

WEEK 1, 2023

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER



CHINA EYES US FARMLAND

See Page 4

COVID IN CHINA

Accounts of ‘White Lung’ Flood Chinese Social Media Amid COVID Spike

EVA FU

When the father of Fan Deng, a prominent former anchor of Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, started dozing off more frequently during the day, the family didn't worry. This wasn't uncommon, after all, for someone in their 80s. The man's mind was clear and his appetite was as good as ever. But when the family used a pulse oximeter out of caution, they found his blood oxygen level dangerously low at 88 percent, 4 percent below the threshold requiring medical attention. By the time the family got him to the hospital, his blood oxygen levels had plunged to the 60s. Only after a series of X-ray scans at the hospital did the family realize the gravity of the situation: His lungs appeared mostly white. Healthy lungs, by contrast, would normally appear as dark regions in an X-ray or CT scan. He died after three nights at the hospital.

Fan shared this account on Chinese social media, which has been flooded with similar stories by family and friends of victims who allegedly presented the same symptoms in their lungs.

“White lung,” once a little-known phrase, has been a top trending word on Chinese social media amid an expansive COVID outbreak sweeping China, before censors swooped in to scrub discussion of the phenomenon. The white patches indicate areas of inflammation, which causes excessive fluid accumulation in the lungs.

The phenomenon has sparked fears that the virus has mutated or that earlier strains of COVID are driving the latest outbreak. The Chinese regime, which has been sharply criticized by the international community for refusing to share data on the outbreak, insists that Omicron is behind the surge, that no new variants have emerged, and no earlier strains have reemerged.

Official Explanation and Concerns

The elderly weren't the only group who reportedly presented with white lung syndrome. Recent Chinese media reports and social media posts have described patients from as young as 12 years old to some in their 30s.

The death rate is around 40 percent for those with serious cases of a white lung; and even for people who do recover, fibrous scars will likely remain, Zhang Li, deputy director of neurosurgery at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital in Shanghai, told state-run media.

He and multiple other top Chinese experts said that white lung patients—who by their definition have around three-quarters of their lungs showing as white on a CT scan—make up only a small portion of COVID patients.

“All serious pneumonia will cause white lungs,” said Zhang Wenhong, director of the infectious diseases department at Huashan Hospital of Fudan University as well as its Chinese Communist Party Party secretary, in an op-ed for Chinese media outlet Caixin.

“Even though the proportion of ‘white lung’ patients is not high, because of the significant cardinal number, the number of ‘white lung’ cases we observe clinically will increase.”

Asked whether Omicron can lead to the syndrome, China's top health authority, the National Health Commission, didn't directly answer the question but stressed that white lung has nothing to do with the original COVID variants or inoculation by Chinese vaccines. Rather, many pathogens can lead to such inflammation of the lungs, and “a considerable number” of the patients can return back to health, an official with the commission said at a press conference last week.

The official statements, though, haven't reassured many Chinese.

An unnamed doctor donning a medical plastic shield over his surgical mask said he diagnosed 120 COVID patients over a span of eight hours, among which, a third were seriously ill and up to 20, around 16 percent, had white lung symptoms.

Every day there are deaths in my residential compound. ... If one person gets sick in a household, all the rest will become infected. There's no one spared.

Wuhan resident

“The white lungs are not just seen in the elderly,” he said in a video shared on the Chinese microblogging site Weibo, which displays a document listing details of patients affected. “There are people in their 20s, 40s, and 60s. I'm feeling a little panicky.”

Anecdotes From the Ground

Like the former CCTV anchor's father, some of these patients exhibited little outward signs such as fever or coughing which is more typical in a COVID infection. Doctors describe this as “silent hypoxia”: a condition where oxygen in the body is alarmingly low.

In recent interviews, people from multiple areas across China said they have seen such cases in those close to them. Most of the interviewees requested anonymity for fear of reprisals.

A blogger in the southwestern megacity of Chongqing mentioned a former schoolmate who developed white lung symptoms while recovering from a mild COVID infection.

“The doctor said it would have been dangerous had they waited a bit longer,” he told The Epoch Times.

Zhang, the Shanghai-based infectious disease expert, said the prime window for treating “serious pneumonia cases” is 72 hours. But for many, this is not possible due to the extreme difficulty in obtaining medical care. Hospitals and health clinics across China have been overwhelmed in



Patients at the Tongren Hospital in Shanghai on Jan. 3, 2023.

the past weeks since the surge in cases.

A white lung patient from Suzhou, a city near Shanghai, said he couldn't get a hospital placement after being diagnosed with double lung inflammation and viral pneumonia.

“There was no bed,” he told The Epoch Times.

