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CHINA INSIDER

A person in a white protective suit and mask is using a smartphone in a public space, likely an airport or train station. The person is standing next to a purple suitcase with a white bag on top. In the background, other people are visible, some wearing masks. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor public area.

**CHINA FACES
NEW COVID
WAVE**

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Lydia Wang, a panelist, speaks at a briefing on the persecution of Falun Gong, on Capitol Hill in Washington on May 23, 2023.



You Zhou speaks at a briefing on the persecution of Falun Gong, in Washington on May 23, 2023.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

CCP's 'Deplorable' Persecution of Falun Gong Under Spotlight at Congress Briefing

By Eva Fu

Ten years ago, Zhou Deyong was trying to rescue his wife who was jailed by Chinese authorities over her faith. Now, his wife and son are doing the same for him.

Every day, You Ling shows up at the Chinese Consulate in New York holding a sign calling for her husband's release. The 62-year-old geological engineer was recently sentenced to eight years in prison for practicing Falun Gong, a meditation discipline that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has brutally suppressed since 1999.

The couple's son, Florida resident Zhou You, recounted the family's story of persecution at a congressional briefing hosted by the International Religious Freedom Caucus on May 23.

"My grandfather died last year. I couldn't go to the funeral, because if I return to China, I will be in jail," Zhou You said at the event, which was hosted by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), chairman of the Inter-

national Religious Freedom Caucus. "My father couldn't make it, because he was already in jail."

Zhou You was one of three people who shared their stories of loss and separation under the Chinese regime's 24-year-long campaign that has resulted in millions of Falun Gong practitioners being detained in prisons, black jails, and other facilities.

The spiritual practice, which involves a set of meditative exercises and moral teachings centered on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, surged in popularity in the 1990s, leading to an estimated 100 million practitioners in China. The communist regime perceived that as a threat to its grip on power, and unleashed a sweeping persecution campaign that continues today.

"Falun Gong practitioners suffer from persecution, intimidation, censorship, imprisonment, forced labor, torture, organ harvesting, and even death at the hands of the CCP solely because of adherence to their religious beliefs," said Bilirakis, call-

ing the repression campaign "deplorable." "This is not something that just affects people in China," he said, noting the stories presented at the panel. "This is something that has a direct impact; it has a direct impact on the U.S. citizens and people living in the United States of America."

A Broken Family

As Lydia Wang, another panelist, prepared her speech over the weekend, she stared at a 1996 photo of herself alongside her parents and three siblings in China. Her family hasn't been able to take another photo together since.

It was hard for Wang to recollect those painful memories; she was still in high school when the persecution started. She says she does remember that police broke into their home around 2000 and made a mess of everything before forcibly taking away her father in front of his four crying children.

The police didn't hesitate to use force as the children watched; they beat Wang's

father so brutally that he lost consciousness, she recalled.

"Anything that had some value, they took it away," Wang, now living in New York, told The Epoch Times.

That was one of the many arrests and incidents of police harassment that the family would be subjected to over the years.

Wang recalled visiting her jailed father about two years after his second arrest. He was only allowed to meet with her and her sister from behind soundproof glass and had to write on a chalkboard to communicate.

He told them his situation wasn't good. The guards directed prisoners to beat him, he told them.

"Why is your mom not here?" Wang remembers her father asking. He wanted Wang's mother to tell the guards that he was wronged and get him freed, she said.

Wang and her elder sister just kept crying. "We didn't know what to do, because our mom had been arrested as well," she said.

After his fourth imprisonment in February 2003, Wang's father was emaciated and

My grandfather died last year. I couldn't go to the funeral, because if I return to China, I will be in jail.

Zhou You, Chinese dissident and Florida resident



Nina Shea, a senior fellow at Hudson Institute, speaks at a briefing on the persecution of Falun Gong, in Washington on May 23, 2023.

suffering from diabetes and kidney failure.

Finally, a prison doctor warned the guards that if they didn't release Wang's father immediately, he'd be dead by the next day, Wang said.

After returning home, her father wouldn't talk much about what he had been through. But the physical effects were obvious. He had so much pain from bruises and other injuries all over his body that he had trouble falling asleep. His leg was so swollen that a pit would appear if it was lightly pressed, Wang said.

