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Bribery Case Targeting Falun Gong Reveals CCP's 'Covert Warfare' in US

EVA FU

Sculptor Chen Weiming is no stranger to Chen Jun, the man recently arrested over a bribery scheme to help the Chinese communist regime carry out its repression in the United States. He had heard Chen Jun's threats years ago.

"Let me tell you, if you have a Chinese passport, and we take a photo of you, you can never go back to China," Chen Jun told him and other Chinese dissidents in Los Angeles during a heated exchange, the sculptor recalled.

Chen Weiming and others were protesting a pro-Beijing flag-raising event organized by Chen Jun, one of many he had arranged in Monterey Park, California. As in other years, a Chinese flag was hoisted at Barnes Park awash with red decorations in celebration of the regime's 70th anniversary.

"If you make it back, you will immediately get arrested," Chen Jun said, amplifying his voice through a megaphone hung around his neck.

That was in September 2019. Three and a half years later, on May 26, it was Chen Jun who found himself arrested by the FBI at his home in Chino. A U.S. citizen, Chen Jun was the subject of a Justice Department probe for his alleged role as an enabler of Beijing's transnational repression campaign, this time targeting the persecuted faith Falun Gong.

A Global Campaign of Repression

Falun Gong, which includes meditative exercises and moral teachings centered on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, has been a key target of the Chinese regime since 1999, when the regime began a ruthless crusade to eliminate the spiritual discipline. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) viewed the huge popularity of the practice, which had attracted up to 100 million adherents at the time, as a threat to its authoritarian rule.

Inside China, tens of millions of Falun Gong adherents continue to face harassment, arbitrary arrests, torture, and forced organ harvesting. But even practitioners and dissidents outside of China's borders aren't immune to the Party's machinations. From spying and physical assault to blackmailing, the regime has deployed an onslaught of coercive tactics devised specifically to silence and sabotage any voices deemed unfavorable to Beijing.

Such campaigns, collectively known as transnational repression, have recently come to the spotlight as U.S. prosecutors have brought charges against dozens of Chinese agents and U.S. citizens involved in regime-directed suppression plots on U.S. soil.

In just the past six weeks alone, the Justice Department has charged 40 members of China's national police force with carrying out a cyber propaganda campaign to harass U.S. residents, arrested one Boston man believed to be secretly feeding Beijing a "blacklist" of China critics, and arrested two more in New York who were overseeing one of four known Chinese police stations in the United States.

One of the men arrested over the illegal Chinese police operation had been involved in targeting Falun Gong practitioners in the United States, court filings show. In 2015, the man, Chen Jinping, received a plaque recognizing his efforts in organizing paid protesters to counter demonstrations by Falun Gong adherents when Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited Washington that year.

In the case of Chen Jun, prosecutors alleged that he and a co-defendant worked with officials in China to concoct a scheme to sabotage a U.S. nonprofit run by Falun Gong adherents by trying to get the organization's tax-exempt status revoked.

Chen Jun, the court filing said, offered \$50,000 to an undercover FBI agent who he thought was with the IRS to try to advance a fraudulent IRS whistleblower complaint against the nonprofit. In a recorded conversation, Chen said his goal was to help the regime "topple" the faith group.

Court filings said that Chen Jun worked under the direction of an unnamed Chinese official and was supplied money for the bribes by the regime.

While the documents don't state what agency Chen Jun's handler worked for,



In 2015, Chen Jinping received a plaque recognizing his efforts in organizing paid protesters to counter demonstrations by Falun Gong adherents when Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited Washington that year.



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they do make multiple references to the megacity Tianjin, where Chen Jun was born and raised. For many years, the city has served as the main base of the 610 Office, an extralegal Gestapo-like agency that oversees the persecution of Falun Gong. Chen Jun's handler appears to be from Tianjin as well; when Chen Jun called another co-conspirator to discuss payment plans, he said he would "contact Tianjin again."

He said the official is "the one that is always in charge of these matters."

"They are like blood brothers," Chen Jun once told the undercover FBI agent about his Chinese associates, according to the complaint. "We started this fight against [Falun Gong] twenty, thirty years ago. They are always with us."

'Covert Warfare'

For China analysts and advocates, the recent case represents but another example of a long-known sprawling campaign by Beijing to silence dissent abroad.

"It's kind of a pattern that's emerging," Laura Harth, campaign director for Safeguard Defenders, a group that focuses on China's human rights, told The Epoch Times.

