioning the Biden administration appears to be.

Given Biden’s track record, one could understand how observers may come to such obvious conclusions.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan, for instance, was incredibly harmful to U.S. security and prestige. In a single day, the Biden administration destroyed U.S. credibility among allies and adversaries, left a power vacuum that was immediately filled by Russia and China, and armed the very folks we’ve been fighting against over the past 20 years.

Then, in Ukraine, the administration failed to deter Russia from invading, which has led to a raging war, the ongoing destruction of a nation, and forthcoming famine, among other negative outcomes.

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That’s understandable. After all, even though neither the Biden administration nor its military leadership approved of Pelosi’s visit, the speaker did so anyway.

How could this be?

How can a visit by a member of Congress that triggers the most aggressive encirclement of the island nation by China’s naval forces in history and further disrupt global trade be considered simply accidental or inadvertent?

Under what circumstances does a member of Congress supersede presidential authority, especially regarding a provocative act involving delicate foreign policy that could well lead to war?

Creating a False Narrative

It would seem to demonstrate that the U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity toward Taiwan is reaching absurd and unsustainable levels.

That may be the point—it’s too incredulous to believe, and therefore, prompts other questions.

For example, how should Taipei—and for that matter, Beijing—view U.S. policy and judgment now?

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) speaks after receiving the Order of Prodigious Clouds with Special Grand Cordon, Taiwan’s highest civilian honor, from Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen, at the president’s office in Taipei, Taiwan, on Aug. 3, 2022.



HANDOUT/GETTY IMAGES

Should either or both conclude that the United States has no clear policy objective, that its leadership is deeply divided on Taiwan, and that therefore, the American commitment to the status quo is over with regard to Taiwan’s existence?

That seems like a reasonable assumption.

Or, more cynically, what if both Taipei and Beijing simply were led to that conclusion?

The Ukraine Template

That may be a hard pill to swallow, but consider the provocations from the Biden administration toward Russia. In the months leading up to the war, NATO’s destabilizing overtures to Ukraine, driven by the United States, would have put a Western Military presence on Russia’s border. Moscow made it clear that such an outcome would provoke a Russian military response.

And yet, the United States kept pushing and Russia finally responded with its horrendous invasion and destruction of Ukraine.

Of crucial importance is the fact that the United States has not “abandoned” Ukraine in the face of Russia’s war against it, but rather, along with NATO, is supporting Ukraine with sophisticated weaponry to Moscow’s great disadvantage. Russia’s conventional military capacity is being drained rapidly, with a staggeringly high casualty rate and material losses. The war, which is pitting relatives against each other, is also dividing Russian society.

Moscow has charged the United States with fighting a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, with Russian and Ukrainian troops doing all the dying, while the United States simply supplies arms.

Delusion Reigns

Could the Ukraine template be the whole point of Pelosi’s Taiwan visit?

Could the administration’s strategy be to provoke China into invading a heavily armed Taiwan, thus allowing the United States to fight a proxy war against China?

It’s certainly a possibility, but who knows?

If projection is any indicator, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken’s statement that he hopes “Beijing will not manufacture a crisis” from Pelosi’s Taiwan visit may be exactly what the Biden administration wants to see occur.

Foreign policy by proxy war isn’t new. But if Team Biden believes that triggering a proxy war against China in Taiwan serves our interests in some way, or some overarching, globalist pretensions, then it is as delusional as Pelosi.

It’s even more delusional to imagine that Beijing’s response will mirror Russia’s. Beijing is preparing its people for war and it’s delusional to think that it would be waged on the Biden administration’s terms.

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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