Wang's father died in 2009 from afflictions that he never quite recovered from. Meanwhile, police continued to target the rest of the family, arresting Wang's mother 11 times in an attempt to coerce her to renounce her faith.

One of the arrests took place shortly after Wang escaped to the United States in 2012 in a bid to keep her second child, which authorities wanted her to abort in line with Beijing's stringent one-child policy.

In March this year, Wang's mother was sentenced to four years in prison after more than a half-year of detention without trial. Wang's second child, now 11, has never met her grandmother in China.

'World's Most Unrecognized' Persecution

Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute and former commissioner at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, described the Chinese regime's repression of Falun Gong as "one of the world's most unrecognized and serious episodes of religious persecution and possible genocide in the world today."

In addition to an expansive domestic

campaign targeting the faith group, including the killing of detained practitioners for their organs, the regime has sent agents overseas to aid in the repression.

Shea cited a recent Department of Justice indictment of two New York men allegedly running a secret police station on Beijing's behalf. The word Falun Gong appeared 13 times in the indictment.

"It's part of the CCP's obsessive worldwide crackdown on Falun Gong," she said at the briefing.

Wang remains separated from her eldest daughter, who's still in China. Wang was forced to divorce her husband due to the persecution, and her elder daughter lives with her paternal grandparents.

"During this persecution, one daughter lost her mother, the other lost her father," she said.

Wang's relatives in China have tried repeatedly to see her mother in prison without success.

She implored the Florida congressman and others at the event to help raise her mother's case so that Liu can be released and reunited with her in New York.

Zhou You noted that his father has lost almost all his teeth in prison.

"He can't eat meat, vegetables, or even rice because he can't bite. The only thing he can eat is buns soaked in soup," he said.

Bilirakis, a sponsor of the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act, which was approved by the House in March, said that he wants to see Congress do more to bring such abuses to an end.

"We must do more," he said. "No person should ever be intimidated, forced from their ancestral homeland, imprisoned, or murdered simply because of their beliefs. We've just begun to fight."

China Facing New Wave of COVID-19 Infections

By Alex Wu

A new wave of COVID-19 infections in China is likely to peak in late June, when weekly cases could reach 65 million, the Chinese communist regime's top health adviser has warned.

Chinese citizens have responded on social media that the wave of infection is already swelling.

Zhong Nanshan, China's top respiratory disease specialist, made the prediction on the account of the ruling Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) official media China News Agency. It was posted on the Chinese social media platform Weibo on May 22.

One Omicron-infected patient can infect more than 30 people, and the infection is difficult to prevent, Zhong said. The focus of COVID-19 prevention and control for the next wave should be on preventing severe symptoms, the doctor said.

There was a small peak in infections at the end of April and early May, and judging from various sources, "this is what we expected," Zhong said.

The Epoch Times reported in late April that a large number of Chinese citizens posted on social media platforms about COVID-19 reinfections. However, the regime's mouthpiece media outlet quickly denied that China was experiencing another outbreak.

Most COVID-19 infections in mainland China are currently caused by the XBB series mutant strains of Omicron. Chen Cao, a researcher at the Institute of Viral

Most COVID-19 infections in mainland China are currently caused by the XBB series mutant strains of Omicron.

Diseases of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, recently told the media that in the first 10 days of May, the XBB series mutant strains accounted for 95.6 percent of imported cases.

Among the locally transmitted cases, the percentage of XBB series variants has increased to 83.6 percent in early May from 0.2 percent in February. The combined percentage of BA.5.2, BF.7, and BA.2 series variants infections was about 16.4 percent in early May.

Chen stated that compared to the early

Omicron mutant strains, the XBB strains are more transmissible and have greater immune evasion properties.

New Wave Has Already Begun

Zhong's most recent prediction caused a stir on Chinese social media. Netizens have responded that they are experiencing a wave of COVID-19.

"My brother-in-law said that their company has a total of seven floors of offices, and there is no one on one of the floors who went to work last week," Frosty



A patient on oxygen is wheeled into a busy emergency room at a hospital in Beijing on Jan. 2, 2023.