The bribery case, she said, is "the tip of the iceberg."

But even so, Harth was stunned by the tactics used by Chen Jun and his co-conspirators as detailed by the Department of Justice.

The bribery scheme demonstrated the

"breadth and creativeness" of the regime's efforts, she said, as well as the "audacity by which they feel they can get away with" these actions.

The alleged attempt to subvert U.S. institutions also stood out to other China analysts.

"You're not just talking anymore about organizing some counter-protesters, or trying to convince someone to come back to China, or monitoring a dissident. This was really an attempt to use institutions of the United States, including things like whistleblower systems and protections, to basically go after a perceived enemy of the CCP," Sarah Cook, a senior China analyst at Freedom House, told The Epoch Times.

To her, it reveals both the "degree of effort and resources that the CCP is investing to target Falun Gong, at least in the United States," and the "lengths the CCP is willing to go to in terms of using democratic institutions against themselves."

Nicholas Eftimiades, a former intelligence analyst for the CIA specialized in Chinese espionage, sees the latest case as part of Beijing's "covert warfare"—an "extraordinarily far-ranging worldwide effort" from China to "influence and corrupt foreign governments and foreign political processes."

"To actually go get someone in the United States to submit basically a lie like this for truth, have the U.S. government take official action, and to bribe U.S. officials—that's corruption at its greatest moment," Eftimiades told The Epoch

Times, adding that it's something often carried out by intelligence services and organized crime groups. "So we see the Chinese government behaving as such."

'Canary in the Coal Mine'

In Los Angeles County, 70-year-old Chen Jun, who also goes by John, has developed a reputation among the Chinese diaspora as a talking head for the Chinese regime. A veteran of China's air force, Chen had been a trade delegate for Tianjin before emigrating to California, where he holds top positions in a slew of pro-Beijing organizations, including two he created himself, according to Chinese media reports. He has hosted roughly two dozen annual flag-raising events like that one in 2019 and penned several books trumpeting the regime's narratives. He has mobilized local Chinese communities to welcome top Chinese officials during their visits to the United States, as well as organized protests that the regime deemed "patriotic," the reports said.

With his close alignment with the regime, it was unsurprising to some that he has kept in step with the regime on its suppression of Falun Gong.

Wu Fan, a former chief editor of pro-democracy Chinese-language magazine Beijing Spring and commentator on China affairs, remembered debating the persecution with Chen Jun on the radio as early as 2001. In their approximately 20 other similar interactions on various China topics, Chen Jun had been parroting the regime's talking points, Wu recalled.

"It seems that his life goal is to follow the CCP," Wu told The Epoch Times.

Levi Browde, executive director of the New York-based Falun Dafa Information Center, said the U.S. action on the IRS bribery attempt, which was still unfolding at the time of the men's arrest, shows that U.S. authorities have "really come up to speed on the sheer scope and scale of CCP infiltration into this country."

"I've met a lot of people who think the Falun Gong issue really is the canary in the coal mine for all Americans," he told The Epoch Times. In many ways, he said, he believes the Falun Gong community "has been a leading voice in trying to not only expose the persecution themselves, but also divulge the true nature of the CCP on the world stage."

"Seeing what the CCP does to Falun Gong and understanding what the nature of that threat is and how to counter it, that's a big lesson for all Americans," he said. "If anybody, not just Falun Gong, finds themselves on the opposite side of the CCP and is doing or saying something the CCP doesn't like, who's to say they won't do the exact same thing to them?"

A Sculpture Targeted

Three days after the row at Barnes Park in 2019, Chen Weiming filed a lawsuit accus-



Sculptor Chen Weiming, whose artwork was sabotaged by agents of the Chinese regime.

ing Chen Jun of violating his free speech rights, although he eventually didn't pursue it due to a lack of funds.

The California pro-democracy artist found it apt that the Justice Department in its press release described Chen and his co-conspirator as "illegal agents" for Beijing.

"He is a CCP agent, no question," Chen Weiming told The Epoch Times. "Otherwise, how can he as an individual declare that he can get me arrested? What power does he have?"

Chen Weiming, like others, has experienced the regime's retaliation firsthand.

In a plot to destroy one of his artworks critical of the regime, Matthew Ziburis, a former correctional officer for Florida and a former bodyguard, approached the Chinese-born New Zealander, who lives in California, while posing as an art dealer interested in getting his works displayed in a New York museum, according to court filings.

