

CCP INFLUENCE

Communist China's Sprawling Plan to Infiltrate American College Campuses

VENUS UPADHAYAYA

he Chinese regime is ramping up efforts to infiltrate U.S. universities to gain access to valuable research and mold the minds of the next generation of America's thought leaders, advocates and

American colleges' ties to China have drawn heightened scrutiny in recent years, in particular over Beijing-funded Confucius Institutes that have been criticized for spreading Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda and stifling academic freedom, and the revelation that universities received nearly \$1.5 billion in gifts and contracts from China from 2014 to 2020.

But these examples form a small part of a multifaceted campaign to subvert the institutions that foster America's technological and intellectual elite.

"The CCP sees the openness of our leading universities as a weapon that it can turn against us," said John Metz, president of the Athenai Institute, a student-founded nonprofit focused on removing CCP influence from college campuses.

"It aims to use espionage and its financial influence over universities not only to control discourse and censor its critics, but also to acquire the advanced technology it needs to expand its military might and further its genocidal policies," Metz told The Epoch Times in an email.

Meanwhile, Chinese influence operations targeting universities are but one aspect of the CCP's global efforts to subvert all aspects of Western society to benefit the regime. And since the Communist Party wants to overtake the United States as sole global superpower, the United States takes a major focus of its operations.

"In a very literal sense, the CCP's access to our universities endangers American lives," said Metz.

"The CCP is targeting young people because it wants to control the minds of the next generation of leaders. We risk losing not just in the present, but in the future as well."

Silencing Dissidents

A major part of Chinese influence operations in U.S. universities involves controlling public opinion about the CCP. This has always involved silencing those who speak out against the regime and its abuses.

To this end, Chinese international students themselves and Chinese student associations have become tools by which the regime can suppress dissenting voices on

Part of China's sort of grand strategy is not only stealing economic and security-related secrets, specifically in technology from around the world, but

Ian Oxnevad, program research associate, National Association of Scholars

it's also shaping how

China is viewed.

campus. Over the years, there has been a of the Chinese regime threatening and spate of incidents where Chinese student groups with links to the Chinese consulate have successfully or attempted to suppress voices critical of the Party at American uni-

"In my view, the newer generation of inan advocacy body representing groups victimized by the CCP.

By nationalistic, Kim meant that these students deemed anything critical of the CCP as anti-nationalistic.

According to Kim, if one talks to Chinese international students on U.S. campuses about the CCP, they generally say, "Party is paganda line repeatedly espoused by the CCP in which it claims to be the sole representative of China and the Chinese people.

"If you have individuals like that occupying U.S. universities and who go taking part in everyday classes and taking part in everyday university activities, what tends to happen is that any type of discussion about the criticism of the Chinese Communist Party actually comes into jeopardy,"

speech early this year gave an example

harassing students at U.S. universities for merely exercising their right to free

"In a recent incident at one Midwestern university, for example, a Chinese-American student posted online praise for those ternational students from China seem to students who were killed in the Tiananmen be a lot more nationalistic than the ones Square massacre in 1989. And almost im-I have met in college," said Se Hoon Kim, mediately, his parents called from China, director of the Captive Nations Coalition of saying that Chinese intelligence officers the Committee on Present Danger: China, had shown up to threaten them because of his post," he said.

Wray was talking about a 2020 incident involving Kong Zhihao, a Chinese graduate student at Purdue University in Indiana who was subsequently accused by other Chinese students on campus of being a "CIA Agent." Due to harassment received from the CCP, Kong reluctantly decided the people and we are the Party"—a pro- to cancel a planned speech for an event commemorating the Tiananmen Square

> "I think some of the Chinese students in my school are CCP members. I can tell they are not simply students. They could be spies or informants," Kong told ProPublica

Confucius Institutes Simply Rebranded Confucius Institutes, Beijing-funded language centers criticized as conduits of FBI Director Christopher Wray in a propaganda, have drawn considerable pushback in recent years, resulting in 104



A human rights group urges Tufts University to close its Confucius Institute in Somerville, Mass., on March 13, 2021.

of the 118 centers across U.S. colleges and universities to close down.

But the National Association of Scholars said in a June report that many of these closures have simply resulted in a re-branding of the programs. Confucius Institute-like programs have since emerged under other names or have reappeared in other forms, the report said.

Universities are generally eager to replace their Confucius Institutes with similar programs. According to the report, out of those closed, 28 have replaced their institutes with a similar program, 58 have maintained close relations with the former Confucius Institute partner university, and five have kept their Confucius Institutes alive by transferring the center to a new host.