A man from Wuhan, China's first virus hotspot in 2020, is sick with the virus, along with his wife and mother. His mother fared the worst and was barely eating. After a round of visits to major hospitals that are all packed with the infected, they got her into a small local hospital, where she was given anti-inflammatory drugs for two days.

“The examination shows that she has a lung infection. The doctor didn't say much, but my hunch is that it's also a ‘white lung,’” he told The Epoch Times on Dec. 30, 2022.

“Every day, there are deaths in my residential compound, nonstop,” he said, adding that most of them are seniors.

HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A health worker takes a swab sample from a woman to test for COVID-19 in the Jing'an district in Shanghai on Dec. 7, 2022.

Doctors look at a lung CT image at a hospital in Xiaogan city, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 20, 2020.



STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

The Undoing of the Unscientific Zero-COVID Policy in China

What motivated the CCP to implement draconian pandemic measures?

STU CVRK



Communist China has been reeling due to the relaxation of its three-year-long zero-COVID policy, with as many as 250 million infected Chinese last month. That number includes an incredible 37 million who were infected on Dec. 20 alone.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) implemented its zero-COVID policy in an attempt to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus in 2019, when it shocked the world by locking down the virus epicenter in Wuhan. The policy has evolved to include mass testing, quarantines of the sick in government facilities, and strict lockdowns wherever outbreaks are detected. In a highly unusual circumstance, the CCP has been forced to relax the protocols in response to mass protests across China.

It is entirely possible that the virus presented an existential threat to the CCP leadership.

While the focus remains on why the CCP completely reversed its draconian zero-COVID policy, the current rates of infection and deaths in China, the origins of the virus, and its potential linkage to biowarfare research, there remains the unanswered question of why the policy was adopted in the first place since it was antiscience in nature. It is virtually impossible to stop the human-to-human spread of the coronavirus for the reasons noted here:

- The coronavirus can be present in asymptomatic carriers who can transmit the disease to others.
- The coronavirus can infect many different kinds of animals that can pass the disease on to humans.
- There is no highly effective vaccine or antiviral treatment for coronavirus despite efforts by governments to obfuscate the failures of mRNA shots to provide the requisite protections and immunity.

If the premise is correct that zero COVID was anti-science, then that leaves other motivations, including political and geopolitical. Let us examine some of the possible reasons.

To Contain the Outbreak

Well, that didn't work, and we'll never know how many Chinese were infected and died over the past three years because the CCP suppressed the truth. Does anyone seriously believe the numbers reported to Worldometers, which tracks virus cases and deaths worldwide? The current Chinese numbers are 5,245 deaths in three years—an absurd number out of a population of 1.4 billion people!

Since the Chinese won't share information on the virus genome, we don't even know which variant(s) are in circulation in China. No wonder countries are requiring testing for any incoming Chinese visitors.

To Convince the World About China's Leadership

CCP leader Xi Jinping has implemented a campaign to show the world that the “Chinese way” is best. All topics are propagated “with Chinese characteristics” to reinforce and propagandize that claim.

Total control of information sources and media data about the virus makes it easier to convince the world that China's virus control measures actually work

(when no outsiders can prove otherwise). This also deflects pressure on the CCP for hiding information about the origin of the virus.

To Reassert Authoritarian Controls

The virus presented the CCP with a golden opportunity to reassert authoritarian controls over the population through the accelerated implementation of surveillance and social control methods throughout society. This has long been a goal of the communists—to monitor and control all the daily activities of the Chinese to thwart any dissent and to reward CCP-approved behavior.

To Hide China's Emerging Economic Chaos

The CCP probably determined that measures to combat the virus could be used to hide the emerging economic problems in the Chinese real estate market, the growing debt crisis, and the problems created by a declining birth rate. Some CCP cadres certainly understood that the zero-COVID policy would roil the Chinese economy because mass quarantines would interrupt supply chains and drag productivity down due to widespread absenteeism.

What better way to obfuscate those problems than to propagandize zero-COVID measures and claim they work for the rest of the world?

And other countries eagerly jumped on the zero-COVID bandwagon by implementing lockdowns and testing regimens.

To Attack the US

Whether the virus release in Wuhan was inadvertent or planned, the CCP aimed its propaganda directly at the United States to create maximum chaos in the American economy and society at large. The CCP understands that anything that disrupts America by causing divisiveness, economic turmoil, and outright fear advances its goal of supplanting the United States as the world's economic and geopolitical hegemon by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the communist Chinese regime.

Could This Be the Real Reason for Zero COVID?