The sculpture, a bust statue depicting Xi as a coronavirus molecule, was demolished by vandals in July 2021 after the artist unveiled it to the public in Liberty Sculpture Park in Yermo, California. It's unclear whether Ziburis, who was in New York City during that arson attack, had any involvement in the sculpture's destruction, but two of his co-conspirators, one of whom is based in China, discussed such actions in undated conversations cited in the filing.

Regarding the recently publicized tax bribery scheme, Chinese agents paid



The "CCP Virus" sculpture, which depicted Xi as a coronavirus molecule, was demolished by vandals in July 2021 after the artist unveiled it to the public in Liberty Sculpture Park in Yermo, Calif.

\$1,500 to a purported IRS agent to get tax returns of Chen Weiming, believing they could find evidence of tax evasion to discredit him.

For dissidents, "the CCP tries every possible way to threaten you and destroy your reputation," said Chen, who on June 4 unveiled his latest work—a statue of an abused mother of eight chained in front of a metal cage welded together with the characters "China," inspired by a real-life incident that horrified the country last year and at times overshadowed Beijing's Winter Olympics.

When Chen Weiming was running a pro-democracy newspaper, New Times Weekly, in New Zealand, police had repeatedly received anonymous tips alleging, without evidence, that the outlet's office engaged in drug dealing and tax fraud.

'Wake-Up Call'

In Congress, some lawmakers are also taking note of the covert Chinese influence campaigns.

"The FBI calls this 'transnational repression,' but we should be clear that this is a foreign adversary emboldened enough to commit crimes against those it deems to be a threat in the United States," Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), who chairs the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, told The Epoch Times after the unsealing of the IRS bribery case files.

Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-Iowa), a member of the committee, said the revelation from the case is a "wake-up call to everyone here."

"There's nothing more that the Chinese Communist Party hates than people who are pursuing freedom—people who want to practice the religion they want to practice, what we have here in the United States—and that's a threat to them," Hinson said on NTD's "Capitol Report" program.

"So this is happening in our backyard every single day, whether they're trying to bribe an IRS official, or sneak out our military bases. They are not a friend to us, and if we don't hold them accountable, and show them that we're strong, and we mean business, they're going to take advantage of that, like they have for decades."

Assessing the US Response

From the national security perspective, Eftimiades considers the repressive activities from China a reckoning call for nation states to reassess their relationship with China and decide whether the com-

mercial benefits from China are worth the national security risks.

In dealing with such state-sponsored "pervasive criminal activity," law enforcement alone is not effective, he said.

The U.S. approach has to be comprehensive, strategic, and employing "all elements of national power... because that's the way China approaches the situation," he said.

On a broader scale, the United States should also work in concert with allies, be it to issue sanctions or otherwise, to make deterrence effective globally, according to Eftimiades.

In March, a bipartisan group of senators introduced the Transnational Repression Policy Act, which aims to hold foreign governments and individuals accountable when they stalk, intimidate, harass, coerce, or assault people in the United States—or U.S. citizens abroad.

Gallagher has also suggested increasing the penalties on executors of targeted harassment if they do so on behalf of a foreign adversary.

Eftimiades supports other penalties, such as placing perpetrators on the "no fly" list and barring investments into regional Chinese governments that are involved.

With the recent spotlight on the regime's spy balloon and its policing networks across more than 100 countries, which Germany suspects were still operating in their country as of mid-May, the West seems to be paying attention at last.

At the G-7 summit in Hiroshima last month, leaders of the member states called on China "not to conduct interference activities aimed at undermining the security and safety of our communities, the integrity of our democratic institutions, and our economic prosperity."

"The net is closing in" against Beijing proxies, said the California dissident artist, adding that he's glad the West has "finally become clear on the matter."

"The CCP will never embrace Western values. As long as it has money and power, it will want to export its authoritarian model, and with it, reshape the entire world," he said.

Eftimiades zeroed in on the need for a "whole-of-government" response to Beijing's covert operation campaigns.

"It's directed against our own citizens... The one thing [the government] is responsible for, above all others, is protecting its own people, and we're failing in that regard," Eftimiades said.

Linda Jiang contributed to this report.



Sculptor Chen Weiming's "Tank Man," a Tiananmen Massacre sculpture, at Liberty Sculpture Park in Yermo, Calif., on June 1, 2021.