White Rice," a social media novelist and influencer, said on Weibo. "All of them tested positive for COVID-19, most of them are reinfections. Two of my aunts are reinfected as well."

Other netizens also confirmed the new COVID-19 outbreak.

"Recently, our company has begun to have a wave of COVID-19 reinfection," one post read.

Another said in a post, "All the doctors and nurses in the department were already reinfected with COVID-19, and have just recovered from the reinfection."

The symptoms of this new round of infections are severe for some people, some netizens have stated.

"I am in great pain now," one patient posted. "I had a high fever of 40 (Celsius) degrees (104F) for two days, and now I'm still having a low fever. My whole body is sore and weak. There isn't any way to relieve the pain and soreness."

Mr. Wang, a resident of Pudong in Shanghai, told The Epoch Times that he tested negative on May 21 but is now experiencing a sore throat and feeling unwell.

"I might be infected again, or already was. My wife tested positive yesterday and she has been having symptoms for more than a week. The leader of the company she works for still asked her to come to work and wear a mask."

He added, "Many people in our office have tested positive, and they have gone home to rest for two days. If I tested posi-

tive, I am still going to work because we are not getting paid if we rest due to COVID-19 infection."

He said that 20 percent of the population was said to have been infected but there haven't been any official reports.

Mr. Zhao, another Shanghai citizen, says two family members of his who had never been infected before have now tested positive.

"They went to the hospital for treatment, but not effective," he told The Epoch Times on May 22. "I also have symptoms. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is resurging."

Zhao said he was also infected with COVID-19 in late April, when he went to Beijing to petition against the local government. He returned to Shanghai on April 28.

"Our group of petitioners from Shanghai all tested positive for COVID-19 after we came back. We had been infected in Beijing and feeling sick there. The symptoms were very serious. I felt the pain caused by sore throat like being cut by a knife."

"I was bedridden with fever. It's no use to take the regular medicines for this."

Zhang Wenhong, China's top virologist and director of China's National Center for Infectious Diseases, also warned in late April at a conference that COVID-19 infections would reoccur after six months, when immunity gained from prior infections has worn out.

Xia Song and Luo Ya contributed to this report.

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OPINION

China's Expanding Web of Overseas Bases

By Richard A. Bitzinger



In the early 2010s, China started building a constellation of artificial islands in the Spratly Islands. At the time, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership promised not to militarize these islands.

That turned out to be a lie, and several islands were subsequently constructed with airstrips and harbors capable of accepting military aircraft and warships. In addition, these islands have been furnished with radar stations, anti-aircraft guns, anti-ship cruise missiles, and long-range surface-to-air missiles.

The Spratlys are a chain of mostly coral reefs in the eastern South China Sea that barely break the ocean's surface. Still, they are adjacent to major sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) and to potentially lucrative maritime natural resources, such as fisheries and oil and gas deposits.

The CCP has moved on to its next big lie. For decades, it used to espouse a "non-interventionist" foreign policy that, among other things, opposed the idea of overseas naval or military bases. This stance was mostly used to criticize countries like the United States, which has hundreds of such bases and sites worldwide.

We now know, from the leaked "Discord" papers, that China is planning to build a web of bases and logistics sites stretching from the South China Sea through the Indian Ocean and to the eastern Atlantic. This is all part of something called Project 141, a scheme to establish a minimum of five overseas bases and 10 logistical support centers by 2030.

According to this plan, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) wants to create a worldwide network of military outposts in Equatorial Guinea, Djibouti, the United Arab Republic (UAE), Cambodia, and Mozambique. According to the Discord leaks, two of these outposts are currently under construction—one is operational, and the remaining two are awaiting approval.

The first of these operational bases is in Djibouti, a small country in the Horn of Africa situated at the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Djibouti is strategically located near some of the world's busiest shipping lanes, controlling access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. It also serves as



A Chinese warship in the port of Djibouti on Feb 6, 2016.

a key refueling and transshipment center and is the principal maritime port for imports from and exports to neighboring Ethiopia.

China began building its military facility there in 2016, for which it is paying the government of Djibouti \$20 million a year. This base, which the PLA calls a "logistical support facility," contains a 1,120-foot-long pier (big enough for China's aircraft carriers) and is home to around 1,000 to 2,000 military personnel.