The report said after the closure of the institutes, some host institutions were made to refund money to the Chinese regime, and in certain cases, this was in excess of \$1 million.

China's theft of research and technology from American universities has been a direct assault on American innovation leadership. Recently there has been more clamor about the theft of sensitive technology adding another angle to China's meddling in U.S. universities.

The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI), led by former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, last year voted unanimously to approve its final report to Congress recommending that American universities take steps to prevent the theft of sensitive technology by the Chinese military.

"On a level playing field, the United States is capable of out-innovating any competitor. However, today, there is a fundamental difference in the U.S. and China's approaches to AI innovation that puts American AI leadership in peril," said the report, adding that unlike China, the U.S. innovation model is based on the open exchange of ideas, free markets, and limited government involvement.

"China is executing a centrally directed systematic plan to extract AI knowledge from abroad through espionage, talent recruitment, technology transfer, and investments. It has ambitious plans to build and train a new generation of AI engineers in new AI hubs," it said.

During the Cold War, technology competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was characterized by research and development programs that were divorced from one another. But in today's interconnected world, U.S.-China competition is more complicated because both countries' research ecosystems are incentive for universities like MIT to look deeply connected through shared research the other way while the CCP abuses human cial linkages that include supply chains, markets, and joint research ventures, according to the report.

Growing awareness of the threat of technology theft rose amid the Trump administration, which launched the China Initiative, a Department of Justice program aimed at combating economic espionage and other malign actions emanating from the communist regime.

Dozens of U.S. or Chinese researchers or academics have been prosecuted or convicted under the initiative, with charges ranging from theft of trade secrets to grant

Late last year, former chair of Harvard University's chemistry department Charles Lieber was convicted by a jury of lying to federal agencies about his ties to the Thousand Talents Plan, the Chinese regime's talent recruitment plan accused of facilitating the transfer of American know-how to China.

However, the Biden administration ended the China Initiative in February amid allegations of racial discrimination. While an internal review found no racial bias in the department's approach, the program was shuttered over the concern of a perception of bias, Assistant Attorney General for National Security Division Matthew Olsen said at the time.

Chinese Funding

Ian Oxnevad, a program research associate with the National Association of Scholars and one of the authors of the above-mentioned report on Confucius Institutes, told the Epoch Times that China's influence operations on U.S. universities align with the CCP's goal of becoming a global su-

"Part of China's sort of grand strategy is not only stealing economic and securityrelated secrets, specifically in technology from around the world, but it's also shaping how China is viewed," said Oxnevad. This means that discussions on subjects like human rights violations, the Tiananmen Square massacre, and atrocities like the Great Leap Forward will continue to get



Metz said that Chinese funding is a "massive source" of university funding, and it is attractive because it deceptively appears to be freely given and there's a need to root it out by preventing universities from accepting such funding.

He pointed to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as one example of Chinese money flowing to American colleges. The university received over \$100 million in contributions from various Chinese sources between 2015 and 2019, according to a 2020 Department of Education report.

Last year, Michelle Bethel, a board member of MIT's McGovern Institute for Brain Research, resigned over ethical concerns about the institute's partnerships with Chinese research bodies.

"By conducting research with institutions in China, the McGovern Institute unwittingly could be aiding the country's repressive security apparatus or its military, whose officers have published articles declaring biology a new domain of warfare," Bethel wrote in a Wall Street Journal op-ed explaining her resignation.

"My concerns about how Beijing might be using our findings were dismissed as racist and political," she wrote.

To Metz. American universities' collaboration with Chinese institutions and their financial links to China is an untenable situation.

"That vast financial leverage creates an ijects, talent circulation, and commer- rights and threatens U.S. national security,

> An MIT spokesperson told The Epoch Times that the MIT has "strong processes for evaluating and managing the risks of research involving countries, including China, whose behavior affects U.S. national and economic security."

Earlier in response to Bethel's op-ed, the university issued a statement jointly by Robert Desimone, director of the Mc-Govern Institute for Brain Research, Nergis Mavalvala, dean of MIT's School of Science, and Maria T. Zuber, vice president for research at the university.

They said that of the dozens of research projects at McGovern Institute, only one on developing treatments for severe forms of autism or neurological disorders is with China, and MIT receives no funding from China for it.

"Every proposed engagement that involves an organization or funding source from China, once it has been evaluated for compliance with U.S. law and regulation, is

The Confucius Institute building on the campus of Troy University in Troy, Ala., on March 16, 2018.

further reviewed by committees of senior administrators to consider risks related to national security, economic competitiveness, and civil and human rights," the statement said.

What Should the US do?