OPINION

Decoupling From China's Aircraft Industry

Beijing wants 'guardrails' to guide U.S.-China relations

RICHARD A. BITZINGER



"Decoupling" is the new buzzword these days when it comes to sanctioning communist China for its bad behavior. The argument behind it is that the West should no longer rely so much upon China's manufacturing base for essential products and processes but instead work to reduce, even eliminate, China's place in global supply chains.

There are obvious candidates for decoupling. Textiles, of course (sorry, no more 12-packs of tube socks for \$5.99), but also televisions, smartphones, any kind of consumer product (from toasters to extension cords), integrated circuits, microelectronic assemblies, computers—the list is endless.

Not every kind of decoupling is a good idea, or at least one that should be implemented quickly. Removing China from the global supply chain is risky in the short run, to say the least, although it could pay huge benefits over time. Reestablishing assembly lines in the West is a smart move if it can be done cheaply, but it will take time and planning.

There are, however, areas where decoupling could be pursued quickly and with minimal risk to the West. One of these is microchips, and the other, which is glaringly obvious, is China's commercial aircraft industry.

China's weaknesses in the semiconductor industry are widely known. A huge gap exists between current Chinese chip technology and global state of the art. China is unable to design and fabricate high-end microchips, particularly when it comes to breaking the "seven-nanometer wall" of producing semiconductors with processing nodes below seven nanometers.

Taiwan, meanwhile, already builds chips as small as five nanometers, and South Korea will soon be producing three-nanometer chips.

Moreover, most of China's indigenous chipmaking technology is old and getting older. China's top-down, state-led development model has been unable to deliver on Chinese leader Xi Jinping's ambition of creating a high-end national semiconductor industry.

China aims to produce 70 percent of its own chips by 2025, but it's unlikely to meet that target. In fact, China can barely supply more than 15 percent of the semiconductors it needs (and most of them low-end). As a result, Beijing depends heavily on foreign sources for its microchips and chip-manufacturing technology. In 2020 alone, China imported more than \$300 billion worth of semiconductors.

Beijing's inability to manufacture high-end chips threatens to leave it unable to participate in the so-called fourth industrial revolution (4IR). According to

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping enter a hall during a meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on March 21, 2023.

Mathieu Duchatel, director of the Asia Program at Institut Montaigne, without an advanced semiconductor sector, China will find it difficult to "dominate the digital revolution" enabled by artificial intelligence (AI), big data, cloud computing, 5G wireless infrastructures, and the like. This has implications for China's future high-tech commercial economy and its ambitious military modernization plans.

China's critical dependencies on imported microchips and microchip technology create a huge chokepoint for Beijing's high-technology ambitions. Cutting off China from Western semiconductors, as well as 4IR technologies like AI and advanced computing, could leave Beijing scrambling for years to find domestic solutions to these requirements. The costs to the West, meanwhile, would be minimal. An even more obvious candidate for decoupling is China's civilian airliner industry. China is attempting to build a commercial aircraft business where none hardly existed two decades ago. It launched its first passenger jet, the 70-seat ARJ21 regional jet, in 2002, and its second, the C919 (roughly the same size as the Boeing 737 or Airbus A320), in 2008.

Both planes have had troubled births, plagued by delays and huge cost overruns. Moreover, neither has yet obtained air-worthiness certifications from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA); these are essential if Beijing wishes to sell the airplane overseas.

What's more, neither the ARJ21 nor the C919 could be called groundbreaking aircraft. Western aerospace analysts have noted that the C919 offers no new technology, dismissing it as a "me-too jet."

More importantly, calling a plane like the C919 "Chinese" is stretching the point. The airliner depends heavily on Western suppliers for critical components and subsystems, including its avionics, landing gear, nacelles, flight controls, and—most importantly—jet engines. General Electric, for example, supplies the LEAP turbofan engine for the aircraft, while Rockwell Collins provides the avionics, and Goodrich and Liebherr (a German-Swiss company) supply the plane's landing gear.

Altogether, around 60 percent of these foreign suppliers to the C919 are U.S. companies, including General Electric, Honeywell, and Eaton.

In fact, it is estimated that only 25 percent of the overall value of the C919 is actually Chinese, mainly in the manufacture of the fuselage and wings, as well as final assembly.