China is expanding its presence and operations in Djibouti. It is nearing completion of an antenna operations building for SATCOM and SIGINT collection over Africa, Europe, Middle East. In January, China and Djibouti signed an agreement to establish Africa's first spaceport.

China is also secretly building an "independent facility" located at the Ream Naval Base in Cambodia, whose existence was discovered through satellite surveillance. Construction includes two new piers and several new buildings. This part of the naval base will be under direct Chinese control.

China is looking at other countries in Africa for new basing opportunities, including Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Tanzania. According to the Discord leaks, the U.S. intelligence community is increasingly concerned that China intends to establish a naval base at Bata, Equatorial Guinea, along Africa's

west coast. Bata already possesses a deepwater port constructed by a Chinese company. If true, then the PLA Navy could have its first permanent military presence on the Atlantic Ocean, giving Chinese warships direct access to the United States' eastern seaboard.

CCP representatives have also supposedly visited Equatorial Guinea and Gabon to discuss the construction of a joint training center. China is also reportedly trying to conclude a "status of forces" agreement with Mozambique to construct a military base there. Meanwhile, Beijing is shoring up its relations with Nigeria through various arms sales, including armed drones and JF-17 fighter jets.

China has been particularly aggressive in seeking out new basing opportunities on the Indian Ocean littoral. The CCP has built deepwater ports in Pakistan (Gwadar and Karachi), Sri Lanka (Colombo and Hambantota), and Burma/Myanmar (Sittwe).

More alarmingly, China is working closely with the UAE—a key U.S. security partner in the Gulf—to establish a PLA base and logistics storage site at Khalifa Industrial Zone in Abu Dhabi. Beijing has invested around \$1 billion in developing this port, and several Chinese companies are involved in its construction and operations.

According to a recent report by the U.S. government, China has already been using Khalifa Port as a base for

its military and naval operations. The report claims that China uses the port as a hub for military personnel, equipment, and supplies. Moreover, the PLA has built a military compound at the port, which includes barracks, offices, and storage facilities, all surrounded by a perimeter fence.

With this expanding web of global military bases and access centers, the CCP has changed its tune regarding the legality and legitimacy of overseas facilities. According to a 2019 article by Xue Guifang and Zheng Jie, China now needs overseas military bases to "protect its expanding overseas interests and better fulfill international responsibilities." Furthermore, they argue, "China's overseas military bases will mainly serve peaceful purposes."

As such, China does not call its Djibouti establishment a "naval base." Instead, it is a "logistical support facility... not responsible for combat operations." The authors insist that the Chinese facilities at Djibouti do not constitute a military base because "they have not lived up to military standards in terms of size and functions, such as housing naval vessels." (Of course, given the construction of the new 1,000-plus-foot-long pier at this facility, this argument can no longer be made.)

Beijing has "suddenly" discovered the "peaceful" use of overseas bases. China's growing global military footprint initially may have resulted from its expanding international economic and commercial interests ("the fleet follows the flag"). Increasingly, however, geostrategic and great-power aspirations are outstripping economics. Like the United States, China wants to be a global superpower with a world-girdling presence, and these ambitions are driving its new globalized basing schemes.

In such cases, economics will not so much lead as reinforce China's military globalization efforts.

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

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OPINION

China's 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization' for the Moon

By Rick Fisher



A deepening cold war divide between China and the United States is about to be officially extended to the moon by China's creation of a formal organization that will help extend the hegemony of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from the Earth to the Earth-moon system.

The impending formation of the International Lunar Research Station Cooperation Organization (ILRSCO), as part of the 2001 China-Russia International Lunar Research Station (ILRS), was announced on April 25 at the Deep Space Exploration Conference in Hefei, China.

China intends to compete with and outmaneuver the United States' 24-member Artemis Accords, which is just an agreement on principles for behavior on the moon.

The distinction is crucial as the Artemis Accords do not include the formation of a formal organization.

But as a formal organization, ILRSCO will have a leader—most certainly China. It will also have a bureaucracy—again, most likely in China.

Furthermore, through agreements on principles and then planning led by China, it will implement dual-use scientific and commercial activities on the moon, largely funded by China but approved by ILRSCO members.