CONFUCIUS

INSTITUTE

The question of how the United States should respond to the Chinese regime's interference on U.S. campuses has prompted varying recommendations from experts, ranging from cutting federal funding to universities that partner with the Chinese regime to stepping up information sharing with like-minded countries.

Greg F. Treverton, a professor at the University of Southern California and the former chairperson of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, told The Epoch Times that incidents of the CCP trying to censor criticism on U.S. campuses are "occasional, worrisome, but not worth cutting off cooperation" with China.

"I think there are two sorts of cooperation that ought to be beefed up, there ought to be more and more explicit cooperation between universities and for instance, the FBI," he added. Treverton said such cooperation doesn't come "naturally" because generally many people in the universities are skeptical of the government.

The second kind of cooperation should be between the United States and its "friends around the world" like Australia, another popular country with Chinese international students. Treverton said this is important because if the U.S. closes its doors to Chinese students, they'll go

"We can share information about what's happened with various countries, by way of connections between China, Chinese authorities and their students," he said.

The National Association of Scholars report recommended that, in the short term, the federal government should amend the National Defense Authorization Act to target Confucius Institute-replacement programs, and should institute "new limits on other sources of federal funding to institutions that maintain a [Confucius Institute] or similar program."

In the long term, the report said that authorities should levy tax on the Chinese funds and contracts received by U.S. institutions, and take other measures to build transparency in funding processes.

This will cap the "amount of Chinese funding a college or university may receive before jeopardizing eligibility for federal funding, and prohibiting funding to colleges and universities that enter research partnerships with Chinese universities involved in China's military-civil fusion,"

the report said. Metz of Athenai said that he has started to witness a shift in that universities, for the first time, are starting to reconsider their investments in China

"Universities like CUA [The Catholic University of America] and Yale are already investigating their endowments links to the Uyghur genocide; others, like Harvard, are rolling back these investments more

quietly," he said. "By the end of the 2022-23 school year we expect other universities to begin to divest at an accelerating rate," said Metz, adding that university leaders including trustees and other administrators are reaching out to Athenia asking how they can reduce their exposure to the worst actors in China.

Athenia plans to launch a new, interactive online tool that will help students, policymakers, and other stakeholders actually begin to measure their universities' exposure to China.

Metz said this online tool will look at everything from gifts and research partnerships to Confucius Institutes, investments, and state-supported harassment and cen-

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Harvard University

professor Charles Lieber

Boston on Jan. 30, 2020

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John Metz, president, Athenai Institute

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censored. This concern has brought up a Students walk past the "Great Dome" atop Building 10 on the Massachusetts louder debate about Chinese funding to Institute of Technology campus in Cambridge, Mass., in this file photo.

Virology is

Wuhan, China

on May 13,

An about foursquare-mile expanse of radioactive waste outside Baotou, Inner Province. China, on April

Week 44, 2022 THE EPOCH TIMES

Investigative Reporter Reveals CCP's Legacy of Environmental Destruction in China

ALEX WU

During the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) 20th National Congress, China's ruling regime claimed that it has been more effective in managing the environment over the past decade, citing official data. However, a Chinese investigative journalist revealed a drastic deterioration of the not recover for decades.

Zhai Qing, vice minister for the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, said at a press conference that under the guidance of "Xi Jinping and the thought of ecological civilization" over the past 10 years, the party has made overall advances in China's ecological and environmental protection.

He claimed numerous achievements, including the fastest improvement in air quality in the world, the country's improved safety rating for the drinking water of 770 million people, and the restoration and increase in population of more than 300 kinds of rare and endangered wild animals and plants.

Regarding the official claims, mainland Chinese investigative reporter Zhao Lanjian told The Epoch Times on Oct. 23 that China's air pollution, groundwater pollution, soil pollution, and other concerns all remain at shocking levels. People's antipollution protests have been suppressed, investigative reporters have been silenced, and only CCP officials from the Ministry of Environment brag about the state of China's environment.

"The standards for environmental protection evaluation should first come from the establishment of the evaluation system of non-governmental organizations (NGO), so that it is possible to objectively evaluate the environmental protection results that are related to people's lives," Zhao said.

"He [Zhai] is bragging about how well the CCP manages the environment. All the questions at the press conference are prepared in advance, and its data cannot be trusted."

Predatory Development Destroys Natural Reserves

The CCP's environmental protection policies and its economic development model are contradictory, Zhao points out.

"Some protected natural resource landscapes have been developed for quick commercial success in a predatory model, such as Zhangjiajie or Changbai Mountain."

"I have visited Changbai Mountain four times; the earliest visit was in 1994 and again in 2015," Zhao said, referring to a In 2018, Chinese investigative reporter Zhao Lanjian went to various areas of Sanjiangyuan, on the Tibetan plateau in the south of Qinghai studies, and saw the extent of many

new deserts.