The above are logical reasons for implementing China's zero COVID, and all or some could have played a part in the decision-making as the policy evolved and was implemented in China over the past three years. However, there may have been a hidden and self-serving reason that the CCP leadership supported the policy. And that was personal fear of catching the virus.

There have been reports over the years that many high-ranking CCP members and family members received organ transplants from the lucrative organ harvesting operations in China. China has long had an organ harvesting

industry that has been condemned worldwide (examples here and here).

Jiang Zemin accelerated the organ harvesting of Falun Gong adherents during his time as Chinese leader. Top CCP officials have long been rumored to extend their lives through organ transplants. Unsurprisingly, Jiang's son had three transplants.

Those organ recipients are very likely immuno-compromised due to anti-rejection drugs taken to enable the transplants, as noted in a recent video by Epoch TV's “Crossroads” program. The quarantines and personal isolation created by the zero-COVID policy precluded the development of natural immunities among the population (and within the leadership), which could explain the explosion of new cases in China as the policy has been relaxed in recent weeks.

The recent high incidence of deaths among the CCP members and “top experts” could be explained by the suppressed immune systems of those who received organ transplants, as noted in a video by Spotlight on China. Those people would be particularly susceptible to the SARS-CoV-2 variants that are currently spreading everywhere in China.

Concluding Thoughts

Did Xi Jinping blink when spontaneous riots erupted protesting his draconian COVID measures? Whatever the reason for the abrupt policy change that is opening up China, Western media are currently focused on the virus outbreaks and deaths.

An unanswered question is why the unscientific policy was implemented in the first place. There are several politically motivated possibilities that were summarized above. However, it is entirely possible that the virus presented an existential threat to the CCP leadership and elite themselves since a significant number of them and their families are immuno-compromised from the drug therapy associated with having received organ transplants.

Since those organs were probably harvested from unwilling donors per the current CCP policy on organ harvesting, this is indeed karma!

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

Stu Cvrk retired as a captain after serving 30 years in the U.S. Navy in a variety of active and reserve capacities, with considerable operational experience in the Middle East and the Western Pacific. Through education and experience as an oceanographer and systems analyst, Cvrk is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he received a classical liberal education that serves as the key foundation for his political commentary.

HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Health workers wait for people to scan a health code to test for the COVID-19 coronavirus in the Jing'an district in Shanghai on Dec. 22, 2022

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



FOOD SECURITY

American Officials Sound Alarm on China’s Purchases of US Farmland

TERRI WU

Sid Miller just won his third term as the Texas agricultural commissioner in November. One of his campaign priorities was to prevent communist China from buying agricultural land and gaining access to the state’s infrastructure.

“This is the stupidest thing we can do as a nation,” Miller told The Epoch Times, referring to what he intended to prevent. “Not only do we need to stop it here in Texas—I’m working with the state legislature—but we need federal oversight of this that needs to stop in every state.”

The issue first came to the commissioner’s attention two years ago when a retired Chinese military officer’s wind farm plan in south Texas became public knowledge. The proposal would have given the owner access to the state’s electricity grid. Miller first sounded the alarm about this issue with Epoch Times reporter Joe Gomez in November.

For the Blue Hills Wind Farm project, Chinese billionaire Sun Guangxin bought 140,000 acres in Del Rio. This included several ranches within 80 miles of the Laughlin Air Force Base and within some of the base’s pilot training zones.

Texas ranks number one in China’s agricultural land ownership, according to the state-by-state data shared by the Department of Agriculture (USDA)’s Farm Produc-

They use our legal system and everything else at their disposal, possibly with an end game to harm us. This needs to stop.

Sid Miller, Texas agriculture commissioner

tion and Conservation agency.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, China owned 325,686 acres of U.S. agricultural land, according to the USDA data. While the acreage under Chinese ownership is slightly less than one percent of all foreign-held agricultural land, it represents an exponential increase from 13,720 acres in 2010.

This rapid upward trend is alarming to Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.), a third-generation farmer.

“You also have to couple the acreage with the fact that the CCP’s stated goal is to remake the world according to their benefit. The trend is for them to continue buying our assets and it has to stop before it becomes an even bigger problem,” the congressman previously told Farm Journal.

Newhouse introduced a bill in May to prohibit foreign individuals or enterprises associated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from buying agricultural real estate in the United States.

Food Security as National Security

Home to nearly 20 percent of the global population, China has only seven to nine percent of the world’s productive farmland, according to a May report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (USCC), an influential congressional advisory body. Therefore, China has increased its acquisitions of foreign agricultural businesses and assets to address its need for food.

The report also warned that “China may have undue leverage over U.S. supply chains” if such a trend continues.