The April 25 announcement was made by Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's Lunar Exploration Program and director of the China Deep Space Exploration Laboratory (DSEL) in Hefei.

Wu told Chinese state television that day: "We hope it [ILRSCO] can become a major scientific program that links multiple countries, international organizations, institutions, and scientists together. China is committed to making greater contributions to humanity; this is our main starting point."

However, humanity usually does not benefit when China's communist regime creates and then leads broad international organizations.

The regime often restricts the membership of its organizations to other authoritarian nations or those that can be expected to oppose or show independence from the United States, and then stacks these organizations with anti-democratic preferences and agendas.

Coalitions and organizations created and led by China also tend to produce military cooperation that benefits the security interests of their authoritarian members and detracts from that of the democracies.

The premier example is the 2001 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), whose formation was led by China and Russia.

Today it has a Chinese secretary general as its leader; it began with six members, including Russia and China, and now has nine members, with 17 countries in the membership process.

The chief products of the SCO are its annual "Peace Mission" military exercises that, for nearly 20 years, have enabled China and Russia to increase joint force military cooperation and its repeated admonitions against "color revolutions" or democratic revolutions.

The South China Morning Post (SCMP) on April 25 reported that Wu said the ILRS "has signed cooperation agreements or letters of intent with a number of countries and international

bodies, including Russia, Argentina, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, and the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization."

During the Hefei conference, a joint declaration regarding future ILRS cooperation was signed by the China National Space Agency (CNSA) and the China-led Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO).

Formed in 2008, APSCO's members are China, Bangladesh, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, and Thailand.

SCMP also reported on Wu, noting, "CNSA is also negotiating with 10 other countries as potential participants."

Currently, the China-led ILRS envisions five stages between 2030 and 2050 to build increasingly sophisticated unmanned moon bases for scientific exploration, research, and commercial exploitation.

China can be expected to begin manned moon missions before 2030, and, likely, these will quickly become part of the ILRS program.

Into the 2030s, China's manned missions will likely include astronauts from ILRSCO member states as manned moon base construction advances.

ILRSCO organized "Peace Mission" joint military exercises on the moon may seem farfetched, though that possibility should not be dismissed.

China's manned and unmanned space programs are controlled by the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Chinese academics have written about using the moon as a platform to surveil the Earth and the cis-lunar space between the Earth and the moon, with implications for seeking military dominance.

China plans its own satellite constellation for the moon that will provide navigation, surveillance, and potential electronic warfare functions.

China is also developing humanoid robots for space functions; a humanoid robot for moon mining could easily be configured as a lunar soldier.

At a minimum, the ILRSCO can be expected to provide political support for the CCP's aggressive territorial grabs on the moon and its introduction of dual-use civil-military capabilities on the moon.

To sustain and increase support for the Artemis Accords, it is crucial that the United States keep to its schedule of returning astronauts to the moon by 2025.

It will also be important for the United States to place a high priority on including astronauts from Artemis partner nations.

Finally, it is crucial that Washington refuses to let CCP-initiated wars on Earth diminish funding and support for building a larger presence for the democracies on the moon.

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Participants of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit attend an extended-format meeting of heads of SCO member states in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on Sept. 16, 2022.



China's aircraft carrier Liaoning takes part in a military drill of Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy in the western Pacific Ocean on April 18, 2018.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Flags Flown Over US Capitol in Honor of World Falun Dafa Day

Falun Gong recognized for its spiritual values and its adherents' contributions to communities

By Terri Wu

Two U.S. flags were flown over the U.S. Capitol on May 13, in honor of World Falun Dafa Day and Mr. Li Hongzhi, the founder of the spiritual practice.

On that day 31 years ago, Mr. Li introduced Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong, to the public in northeast China. The spiritual discipline, which involves meditative exercises and moral teachings rooted in the Chinese traditions of body and mind improvement, is now practiced in more than 100 countries. The office of Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), congressional representative of practitioner Jennie Sheeks of Philadelphia, sponsored the celebration, which recognizes Falun Dafa for its spiritual values and its adherents' contributions to communities.