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Desertification Affecting

Water Supply, Fisheries

In 2018, Zhao went to various areas of Sanjiangyuan, on the Tibetan plateau in the south of Qinghai Province, for field studies, and saw the extent of many new deserts. Compared with the maps in the past, "I found out that this desert was formed in the last 30 years. Thirty years ago, it was graveyards and swamps," he said.

mountain in northeastern China's Jilin Province near the border with North Korea.

"I found out that the natural reserve has

been plundered and artificially developed,

and all the scenic spots in China are facing

He compared the situation with other

"I have visited ecological parks in many

Chile, where people are not allowed to

build roads nor to develop commercial

tourism. However, China puts the tourist

economic model in first place; puts tourism

revenue from selling tickets in first place."

Zhao said that he has spent 10 years in-

vestigating the ecological status of places along China's Yangtze River and Yellow

River in Qinghai, as well as Tibet and Inner

Mongolia, and has witnessed the devasta-

tion of the same predatory development

model on the natural environment.

the same problem.

"The existence of this desert proves that at least the ecological environment of the Sanjiangyuan area has undergone shocking changes compared with 30 years ago," Zhao said. "I interviewed some experts, and they also believed that the desertification of the upper reaches of the Sanjiangyuan has actually caused the water shortage in Shanghai and the entire Yangtze River

Sanjiangyuan, which literally means "The Source of the Three Rivers," is the birthplace of the Yangtze, Yellow, and Lancang rivers. It's known as the "Chinese Water Tower" and plays an important role in China's ecological status and national economic development.

"Everyone can see the deterioration of China's ecological environment now, such as the cut-off of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers and many water systems," Zhao said. "The cutoff of such water systems will also affect the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, and fisheries along the rivers. Therefore, no matter how good the government's slogan is about these environmental issues, the reality is visible to

CCP leader Xi emphasized two points Li Yun and Luo Ya contributed to this about the environment in his speech at the *report*.

20th National Congress: that the party will be "deeply promoting the prevention and control of environmental pollution, and further promoting the ecological protection and management of important rivers, lakes, and reservoirs."

Zhao said of Xi's comments: "The issues of environmental protection and ecology are imminent and he had to mention it. When we noticed that the environmen has changed, the environment has actually already been deteriorating to a certain extent. The development model of the entire society is on the verge of crisis."

Zhao's 2014 report revealed shocking pollution in the Tengger Desert. Local herdsmen pointed out that sewage ponds had appeared in the desert hinterland, with local enterprises discharging untreated wastewater into the ponds. The regime has since deleted his articles and photos from the internet.

Censoring Journalists, Protests

"China has tightened control of the media since 2014, and investigative reporters have been severely suppressed," Zhao said.

At the same time, large-scale anti-pollution demonstrations by tens of thousands of people have emerged one after another across China, all of which have been brutally suppressed by the CCP's military and

The groundwater in 90 percent of China's cities is polluted because of the deep underground discharge of sewage by enterprises. And a public welfare activist has made a "Map of Cancer Villages in China." Due to pollution, there are thousands of cancer villages across the country, Zhao

"How is China's current environment?" he asked. "The final evaluation system is in the hands of the government."

He pointed out that "after Xi Jinping advocated green mountains and rivers, the local governments have not been able to restore green mountains. As a result, plastic green plants were spread from the top of the mountain layer by layer, and the bare mountain became an artificial green mountain. There were many places where 'green' mountains were sprayed with green

"The destruction of the entire natural environment in China, the destruction of tourism resources, and the destruction of ecological resources may not be recovered in the next few decades or even hundreds

COVID ORIGINS

'Substantial Evidence' COVID-19 Result of Wuhan Laboratory 'Incident': Senate Report

ZACHARY STIEBER

Considerable evidence points to the CO-VID-19 pandemic being linked to the highlevel laboratory in Wuhan, China, that's located near where the first cases were reported, a U.S. Senate report released on Oct. 27 states.

"Substantial evidence suggests that the CO-VID-19 pandemic was the result of a researchrelated incident associated with a laboratory in Wuhan, China," the report states.

"A research-related incident is consistent with the early epidemiology showing rapid spread of the virus exclusively in Wuhan with the earliest calls for assistance being located in the same district as the Wuhan Institute of Virology's (WIV) original campus in central Wuhan. The WIV is an epicenter of advanced coronavirus research, where researchers have collected samples of and experimented on high-risk corona-

The origins of COVID-19 are still unknown. Some scientists lean toward a lab origin, which would mean the virus leaked or was released by Chinese researchers.