An example was the \$4.7 billion purchase of Smithfield Foods, Inc., the largest pork producer in the United States. In September 2013, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), a federal panel that reviews foreign acquisitions for national security risks, cleared the transaction, which was subsequently completed in the same year. As a part of the deal, the Chinese buyer WH Group (formerly Shuanghui Group) gained over 146,000 acres with hog farms and processing plants in North Carolina, Missouri, Utah, and Virginia.

Shuanghui’s chairman Wan Long was a member of the CCP’s National People’s Congress, the regime’s rubber-stamp legislature, for over 15 years, according to a 2013 Senate hearing testimony. PBS New-

shour reported that the state-owned Bank of China approved a \$4 billion loan in a single day for the Shuanghui acquisition.

The USCC report analyzed the benefit Shuanghui enjoyed from the purchase: a tap into Smithfield’s global brand, a good record on food safety, and advanced hog genetic technology.

These are types of access that Newhouse worries about.

“The Chinese Communist Party and the Government of the People’s Republic of China are not our allies, and the U.S. cannot become dependent on an adversary for our domestic agriculture and food supply,” Newhouse told The Epoch Times in an email.

“Food security is national security, and China’s efforts are a direct threat to both.”

Threat

Similar to the case of Shuanghui, the Chinese owner of the land in southern Texas, billionaire Sun Guangxin, a self-made businessman in the country’s far west Xinjiang region, is also closely aligned with the CCP.

“Over the past 30 years, the Guanghui Group has flourished on the wave of the reform and opening up policy. We have been and will continue to be driven by the principle of keeping the Party in mind and obeying the Party’s commands,” states Sun’s company on its English website.

The company also vows to follow “Xi Jinping Thought,” the personal dogma of the Chinese communist leader, and seize opportunities of the CCP’s Belt and Road Initiative, a trillion-dollar overseas infrastructure investment program. On its Chinese-language website, Guanghui pledged to contribute to the “China dream”—Xi’s call for the regime to become the world’s dominant power by 2049.

Miller shared the same view on the CCP with Newhouse: “We’ve got to treat them for what they are: the enemy.”

He pointed out that Americans couldn’t buy land in China. Chinese citizens aren’t even allowed private ownership of land in the country; Instead, they can only purchase the right to use the land, which is under state or collective ownership. The ultimate decider is the CCP.

“We need to do what I call a little cowboy logic. We could pass simple legislation and

say, ‘Look, if we can’t buy agricultural land in your country, you’re not allowed to buy land in our country,’” said Miller. “That would fix the problem. It’s just so simple.”

He is also alarmed that entities with ties to the CCP seem to purchase land close to military bases.

“They just bought some more land in North Dakota, again next to a military installation,” he added, referring to the 370 acres of farmland a Chinese company bought through its subsidiary, Fufeng USA, to build a corn milling plant in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The land is within 15 miles of the Grand Forks Air Force base, which houses sensitive drone, satellite, and surveillance technology. On Dec. 12, CFIUS determined that the land sale for the Fufeng project was “not a ‘covered transaction’” under the committee’s jurisdiction. In response, Fufeng USA said it was “pleased with the outcome of the CFIUS review.”

Foreign-owned land near military installations was flagged as a potential risk to U.S. defense infrastructures in the USCC report. The report also highlighted the unusually high percentage of Chinese entities’ acquisition of property categorized as “other land,” defined by the USDA as having unclassified uses such as marshes, swamps, and bare rock.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, other-use land—land not used for crops, livestock, or timber—accounted for about 77 percent of total Chinese ownership. In comparison, Canada owned over 9 million acres of U.S. agricultural land, and 1 percent was for other use, and Germany had 5 percent of “other land” out of over 1 million acres of U.S. agricultural land it owned, according to the USDA data.

The USCC report noted the risk in such characterization.

“The possibility remains that land usage could change after a foreign buyer’s purchase is cleared and the investor has completed the initial reporting requirements. USDA requires foreign buyers to report on any changes to land use, but the lack of enforcement makes this an area ripe for neglect,” it stated.

Miller said that the CCP was “very stealthy” about their purchase of U.S. agricultural land. “They use our legal system and everything else at their disposal, pos-

sibly with an end game to harm us. This needs to stop,” he added.

Texas has more farmland than any other state, at 126 million acres, according to a February USDA report. And the Lone Star State leads the nation in agricultural exports of cotton and cattle, USDA data shows.

Miller is not against trade. He visited China in 2015 with a USDA delegation. The purpose was to encourage China to resume buying beef from the United States, he said. Miller doesn’t have a problem selling agricultural products to China; he just doesn’t want China to grow crops or raise livestock in the country.