The West, particularly the United States, has little to lose by cutting China off from its aerospace supply chain. All it is doing anyway is creating future competitors rather than future partners.

Moreover, the West might soon have a very good reason to decouple China's



ALEXEY MAISHEV/SPUTNIK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

aircraft industry. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been going badly, and it is running out of munitions. Moscow is keen to have Beijing supply it with lethal equipment, as China is about the only country with the stockpiles, industrial capacity, and political likelihood to sell to Russia.

Despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's persistent wooing, Xi has so far resisted supplying Russia with lethal military equipment. But if Xi should change his mind and start selling arms to Russia, the West could wield a powerful lever against China. Western aerospace analyst Richard Aboulafia has made the case that the West should immediately embargo China's commercial aircraft industry. Given how "uniquely dependent" Beijing's aerospace future is on Western companies, he argues, "U.S. and EU trade sanctions could bring its indigenous aviation sector to a halt."

Cutting off items like jet engines, avionics, landing gear, and the like would deal an immediate blow to China's civil airliner business. There are simply no alternative suppliers: China's efforts to produce a home-grown engine, the CJ-1000A, is years away from fruition, and it still incorporates a number of imported technologies.

Russia is hardly in a position to replace the West; its own aerospace industry is in shambles. In fact, Moscow and Beijing have a joint passenger jet in the works (the C929), but Russia's current economic mess makes it a poor choice for a partner.

On the other hand, decoupling from China has many potential benefits for the West's aerospace business. Reducing the West's dependencies on Chinese-built subsystems or components would help Western firms while also impeding the growth of a competing Chinese aerospace sector. This would also undermine Chinese military modernization, limiting its ability to exploit fourth industrial revolution technologies for such tasks as surveillance, intelligence, targeting, and autonomous strike.

More than ever, the West has critical tools for punishing China while suffering minimal cost or pain. If Beijing decides to help Russia kill Ukrainians, the West should kill China's aircraft industry.

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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SEONG JOON CHO/BLUMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES



A model of the Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China Ltd. (Comac) C919 aircraft sits on display at the Singapore Airshow held at the Changi Exhibition Center in Singapore on Feb. 6, 2018. The state-owned Chinese company seeks to chase markets in Asia and Africa.



SAIL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping shake hands as they meet on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Nusa Dua on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Nov. 14, 2022.

OPINION

Acquiescence to China's Demands Is a Precursor for Diplomatic Talks

STU CVRK



Seemingly everyone wants the United States and China to "talk" these days, for one reason or another.

For starters, the long-time China engagement crowd in the United States wants to continue pursuing the misguided policies that jump-started the Chinese mercantilism and subsequent belligerence that plagues the world in exchange for receiving crumbs from the communist Chinese table. Fame and fortune for all: diplomatic careers, prominence in academia and non-profit organizations, paid-for sinecures in China, Chinese "investments" in institutions favoring engagement, etc. Never mind the devastation wrought on Americans in the Rust Belt and Deep South because of manufacturing concerns being moved to China over the decades.

The multinational corporations that donate heavily to the U.S. political class want to restore trade relations to the "status quo ante Trump" (sans tariffs, that is). Making money is more important than the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ongoing persecution and exploitation of Chinese minority groups.

And then there is CCP leader Xi Jinping and his henchmen who wish to squelch all talk of decoupling from China, protect their export economy from tariffs, maintain trade surpluses to fund overseas initiatives such as the Belt Road Initiative, and prime the Chinese economic pump with more foreign direct investment to mask deep problems with the Chinese economy.

The Chinese appear to have preconditions for any substantive dialog with the United States—an expanded view of what they are referring to as the "guardrails" stemming from "blunt talks" between Xi and President Joe Biden in Bali, Indonesia, at the G-20 Summit in November 2022, as expanded upon in a China Daily article on June 3.

Let us examine the Chinese interpretation of guardrails and what might be an appropriate U.S. response to Chinese demands.

Guardrails With Chinese Characteristics

Guardrails can be defined as controls that prevent deviations from expected

behavior. They can be applied in a number of ways and circumstances: for safety and security and as physical boundaries. In diplomacy, guardrails shape communications and determine what is or is not an acceptable topic for discussion. As such, guardrails can amount to preconditions for diplomatic talks between countries.