The flags, which were flown on special poles on the building that aren't visible to the public because of construction, were presented by Fitzpatrick to the Greater Philadelphia Falun Dafa Association.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro also authorized a U.S. flag to be flown over the state Capitol in Harrisburg to recognize Mr. Li for teaching Falun Dafa and its core values of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance to the state and the rest of the world.

Meanwhile, the Massachusetts state Senate issued a citation for World Falun Dafa Day, noting that it was the 31st anniversary of the spiritual practice's introduction to the public. State Sen. Michael Moore, one of the sponsors of the citation, presented the document to Falun Dafa practitioners in Worcester. The city, which is about 50 miles west of Boston, also raised the World Falun Dafa Day flag outside City Hall in a ceremony on May 13.

From Changchun to the World

On May 13, 1992, Mr. Li held his first public lecture in Changchun, the capital of Jilin Province in northeast China. The city's name in Chinese means "eternal spring."

The theater classroom of Changchun's No. 5 Middle School hosted the first group of students, which numbered fewer than 200. Most were enthusiasts of qigong—physical exercises developed in ancient China as part of traditional Chinese medicine—at the city's Triumph Park, according



A World Falun Dafa Day flag outside City Hall in Worcester, Mass., on May 13, 2023.

to Falun Dafa informational website Minghui.org.

Between May 13, 1992, and Dec. 30, 1994, Mr. Li held 56 series of lectures in more than 15 provinces and municipalities in China for more than 60,000 students, according to Minghui.org.

I stand in solidarity with the many Falun Gong practitioners who fight for the freedom to speak and to practice the religion of their choice.

Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Zhang Ze, an architectural designer, attended Mr. Li's seminars in Changchun in May 1993 and May 1994, after one of his relatives told him that Falun Dafa might help with his chronic heart disease. He was 35 and worked in the propaganda department of a big state-owned enterprise, where he was in charge of taking photos and filming videos.

Zhang said that he liked the healing benefits of the practice. It took him a few years to understand that it was much more profound than just its physical exercises, and as a result of following the core principles, he learned to be a better person, he said.

Through word-of-mouth, the practice grew to have as many as 100 million adherents in China by 1999. That

average soldier. Meanwhile, photos of Lei showed professional lighting and master-level skills, according to Zhang, who wondered how an average soldier could develop such abilities.

"So I know Falun Dafa is exactly the opposite of the CCP. What Falun Dafa requires is real goodness," he said. "Once I made the comparison, who's good and bad was obvious."

Designing Parade Floats in Celebration

Zhang came to the United States with his wife and daughter in October 2015 on tourist visas and was approved for asylum. Before he left China, he had become a successful architectural designer, with projects including prominent hotels and colleges in Changchun.

By the time he arrived in the United States, many people outside China had come to know about the persecution and the benefits of Falun Dafa because of adherents' efforts to clarify the facts.

One such effort is the annual World Falun Dafa Day celebration in New York, for which Zhang helps to create a parade float each year.

Zhang said he has wanted to showcase the beauty of the practice more in recent years. So he changed his design concept from boats—symbolizing the traditional Buddhist idea of a boat rescuing kind people from the sea of suffering—to heavenly scenes in 2022 and this year.

"I don't know how to describe my feelings in words," Zhang said. "I am thrilled to see the parade spectators applauding, taking photos of us, and welcoming us. I want to show them the beauty of Falun Dafa and bring goodness to people."

As World Falun Dafa Day approached, U.S. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) sent a letter of support to practitioners in Washington and around the world on May 1, saying: "For over two decades, Falun Gong practitioners have suffered from forced detention, torture, and organ harvesting committed at the hands of the Chinese government.

"The only crime of those who practice Falun Gong is to be born into a society of intolerance. I stand in solidarity with the many Falun Gong practitioners who fight for the freedom to speak and to practice the religion of their choice."

OPINION

Impose Secondary Sanctions on the Business Partners of Russia and China

By Anders Corr



Western sanctions on Russia have loopholes through which a self-driving truck with hay-wire AI could drive. Businesses in Central Asia, for example, openly advertise online about how they serve as transshipment points to evade U.S. and EU sanctions "100 percent."

The statistics back them up. As soon as the sanctions took effect, imports of goods from the United States and European Union shot up in Kazakhstan, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. Those countries' exports to Russia also jumped, according to The Wall Street Journal on May 14.