Others favor a natural origin theory.

The report states that a natural origin

found in previous instances of a virus starting in nature hasn't been identified for CO-VID-19, such as the original animal host.

"Such gaps include the failure to identify the original host reservoir, the failure to identify a candidate intermediate host species, and the lack of serological or epidemiological evidence showing transmission from animals to humans, among others outlined in this report," the report states. "As a result of these evidentiary gaps, it is hard to treat the natural zoonotic spillover theory as the presumptive origin of the CO-VID-19 pandemic."

The 35-page document was produced by minority staff on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee under the direction of Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.), the panel's ranking Republican member. It was described as an interim report.

Staffers spent 15 months poring over hundreds of scientific studies, interviewing dozens of subject-matter experts, and analyzing previous reports and studies on the possible origins, Burr said.

"I believe that this report provides a significant contribution to the existing body of evidence and helps establish parameters for how future analyses should be remains possible but noted that evidence reviewed," he said.



Substantial evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic was the result of a researchrelated incident associated with a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

From the interim report of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Minority Staff

The Chinese Communist Party's lack of transparency "prevents reaching a more definitive conclusion," he said.

Burr and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), the panel's chair, in June 2021 announced a bipartisan effort that was to include "reviewing information from federal agencies and relevant experts regarding the origins of the virus that causes COVID-19, and regarding how to improve the nation's ability to assess the safety and security of biosafety laboratories."

Neither Murray nor her staff were said to be involved in the interim report.

Murray's spokesperson didn't respond to a request by The Epoch Times for comment by press time.

The report came after a recent study concluded that the odds of a natural origin for COVID-19 were less than 1 in 100 million after analyzing qualitative aspects, such as virus features.

'Compromised': Democratic Aide Fired for China Ties; GOP Demands Investigation

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

Congressional Republicans have called for an investigation following the revelation that an aide to a Democratic lawmaker was fired for seeking to facilitate meetings on behalf of the Chinese Embassy in

Barbara Hamlett, who worked on Capitol Hill for 34 years, was a scheduler for Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) at the time she allegedly contacted several congressional staffers and attempted to arrange meetings between them and various officials working at the Chinese Embassy, the National Review reported.

After she allegedly requested one such meeting with a Republican staffer, a Republican office reported Hamlett to the House's sergeant-at-arms, the report states. A review of her conduct determined that she had attempted to arrange the meetings for China.

The incident has incensed Republican leadership, which has denounced the creeping influence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in American politics.

"The Chinese Communist Party wants to establish influence over every aspect of American life, especially our own government," Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said in

"I'm proud that my work in Congress has gotten me banned and sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party. I hope it sends a clear message to Beijing that Washington will never be beholden to the Chinese Communist Party."

Beyer's office stated that it had no prior knowledge of Hamlett's actions and acted

"Congressman Beyer was totally unaware of these activities prior to being contacted by the House sergeant-at-arms," said Aaron Fritschner, Beyer's deputy chief of staff, according to National Review.

"As soon as he learned of them, he followed every directive he was given by security officials. The staffer in question is no longer employed by the office of Congressman Beyer."

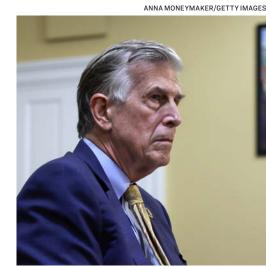
The firing, however, wasn't enough to prevent the incident from spilling over into next week's midterm elections. Karina Lipsman, Beyer's Republican

challenger in Virginia's 8th Congressional District, has called for an investigation into the extent of the congressman's ties to the CCP and whether Hamlett's activities affected national security.

"The extent of Beyer's ties to the Chinese government needs to be determined, so paign website boasted a new tab. Titled the level of national security risk can be determined," Lipsman said in a statement accuses Beyer of being compromised by



The U.S. Capitol in Washington on March 4, 2020.



Rep. Don Beyer (D-Va.) attends a hearing at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Aug. 10,

to The Washington Times. "His office has clearly been compromised."

By Oct. 31, just three days after the incident was first reported, Lipsman's cam-"The Beyer/China Situation," the page



House of Representatives Sergeant-at-Arms William Walker speaks during a news conference at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 4, 2022.

the CCP and unfit to continue his duties

"Don Beyer has been compromised," the page states. "Our district houses the Pentagon and the C.I.A. The reality is that he is no longer fit to hold office.