Last year, he worked with state legislators Rep. Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) and Sen. Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) on the Lone Star Infrastructure Protection Act (LIPA) that would ban Texas businesses and governments from doing business with foreign entities from China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran if these transactions would provide the enterprises with remote access to or control of critical infrastructure. The bill was passed, and the law became effective in June 2021.

[T]he U.S. cannot become dependent on an adversary for our domestic agriculture and food supply.

Dan Newhouse, U.S. congressman (R-Wash.)

The law appears to have thwarted Sun’s wind farm project. The Blue Hills Wind project under GH America Energy, owned by Sun, became officially inactive in August, according to the records of the Texas grid operator Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). In October, ERCOT notified GH America Energy of the cancellation of the Blue Star Solar project to ensure compliance with the new law.

But the firm’s Blue Valley Solar project run by local contractor Blue Valley Solar LLC is still ongoing, with an estimated completion date in December 2025. A Spanish company has acquired ownership of the project and plans to begin construction in the second half of 2023. The Epoch Times has reached out to GH America Energy for comment.

In the coming year, Miller wants to work with the same partners to pass legislation to stop communist China from buying any agricultural land in Texas.

States Take Action

More states have taken action to address risks posed by the Chinese regime’s ownership of farmland and agricultural assets.

On Dec. 13, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem announced new proposed legislation to restrict farmland purchases by foreign countries, namely China. The state currently caps foreign ownership of agricultural land at 160 acres.

In addition, Noem and state legislators planned to create a new board, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States—South Dakota, to review proposed agricultural land purchases by foreign entities. The panel, consisting of three ex officio members and two experts in the agricultural industry and national security, would recommend either approving or denying land sales.

“We cannot allow the Chinese Commu-



A sign opposing a corn mill in Grand Forks, N.D., stands near 370 acres recently annexed by the city for the project. Many residents don’t want the project in the city because the owner, Fufeng Group, has reputed ties to the Chinese Communist Party through its company chairman.

nist Party to continue to buy up our nation’s food supply, so South Dakota will lead the charge on this vital national security issue,” Noem said in a statement.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has also proposed legislative action to “prohibit purchases of agricultural land and land surrounding military bases by foreign countries of concern,” including China, his press secretary Bryan Griffin told The Epoch Times. The Sunshine State’s legislative session begins in March 2023. Florida’s new Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson in December expressed a similar interest.

In an August report, the conservative think tank Heritage Foundation urged more states to take action: “The fastest route to action is at the state level. States are closest to the problem. Therefore, state and local action on China is essential.”

Research indicates that more could be done.

According to the University of Arkansas’s National Agricultural Law Center (NALC), 28 states, including Texas and Florida, don’t have any restrictions on foreign ownership of agricultural land.

NALC research also shows that no U.S. state has an absolute ban on foreign ownership of agricultural land. About 14 states “specifically forbid or limit nonresident aliens, foreign businesses and corpora-

tions, and foreign governments from acquiring or owning an interest in agricultural land within their state,” and some states require foreign land ownership reporting, similar to the federal reporting law under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA), the NALC stated.

AFIDA stipulates that the penalty for failing to report foreign land ownership goes up to a quarter of the property’s market value. In reality, USDA often reduces the penalty amount significantly for fear of disincentivizing filing. For example, the fine for failing to report the land purchase associated with the Blue Hills Wind Farm project in Texas decreased from \$21 million to \$120,000.

Congressional Considerations

Miller said he would work with legislators at the federal level to escalate this matter of critical national security, although he thought the state legislature could resolve the issue faster.

The Farm Bill, a package of legislation addressing agricultural and food policies

passed roughly once every five years, could take up next year. Former President Donald Trump signed the previous one into law in 2018.

Meanwhile, quite a few federal lawmakers introduced bills this and last year tackling this issue. These bills addressed various aspects of economic and national security concerns, including recognizing agriculture as critical infrastructure, giving USDA regular representation on CFIUS, adding an intelligence unit within USDA, and banning Chinese entities from buying U.S. agricultural real estate.

Although all these bills will have to be re-introduced in the next Congress, the main sponsors are determined.

“The United States cannot allow malign ownership bids of American assets by China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea to undermine the efforts of our farmers, whose hard work feeds and fuels our communities,” Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), who introduced the Promoting Agriculture Safeguards and Security (PASS) Act in the summer, told The Epoch Times in an email.

“Especially as we witness the devastating impact of a supply chain crisis, the United States cannot cede any ownership of our food supply to those who do not share our security interests.”

The PASS Act bans China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea from buying U.S. agriculture companies, adds agriculture as part of the nation’s critical infrastructure, and makes the secretary of agriculture a standing CFIUS member.