The talks in Bali covered various hot topics, including tensions in the Taiwan Strait, North Korean missile tests, and the Russo-Ukraine war. The "guardrails" (unspecified) apparently dealt with improving lines of communication and preventing future conflicts between the two countries, as well as identifying "transnational" issues for high-level cooperation, such as climate change and debt relief for developing nations.

All is well and good.

The communists have made their demands for future U.S.-China relations known—which amount to Chinese guardrails. For example, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi spoke of three core demands in 2022: to not get in the way of the country's development, to respect China's claims over places like Taiwan, and to respect Beijing's Communist Party rule.

Chinese guardrails/preconditions have been subsequently expanded upon and clarified by Chinese diplomats and state-run media (which only report the official CCP narratives). These include the following:

Any diplomatic meetings must be based on "equality and mutual respect," as described in the China Daily article about "principled guardrails." These are defined as the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Chinese officials such as Defense Minister Li Shangfu, who was sanctioned in 2018 over the purchase of military equipment from Russia, as well as the cessation of "coercion and suppression." Respect appears to be a one-way street for the CCP, as there are continuing reports of Chinese spy operations being thwarted in the United States (for example, this recent attempt in Alaska reported by USA Today on May 31).

Future discussions must be based on the so-called "five noes" mentioned by Biden in Indonesia: the United States does not seek a new cold war, does not seek to change China's system, does not support the independence of the Chinese island of Taiwan, does not seek conflict with China, and the revitalization of U.S. alliances is not directed at China. It could be argued that those five noes were huge giveaways by the Biden administration that probably made Xi and his underlings giddy.

A further emotional admonishment to Washington to "never cross Beijing's red line" on Taiwan, as the headline blared in China Daily on June 4: "Beijing will not sit idly by while separatist forces in Taiwan collude with foreign anti-Beijing forces in a bid to separate the island from the motherland."

Washington must "stop export controls" that "cut China off from certain semiconductor chips made anywhere in the world with US tools," China Daily reported.

The new controls were reported by The Guardian last year as the "biggest shift in US policy toward shipping technology to China since the 1990s." China wants unfettered access to those chips to support ongoing military modernization, including the development and deployment of advanced nuclear weapons and control systems.

Acquiescence to Chinese demands is a precursor for future talks. While unspoken, China experts have noted that China views high-level talks differently than the United States and most other countries. As reported by The New York Times on June 1, "China tends to look at access to its senior leaders as a reward for acquiescence, rather than a tool for creating stability or resolving differences," said Drew Thompson, a former U.S. defense official who is currently a fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.

That means it is "Beijing's way or the highway" for all practical purposes. This is not a bright prospect for any future U.S. diplomatic efforts to curtail Beijing's belligerence in East Asia and elsewhere, or for reducing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

Concluding Thoughts

The United States should also elucidate some firm guardrails for future U.S.-China talks. Here is a short list of other substantive items that could be added. The United States and China should agree on the following as a precondition for continuing diplomatic discussions:

- Adherence to international laws and the right of free passage.
- Self-determination of peoples.
- Guaranteeing human rights to life, liberty, property, and free expression.
- Outlawing the theft of intellectual property.
- Cessation of CCP efforts to extend its national security law to the citizens of Chinese descent in other countries.

Diplomacy is a two-way street, and talk for the sake of talking should be discarded as a losing U.S. negotiating strategy. Straight-up acquiescence to "guardrails with Chinese characteristics" should be a non-starter in any future U.S.-China meetings. Chinese acquiescence to the above U.S. guardrails would be welcomed by the whole world, not just the United States.

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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ROSLAN RAHMAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

China's Minister of National Defense Li Shangfu delivers a speech during the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue summit in Singapore on June 4, 2023.

CCP INFLUENCE | IN-DEPTH

China Manipulates UN Human Rights System to Further Its Agenda, Experts Say

VENUS UPADHAYAYA

China's communist regime is increasingly subverting procedures and norms related to human rights at global forums, including the United Nations, intending to advance its agenda and minimize scrutiny of its violations, according to experts and advocates.

"Beijing will continue to write its own narratives, including on human rights, by framing a new order as she sees it, which would be entirely different from the U.S.-led allies' perspective in the coming years," Tsering Passang, the founder and chairman of the advocacy group Global Alliance for Tibet and Persecuted Minorities, told The Epoch Times in an email.

Several Chinese state-run media and on-line resources tout China's endorsement of human rights forums and its advocacy and promotion of global human rights. In contrast, the free world has published numerous reports—including testimonies by victims who fled China—about Chinese state-perpetuated violations within and outside the country.