"This district, probably more than any

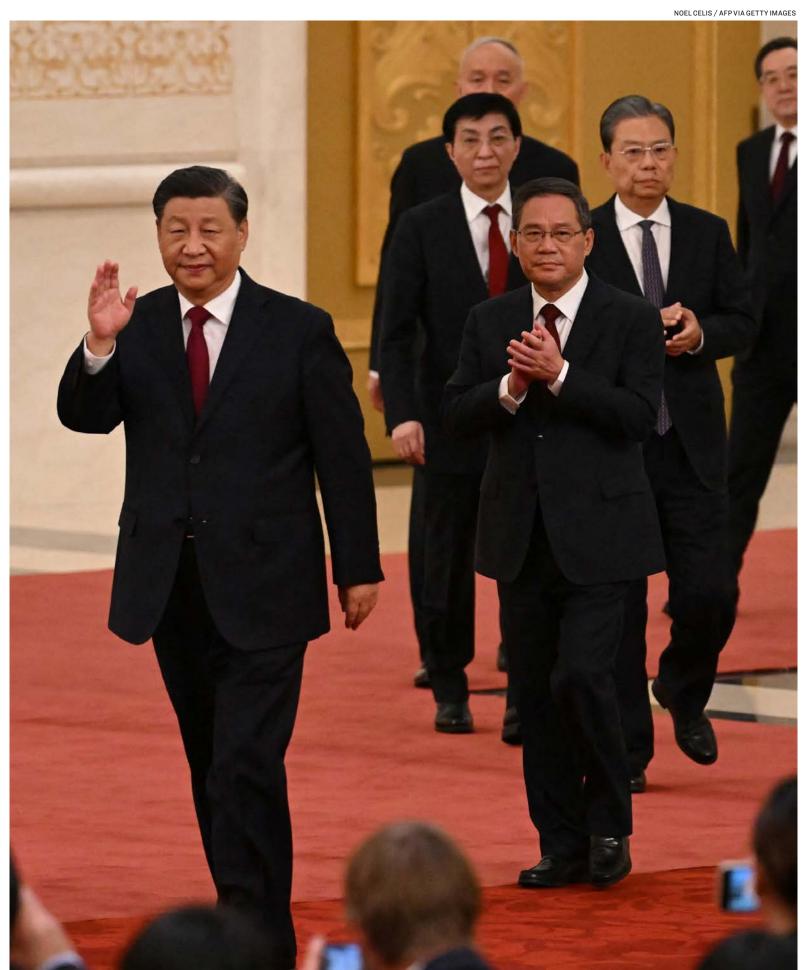


Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) speaks to a reporter in Washington on Feb. 16, 2022.

other, keeps America safe. We can't afford to have a question mark in office repre-

Beyer's office and the House sergeantat-arms didn't respond by press time to requests by The Epoch Times for com-

Xi Cements Control Over CCP's Military, but China's Ability to Win Wars Still Questionable: Analysts



China's leader Xi Jinping (front) walks with members of the Chinese Communist Party's new Politburo Standing Committee, the nation's top decision-making body, as they meet the media in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Oct. 23, 2022.

VENUS UPADHAYAYA

The world can expect a more militarily aggressive China after Xi Jinping secured an unprecedented third term in power, cementing his status as the most powerful Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader since Mao Zedong, the regime's first ruler, according to analysts.

Xi's tenure for another five years, and perhaps more, also puts him in the position of leading a military that, for the first time in the Party's history, poses a real threat to others in the region, they said. But with newly-appointed loyalists in the military who are aging and lack combat experience, Xi also faces deep uncertainty about whether the Party's military arm, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), can actually win wars with advanced armies.

The leader's reappointment as the Party's general secretary came after the close of CCP's 20th National Congress on Oct. 23, during which the composition of the Politburo Standing Committee, the CCP's pinnacle 7-member decision-making body, was also revealed. The four newlyappointment members of the committee were all Xi allies.

Aparna Pande, a research fellow at the Hudson Institute, a Washington-based think tank, told The Epoch Times that Xi is now "more powerful than many of his predecessors," including Deng Xiaoping, the CCP's supreme leader from 1978 to 1989, who still had to contend with Party elders.

The leader's consolidation of power has been matched by a doubling down of propaganda painting Xi as the Party's "core." The CCP amended its constitution on Oct. 22 further cementing Xi's policies and ideologies. In 2017, the Party's charter was amended to incorporate Xi's own brand of dogma, known as "Xi Jinping Thought."

Over the past week, several reports about Xi on Chinese state broadcaster CCTV's mobile app were tagged under the title "people's leader."

This personality cult under the banner of "people's leader" marks the end of the period of China's economic reforms initiated under Deng's reign during the 1980s, said Frank Lehberger, a Europe-based sinologist and expert on CCP policies, who noted that Deng had prohibited leaders from establishing personality cults.