The bill is one of the many attempts to give the USDA a seat on CFIUS and require agriculture to be considered a matter of national security. For example, a bipartisan Senate bill that proposed similar measures—“Food Security is National Security Act of 2017”—didn’t pass the banking committee in 2017.

Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.), one of the original sponsors of the PASS Act, also introduced the Agricultural Intelligence Measures Act (AIM Act) in 2021. The AIM Act proposed a new Office of Intelligence in USDA to share information with the intelligence community.

Crawford called the “increase of Chinese purchases of U.S. farmland” a “great concern.”

“Our nation must take a more proactive approach at protecting our food supply and those who produce it,” the lawmaker said.

PHILIPPE LOPEZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



(L to R) Executive director and chairman of WH Group, Wan Long, Executive director and president of Smithfield, Larry Pope, and Smithfield chief financial officer, Kenneth Sullivan attend a press conference in Hong Kong on April 14, 2014.

SUZANNE CORDEIRO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Sid Miller speaks during a Texas Republican Party election night rally in Austin, Texas, on Nov. 8, 2022.



Chinese 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.

OPINION

4 Steps the US Can Take to Win the Competition With China

ZHANG TIANLIANG

President Joe Biden signed the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act on Dec. 29, 2022, approving \$1.7 trillion in federal spending into law. Not many people are discussing an important section of the intelligence bill, which “requires reporting on the wealth and corrupt activities of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).”

This is a significant move and the first time the United States has investigated the corruption of CCP officials through legislation. To this day, almost none of the CCP officials joined the CCP or became government officials out of their belief in communism but did so because the CCP's unsupervised system gave them the possibility of unbridled corruption. In other words, the ability to reap personal benefits is the only reason they defend the CCP regime. If the United States were to investigate the corruption of top CCP officials and impose future penalties, this would compromise their loyalty to the corrupt regime.

In September 2021, a friend picked me up from the San Francisco airport, and on the way to a forum, she told me that she was worried that the CCP would attack Taiwan. As I've explained in my previous articles, I don't believe it will happen. But there was no time to give a lengthy analysis in the car, so I told her to pay attention to one thing. We should see a mass exodus of corrupt CCP officials' money and assets from the United States before a war breaks out, and the families of these CCP officials will also leave the United States quickly, because once the CCP invades Taiwan, Washington will inevitably sanction the officials and freeze their assets.

I told her, “If this doesn't happen, you can rest assured that an armed reunification with Taiwan won't occur.”

It isn't unprecedented for the United States to freeze the assets of CCP officials. In September 2018, Washington sanctioned the General Armaments Department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and its minister, Lt. Gen. Li Shangfu. Under the U.S. ban, Li couldn't obtain a U.S. visa, all his assets and interests in the United States were frozen, and U.S. companies and individuals weren't allowed to conduct

transactions with him. Washington was able to quickly get a hold of the assets that Li and his wife owned in the United States.

In the competition between the United States and the CCP, the United States has an overwhelming economic, technological, and moral advantage. On my YouTube channel on June 2, 2019, I suggested four steps that the United States can take to defeat the CCP.

Freeze CCP Officials' Assets

Washington should investigate, publicize, and freeze the assets of corrupt CCP officials in the United States. Then the United States can tell the Chinese people that these illegally acquired assets would be used to reconstruct China after it becomes a free society. In addition to weakening the loyalty of these corrupt officials to the CCP, the Party wouldn't be able to use the freezing of assets in the United States to incite the Chinese to hate the United States because, after all, the money was taken from the people and could be returned to them in the future. It would also make the Chinese realize that corrupt officials aren't one of them.

In addition to the Omnibus Spending Bill 2023, which Biden signed into law, the United States and its allies could cooperate further to investigate and freeze CCP officials' overseas assets through the Global Magnitsky Act.

Take Down China's Cyber Firewall

Beijing relies on censoring information to brainwash the Chinese people. Most popular search engines, social media, and media outlet websites, such as Google, YouTube, Facebook, and so forth, are all inaccessible in China. When the Chinese people discover the crimes committed by the CCP, they'll be determined to end totalitarianism and move toward freedom.

A free China can't invade Taiwan. The United States may have spent hundreds of billions of dollars in military spending to deter the CCP from invading Taiwan. Still, the United States can turn China into a free society by spending only a few hundred million dollars to tear down the CCP's “Information Berlin Wall.”

The CCP closely monitors the Chinese people's every word and action because it fears that they'll rise up and fight for their freedom. All encrypted instant

messaging software, such as Signal and Telegram, are blocked. So the Chinese people can't coordinate on a large scale to form a sizable protest. But once the firewall is torn down, the Chinese can use overseas social media to exchange messages and ideas and hold virtual assemblies. This is an essential piece of the puzzle for the Chinese to be able to mount a major protest.