Experts highlight the narrative warfare this situation brings to the multilateral forums where the Chinese regime identifies every attempt of the West to hold it or its allies accountable for their human rights violations as an attack against Beijing's foreign policy. While the regime uses the concepts of human rights in its narratives, its goal is to defend its communist policies and criticize the free world.

The Chinese government does not merely seek to neutralize U.N. human rights mechanisms' scrutiny of China, it also aspires to neutralize the ability of that system to hold any government accountable for serious human rights violations.

Sophie Richardson, China director, Human Rights Watch

Benedict Rogers, the co-founder and chief executive of the Hong Kong Watch and the author of the new book "The China Nexus," believes that, in some ways, today's global human rights are at the mercy of Chinese foreign policy agendas.

"To a certain extent, yes, and as a P5 member of the Security Council, it can wield its veto power," Rogers told The Epoch Times in an email. "The reason, for example, the crises in Myanmar and North Korea have not received more attention is, at least in part, because China uses its influence to protect them diplomatically and politically."

The Chinese regime has continuously come to the rescue of its allies despite their records of human rights violations. For example, until 2020, Beijing vetoed the United Nations Security Council's most severe and potentially effective draft resolutions against the Syrian regime 16 times, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR).

The SNHR, in a report in July 2020, alleged that these vetoes have led to the killing of



Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Marc-André Blanchard speaks during the General Debate of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations headquarters in New York on Sept. 30, 2019. Blanchard has since been replaced by Bob Rae, who has pushed back against China's conduct.

"nearly a quarter of a million Syrians" and the "arrest of nearly 150,000 others, and the spread of impunity."

Sophie Richardson, the China director of Human Rights Watch, wrote in a paper published by Brookings in 2020 that the Chinese regime in recent years had ratified many core U.N. human rights treaties, has served as a member of the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC), and also seconded Chinese diplomats to positions within the U.N. human rights system.

"Particularly under President Xi Jinping's leadership, the Chinese government does not merely seek to neutralize U.N. human rights mechanisms' scrutiny of China, it also aspires to neutralize the ability of that system to hold any government accountable for serious human rights violations," Richardson wrote in her paper titled

AP PHOTO/MARY ALTAFFER, POOL, FILE



Chinese leader Xi Jinping remotely addresses the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, in a pre-recorded message, at the UN headquarters in New York, on Sept. 21, 2021.

"China's Influence on the Global Human Rights System."

She emphasized that the "rights-free development" Beijing endorsed in China is now being established as a Chinese foreign policy tool worldwide.

"Increasingly Beijing pursues rights-free development worldwide, and tries to exploit the openness of institutions in democracies to impose its world view and silence its critics," wrote Richardson.

Passang said the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had used its veto power in recent years to prevent international intervention in issues it considers internal affairs, such as the situation in Tibet or Xinjiang.

He believes that the U.N. system has lost focus of the noble objectives with which it was founded and appears to work in favor of more powerful nations today.

"In my view, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has benefited the most amongst any nation in the U.N. ever since the CCP's PRC was given the U.N. permanent seat after replacing the Nationalist's Republic of China (Taiwan) by the U.S. and its allies.

"Let's not forget the Kuomintang of the Republic of China (ROC), now Taiwan, was a founding member of the United Nations after the Second World War," Passang said.

'A Chinese Slush Fund'

China is the second largest donor to the United Nations after the United States. Critics say that Beijing uses these funding channels for its agendas, including winning over the opinion of countries that rely on it economically.

According to Rogers's book, "The China Nexus," China announced in 2016 that it would donate a billion dollars to the U.N., with a payment of \$20 million per year, "ostensibly for peace, security and development."

"According to the former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Kelley Currie, \$10 million of this goes straight into the office of the U.N. secretary-general, basically for his personal use to do whatever he wanted, with no oversight from anybody other than his office and the Chinese government," Rogers told The Epoch Times, adding that Currie told him in person that the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular, has turned into a "Chinese fiefdom" run by a Chinese official for many years.

The other half of the \$20 million a year given by China to the United Nations goes to this department, specifically to advance China's Belt and Road Initiative within the U.N. system, he said.

"Ambassador Currie describes this as 'a Chinese slush fund.' China has also learned to manipulate the G77 caucus of developing countries, which has 134 members, making it the majority caucus in the General Assembly. This enables China to mobilize resistance to resolutions critical of its human rights record and manipulate the system," said Rogers.