Heightened Threat

With many a comparison being made between Xi and Mao, experts note that while Xi, unlike Mao, isn't a hardened military leader, he has solidified control



An image of Xi Jinping at an exhibition on the history of the Chinese Communist Party at Peking University in Beijing on Oct. 7, 2022.

of the military by rooting out insubordination from the PLA and appointing loyalists. Xi leads the PLA as chairman of the Central Military Commission, the Party's top military body.

Grant Newsham, a senior fellow at the Center for Security Policy and research fellow at the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies, told The Epoch Times that Xi is the first Chinese leader since Mao who has the political clout to take the communist regime in his chosen direction.

"But unlike Mao, Xi has the military capability to take on the United States and to project force in China's immediate vicinity," said Newsham, who is also an Epoch Times contributor.

He said that the PLA is gradually building the capability to project power both regionally and globally, and that if necessary, Xi will not shy from using his solidified position and progressively capable military to further intimidate and assault Taiwan, the self-ruled island that the CCP claims

For Pande, an unchallenged Xi isn't just a concern for the United States, but also for China's neighbors in Asia—from Japan and South Korea to India and Vietnam.

"Xi is likely to continue his policies over the last decade that include a more aggressive China that seeks to wipe out the century of humiliation, reclaims territory through salami slicing, and uses the weakkey parts of the world," Pande said.

Such goals indicate the "messianic aspect to Xi's behavior," according to Newsham, who said that the United States and other free nations should be prepared for a fight.

"Expect Chinese political warfare—a preliminary to kinetic warfare—to continue globally," he said. By political warfare, Newsham meant the use of a range of measures, usually non-violent, to weaken, confuse, demoralize, or even defeat an adversary.

Appointing Military Loyalists

While the CCP's military may pose a heightened threat to those in the Asian region and beyond, Lehberger cautions that Xi's promotion of generals based on loyalty, rather than combat experience or expertise, represents an Achilles heel.

During his 10-year rule thus far, Xi has been extremely suspicious of the top brass of the PLA and has purged many of them while appointing past-retirement-age loyalists around him, Lehberger noted. Xi has also reorganized the complete defense structure, most notably during sweeping military reforms in 2015.

This reorganization was "designed to prevent PLA generals [from] ganging up on [Xi] and toppling him from absolute power," Lehberger said, noting that it, ironically, also created powerful enemies in the process.

To overcome insubordination, Xi on Oct. 24 announced the promotion of a ness of certain powers (Russia) and distrac- few generals whom he could trust like the 72-year-old general Zhang Youxia whom Lehberger described as Xi's "neighbor and playing pal as a kid."

Zhang, who retained his position as vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, is one of the few PLA generals who has actual combat experience, but that was from over four decades ago in Vietnam, the analyst noted.

"He is so old he should be retired according to CCP rules, but Xi bent the rules in his favor and he now has been elevated to first vice chairman of the Central Military Committee, the second most powerful military man after Xi himself," said

The other vice chair role went to He Weidong, who was commander of the 31st Army on the shores opposite Taiwan in Fujian Province, and is equally past retirement age, said Lehberger, adding that the general was formerly in charge of the Western Theater Command, headquartered in China's western region and tasked with fighting India.

"During the last years, Xi liked [He's] performance in the west and did promote He on a fast track to become boss of the Eastern Theatre Command, the entity in charge of an envisaged invasion of Taiwan. He is now second vice chairman of the CMC after Gen. Zhang," said Lehberger.

The third PLA figure promoted to the Central Military Commission was Adm. Miao Hua, 66, whom Xi has known for three decades. Lehberger described Miao as "another leading political cadre (without combat experience and just a communist apparatchik in the military) from the 31st Army," whom Xi has known since his days as a Party official in Fujian Province from 1985 to 2002.

Xi wants to annex Taiwan, and for this, he needs solid expertise in high-tech warfare, notably air warfare and marine or naval warfare, according to the expert.

"Therefore, Xi has built up his Navy to impressive proportions [that] now rivals the Americans in number," he said, but its "rank and file as well as officers all lack professional expertise, when compared to the best in the region: the Japanese Navy and the U.S. Navy.'

Lehberger said that Xi's choice of Miao mirrors this particular dilemma, and indicates what might unfold in the long run.

"Miao is just a political officer, basically a scheming bureaucrat without any naval combat experience whatsoever. So, with such a person in charge of the invasion of Taiwan, this can only lead to disaster for Xi himself," he said.

"But Xi is not interested in professional ism, just personal loyalty."