Russia assisted the trade last year by legalizing "parallel imports" done without the original producers' permission.

"In total, U.S. and E.U. goods exports to Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan rose to \$24.3 billion last year from \$14.6 billion in 2021," according to the Journal. "These countries collectively increased their exports to Russia by nearly 50 percent last year to around \$15 billion."

These are self-reported numbers, so they are likely understated. But data in the Journal still paint a picture of disregard by businesses in Central Asia for the aggression perpetrated by Russia.

Of particular concern to U.S. officials are exports to Russia of aircraft parts, antennas, GPS systems, oilfield equipment, sonar systems, spectrophotometers, test equipment, and vacuum pumps.

Consumer goods are also a concern, given the dual-use components found within.

From Kazakhstan, the Central Asian country with the largest increase in imports from the West (\$4.7 billion) and exports to Russia (\$1.8 billion), washing machine sales to Russia increased from zero in 2021 to nearly 100,000 units in 2022. These machines have semiconductors that can be removed and used in weapons. The same goes for cameras. European officials are concerned that Moscow is extracting chips from both goods for military applications.

Evidence of transshipment from other Central and Eurasian countries is also instructive. According to Armenian media, "Russian-Armenian trade skyrocketed last year, with Armenian exports to Russia nearly tripling to \$2.4 billion. Goods manufactured in third countries and re-exported from Armenia to Russia are believed to have accounted for most of that gain."

The increase in Georgian exports to Russia was a negligible \$40 million compared to much larger increases from the other countries. But there is evidence readily available of Georgia's biggest import from the United States—autos and trucks—being transshipped from the United States through Georgia to evade sanctions on Russia.

"Major foreign automakers pulled out of Russia after the West imposed sanctions, prompting Russian drivers and dealers to turn to neighboring countries like Georgia and Armenia," according to Eurasianet. The article quoted one Russian car dealer at an auto market in Georgia, saying, "Take a gander at this Porsche Cayenne. ... This is a sanctioned car and you can't get it in Russia anymore."

In Asia, Hong Kong has long acted as a

Businesses in Central Asia, for example, openly advertise online about how they serve as transshipment points to evade U.S. and EU sanctions '100 percent.'

transshipment hub for goods that are export-controlled to China. Thus, American and European sanctions have had little effect on our chief adversaries' abilities to acquire whatever technology they wish, as long as they can find another country, or in the case of Hong Kong, an "autonomous" region, that can act as a transshipment hub. Sanctions that target a particular company in China and Russia are even more useless as sanction targets need only change their legal name or transship through a neighboring business.

In other words, "targeted" sanctions against China and Russia are nearly useless. The entire country—and any other country that serves as a transshipment hub—needs to be hit with blanket sanctions, or they have little utility in stopping aggression.

The widespread problem of transshipment should make clear that effective economic sanctions require parallel trade restrictions by all of our trading partners. Kazakhstan is one example where progress is being made. The country announced that starting in April, it would more closely track imports and exports to comply with U.S. and EU sanctions on Russia. That could raise the prices of electronics by approximately 10–12 percent, according to Russian media. That's better than nothing.

But Russian importers are looking far beyond Central Asia to evade Western sanctions, including to China, Kyrgyzstan, and the United Arab Emirates. The U.S. government has identified Turkey, Belarus, Brazil, India, Israel, Mexico, Nicaragua,

Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, and Tajikistan as transshipment points for illegal exports to Russia.

Beijing is likely watching and figuring that if it invades Taiwan, it can still transship from these and other countries where unscrupulous businesses are allowed to run rampant by ethically lax governance.

Countries that allow their businesses to facilitate illegal exports to Russia are now part of the problem that leads to global instability and war, including not only in Ukraine today, but likely in Taiwan tomorrow. If they capitalize on the suffering of Ukrainians and (in expectation) Taiwanese and attempts by the West to sanction Russia and China, they themselves should be subject to secondary sanctions. This is no more a violation of their sovereignty than they are imposing on Ukraine and Taiwan by facilitating transnational aggression.

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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Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, and Chinese leader Xi Jinping toast during their dinner at the Palace of the Facets in Moscow on March 21, 2023.

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