Impose High-Tech Embargo

Big data, artificial intelligence, and facial recognition put the Chinese people in cyber prison. High-tech embargoes can free them from the CCP's ubiquitous surveillance and cripple its ability to control the population.

Trade Must Be Linked to Human Rights

The United States can advance human rights through trade. If the United States can play the human rights card in a trade war, it stands on the moral high ground. And the Chinese people, who are heavily influenced by communism, will gradually realize that human rights are essential for maintaining a civil society. In other words, the trade war is beneficial not only to the Americans but also to the Chinese. The trade war shouldn't be aimed at China but at the CCP. This can actually defuse the nationalism incited by the CCP in the trade war.

Sun Tzu said: “For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

I'm glad to see that the first and third measures are being realized after I proposed these four suggestions three years ago. We can do more by implementing all four steps and hoping that we can win the competition without fighting.

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

Dr. Zhang Tianliang is a professor at Fei Tian College and the librettist for Shen Yun Performing Arts operas. He is a prolific writer, historian, film producer, screenwriter, and thinker. He co-authored several books on communism that have been translated into over 20 languages. He is the founder of NPO Tianliang Alliance.

OPINION

Land of the Rising Nukes?

Japan transforms its defense strategy as US-led world order shatters

JAMES GORRIE



The U.S.-based security alliance in the Asia-Pacific region as we know it is all but dead.

For the first time since the end of World War II, Japan has announced that it will double its defense spending. Over the next five years, its defense budget will increase from about 1 percent to 2 percent of GDP per year, or from about \$50 billion to \$100 billion per year. This will make Japan the third largest defense budget in the world, after the United States and China.

There are several reasons behind this drastic departure from Japan's defense posture and several implications that attach to it.

A Shift in Defense Sharing

First, Tokyo has determined that the world has reached a turning point in history. Communist China is now its biggest threat. Beijing has a blue water navy that's now numerically larger than the U.S. Navy, continually threatens Taiwan and Australia, and has made new alliances with traditional Western allies, such as the Solomon Islands.

On a related front, China's deepened alliance with Russia and its support of nuclear-armed North Korea both pose elevated security risks. Japan now faces threats from all three aggressive nations and the worst security environment since World War II.

Second, Japan has explicitly linked its security to that of Taiwan. To support that recently announced strategic object requires deploying military assets that go beyond defending Japan's home islands. More on that in a bit.

Third, Japan's leaders have rightly determined that the U.S. security umbrella is becoming less reliable as China's military power grows, the United States gets more deeply involved in Ukraine, and war clouds gather over the Asia-Pacific region. Plus, in the wake of the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal, U.S. political will and strategic reliability are less certain than before in the minds of U.S. allies.

Fourth, both the war in Ukraine and Beijing's vow to take control of Taiwan underscore that war is possible in the Asia-Pacific region, perhaps and even probable. Ukraine's lack of military readiness and strategic weapons prior to Russia's invasion is certainly not lost on Japanese military planners.

Japan's New Defense Plans

Japan's new security plans include enhancing its coastguard and maritime forces, as well as developing greater cyber and space capabilities, unmanned systems, and integrated missile defenses. They will also be increasing munition supplies and hardening infrastructure to increase resilience.

But that's not all. In addition to purely defensive actions, Japan will also develop counterstrike capabilities. Those capabilities could include long-range precision-guided cruise missiles capable



The 5th and 8th Air Wings of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's F-15 and F-2 fighters hold a joint military drill with U.S. Marine Aircraft Group 12's F-35B fighters off Japan's southernmost main island of Kyushu in this handout picture released Oct. 4, 2022.

of hitting enemy bases in North Korea and China. This is a huge upgrade in defensive capabilities, indicative of new perspectives of Japan's military planners.

Whether spoken aloud or not, if Japan is to truly take responsibility for its own security, then its military capabilities will have to go even further.

In light of the rising tensions, there will also be a shift toward closer Japanese defense and intelligence cooperation with regional allies, such as South Korea and Australia, with the participation and blessing of the United States. Again, as Ukraine demonstrates, close coordination is critical in providing effective responses in a fast-moving conflict.

But as the war in Ukraine aptly shows, counterstrike capability doesn't prevent war; it only escalates it. Deterrence is the key to protecting against invasion by another nation.

Deterring War With Nukes

Therefore, the ultimate deterrence would have to be the possession of precision-guided nuclear ballistic missiles, preferably hypersonic, to avoid anti-missile defense systems.