OPINION

On Closing China's Secret Police Stations Overseas

The time is now

PETER DAHLIN



Few people could have missed the revelation from Safeguard Defenders that local Chinese police are running overseas police "service

stations." Over the past month, local media outlets have been investigating the illegal centers, and more and more remarkable information is being revealed weekly.

The latest such revelation is the existence of additional stations in Canada. Australia, and the Netherlands. Media outlets in the Netherlands have been able to pinpoint the police outposts "persuading" Chinese residents to return to China to face criminal charges. The illegal police stations circumvent normal legal channels and essentially carry out police work on foreign soil.

Prior to this, Safeguard Defenders had investigated the actions of the "service stations" in Spain and Serbia. However, finding people willing to speak on the issue is nearly impossible.

Despite that, China's Foreign Min-



Overseas Chinese police "Service Stations," or "110 Overseas," are found in dozens of countries across five continents.`

istry, in a response to Spanish media, has acknowledged engaging in these actions, blaming extraditions (the normal, lawful way to seek someone's return) as "cumbersome" and saying that European countries sometimes deny its requests.

With growing attention to illegal Chinese police activity, governments are starting to respond. A committee in the Canadian Parliament is set to hold hearings on the matter, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are launching an investigation. In Spain, the Ministry of the Interior has launched an investigation. In Ireland, the government is requesting information from China (and, reportedly, the sign outside the Chinese police station in Dublin has "disappeared").

In addition, it was reported on Oct. 26 that the Dutch Foreign Ministry is investigating the centers in order to determine appropriate action. The Foreign Ministry said it wasn't informed about the centers via diplomatic channels, which makes them illegal. Further, the UK has announced the establishment of a "foreign agent's registry" to make such operations illegal if not properly registered with the British government.

More governments are likely to launch investigations or demand answers from the Chinese regime in the weeks to come. It's apparent that the stations exist across the globe, with evidence of new centers revealed almost weekly since the original report came out in September.

Yet for all the different actions being taken, there's a marked lack of coordination, with different countries taking different actions. This risks undermining these counteractions.

The West, as usual, is acting like a herd of cats, rather than in a coordinated, planned manner. And a coordinated response is needed.

Our report showed that the various Chinese police jurisdictions that have set up overseas stations operate in different ways and that the program is still in its early stages. Although the campaign started with 10 "pilot provinces," more provinces are set to join the policing effort.

Once the regime analyzes how such stations operate and which tactics work best, we're likely to see more structured operations on a grander scale—that is, unless Beijing is met with a strong response and abandons plans to expand its long-arm policing.

Our report showed that the various Chinese police jurisdictions that have set up overseas stations operate in different ways and that the program is still in its early stages.

A timely response now, before additional plans are made in Beijing, can change the regime's future policy. It has become clear that the police

"service stations" aren't registered in the countries in which they operate. Every country has a regulatory framework for such foundations. The serious violations that these stations represent justify a harsh response: their forced closure or a lighter penalty, dependent on the voluntary dismantling of these operations.

More countries need to move forward with "foreign agent registries." The existence of these registries would have caused the illegal Chinese stations to be shut down right away. They're manned by Chinese residents in the target countries, operating as foreign agents for the Chinese regime. With increased disinformation by foreign agents, coupled with this type of transnational repression, the need for such registries has never been stronger.

In addition, security police need to work systematically on these issues. Hotlines need to be established for victims to report such transgressions with their identities well-protected. And finally, information needs to be made available in those countries on an annual basis to map how China engages in such behavior and how its tactics change.

These actions—which are actually the minimum needed-must be accomplished in a well-orchestrated, coordinated manner by the United States, Canada, the UK, the EU, Australia, and other allies facing the same threat. It's in such a coordinated move that the real strength behind these countermeasures lies.

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

Peter Dahlin is the founder of the NGO Safeguard Defenders and the co-founder of the Beijing-based Chinese NGO China Action (2007–2016). He is the author of "Trial By Media," and contributor to "The People's Republic of the Disappeared." He lived in Beijing from 2007, until detained and placed in a secret jail in 2016, subsequently deported and banned. Prior to living in China, he worked for the Swedish government with gender equality issues, and now lives in Madrid, Spain.



Γhe America ChangLe Association in New York on Oct. 6, 2022. An overseas outpost in New York, called the Fuzhou Police Overseas Service Station, s located inside the association

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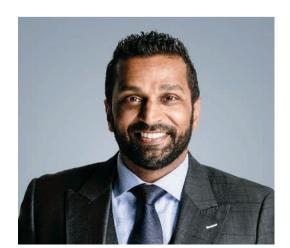
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Thank you.
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