The idea of a nuclear-armed Japan goes back to the 1960s. As recent as 2009, planners feared that a nuclear-armed Japan would cause an arms race among other Asian nations, such as India and

A Japan Self-Defense Forces Type-74 tank fires ammunition during a live fire exercise at the JSDF's training grounds in the East Fuji Maneuver area in Gotemba, Japan, on May 22, 2021.



AKIO KON/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

North Korea, but the region is well past that point.

However, this potential nuclear option has yet to be widely discussed. The ongoing dialogue between the United States and Japan has mainly been around evolving the joint security posture from one of dependence to mutual engagement. Tokyo's enhanced engagement would likely include Japan building up its own defense industry to make them more competitive internationally, including a modern fighter aircraft industry in possible collaboration with the United Kingdom and Italy.

Japan Is Quite Capable of Going Nuclear

Japanese military planners are not only considering the nuclear option, but it is well-prepared, both technologically and in terms of its supply of fissile material. Japan certainly has the know-how and industrial infrastructure to develop its own delivery systems, but it also owns enough plutonium to produce up to 6,000 nuclear warheads. Only Russia and the United States own more weapons-grade plutonium than Japan.

Of course, there are deep historical, political, environmental, and cultural issues surrounding the question of Japan developing nuclear weapons that are too diverse to go into here. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Fukushima are huge factors in Japan's cultural identity.

However, the overriding fact is that Japan sees the world order rapidly changing and, with it, the deterioration of its security. Japan counts at least three nuclear-armed adversaries, with two of them, North Korea and China, repeatedly violating its air and sea spaces with missiles and naval vessels.

As Tokyo's confidence in U.S. security guarantees diminishes and Russia threatens the use of nukes in its war with Ukraine, Tokyo is forced to reevaluate its security situation going forward and its defense options to meet them. Consequently, nuclear deterrence is now at the center of Japan's security planning going forward.

Who can blame the Japanese?

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

James R. Gorrie is the author of “The China Crisis” (Wiley, 2013) and writes on his blog, TheBananaRepublican.com. He is based in Southern California.

THE
EPOCH
TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION

A NEWSPAPER THE FOUNDING FATHERS WOULD READ

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

ReadEpoch.com



[The Epoch Times is] a great paper beyond current events—the arts [section] is awesome (and my favorite). I read mine and leave it at the coffee house or other places for others to enjoy. **When I share it, people love it.**
— DONNA LEE NYZIO

7 Ways to Share The Epoch Times With Your Friends and Family



Like us, you’re probably a fan of fact-based journalism that lets you make up your own mind. If you think we do a good job, please help spread the word to the Americans who still remember a time when newspapers were just about the facts. Your words and actions may be just what they’ve been waiting for.

- 1

PASS ON THE EPOCH TIMES
Done with your weekly paper? Pass it along to a friend, family member, neighbor, or coworker who could use honest news.
- 2

LEAVE BEHIND THE EPOCH TIMES
Leave your copy of The Epoch Times in a coffee shop, waiting room, barbershop, or any other place with reading material after you’re done with it.
- 3

TALK ABOUT THE EPOCH TIMES
Tell your friends and family about The Epoch Times—in a time when many people don’t know what to trust anymore, a recommendation from someone they trust can go a long way.
- 4

REPRESENT* THE EPOCH TIMES
Our posters and bumper stickers are available for purchase at **EpochShop.com**, so you can be loud and proud about your support for Truth and Tradition.

- 5

FORWARD THE EPOCH TIMES
Did you know that all articles in our Morning Brief email can be read by non-subscribers too? It’s our way of making sure crucial information gets to the public, whether they’re a subscriber or not. Forwarding our Morning Brief ** email can help reach people who have to “see it to believe it.” You can also share our posts on Facebook and YouTube with your social network to spread the word, when possible.
- 6

GIVE THE EPOCH TIMES
Epoch Times gift subscriptions are a thoughtful present for the man or woman who has everything but a reliable source of information.
ReadEpoch.com/gift
- 7

REQUEST THE EPOCH TIMES
For those folks who need to try before they buy (or those who just like newspaper smell), we’ve got you covered. Give us the name and shipping address of your friends or family members, and we’ll mail a sample copy to their doorstep at no cost to you or them.

* (1) Please log into your account at TheEpochTimes.com (2) Click your name to manage your account (3) Click “Request Free Papers” on the left menu bar and follow steps
** Your friends and family can read the articles in MORNING BRIEF for FREE. They may meet different paywalls if they read other articles, which are not listed in MORNING BRIEF.

Not a subscriber yet? Visit ReadEpoch.com to learn more.