The Atlantic Council, in a report last year, focussed on China's modus operandi in Global South or sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. It said China pursues a global discourse favorable to its agendas by fostering "buy-in from leaders" in the region for Chinese-defined norms.

"This includes its principles of 'non-interference' in other countries' internal affairs and on a concept of 'human rights' that actively subordinates personal and civic freedoms in favor of state-centered economic development. It is meant to stand in opposition to a Western human rights framework that China criticizes as having been used for interventionist ends, for

example, in Afghanistan and Iraq," said Kenton Thibaut, Atlantic Council's China fellow and the report's author.

Passang said that Beijing also interferes in the domestic affairs of countries that rely on Chinese aid and investment.

"For example, China's monetary assistance to Nepal has one commitment required from the recipient country ... Nepal's authorities must not allow the Tibetan refugee community there to engage in any political, human rights, and religious activity related to Tibet and the Dalai Lama, which Beijing deems political," said Passang, adding that merely wearing a "Free Tibet" t-shirt in Nepal has become an issue today in the Himalayan nation.

"This is not so different from what the Tibetans in China's occupied Tibet experience day to day."

'Battle of Values'

At the core of China's foreign policy, supposedly based on global human rights, is its agenda to gain worldwide supremacy and spread its antagonistic worldview to everything liberal held by the West. Experts said this growing battle of values requires that the West speedily braces itself for this narrative warfare on global human rights.

"Certainly, the world is now facing a choice between authoritarianism and freedom, and the authoritarian narrative is clearly led by China and Russia. The free world has to wake up to this battle of values," said Rogers.

Beijing has created the South-South Human Rights Forum, whose last conference was held on Dec. 8, 2021. It was organized by the State Council Information Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the attendees included various former national leaders, officials, and academics. The forum's website discusses the CCP's ideas of democracy, Xi's call for stronger South-

The world is now facing a choice between authoritarianism and freedom, and the authoritarian narrative is clearly led by China and Russia.

Benedict Rogers, the co-founder and chief executive, Hong Kong Watch

JOHANNES EISELE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Prince, a member of the hacking group Red Hacker Alliance who refused to give his real name, uses a website that monitors global cyberattacks on his computer at their office in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, China, on Aug. 4, 2020.

OPINION

Communist China's Cyber Attacks Must Be Declared Acts of War

PETER NAVARRO



We've been fools. We'll continue to be fooled until our politicians fight communist China's unrestricted cyber warfare against the United States with more than hot air. The latest evidence of such warfare is a newly published Microsoft report documenting the breathtaking scope of this particular form of communist Chinese aggression.

According to that May report, the Chinese regime is aggressively probing our military infrastructure in strategic locations such as Guam as it prepares to take Taiwan by military force. The irony, of course, is that Microsoft is helping the Chinese military develop artificial intelligence to create weapons of unimaginable destruction.

Here's the bigger backstory behind the regime's unrestricted cyber warfare: China's landmass is roughly the same size as the United States. Yet it has a population nearly five times larger. Noting Stalin's admonition that "quantity has a quality of its own," China can overwhelm the United States militarily and economically if it's able to replicate our technologies and defense systems by stealing them.

This is exactly what communist China is quite successfully doing through its relentless and unrestricted cyber warfare. Every day, drawing from its vast population, China deploys equally vast cadres of cyber hackers to probe every conceivable institution of the U.S. economy, society, and government.

The cyber game afoot with American businesses begins with the theft of intellectual property. Chinese state-owned enterprises can thereby beat U.S. rivals with the added advantage of mercantilist tools such as export subsidies and currency manipulation.

Yet the goal of business hacking is often to gain a competitive advantage over an international rival by acquiring confidential internal documents. Such expropriated proprietary information allows a Chinese competitor to underbid or undermine a U.S. competitor.

When communist China hacks our personal accounts, it seeks to build profiles on us, particularly those who are critics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Of course, criminal elements within the state-sponsored wing of China's hacking brigades are also busy stealing our money or identities, creating untold havoc in American lives.

Within academia, when communist China hacks Harvard, MIT, or the University of California, it's attempting to steal cutting-edge research—the figurative corn seed of our technical innovation. When Chinese bandits hack the computers of farm-state universities in Iowa or Kansas, they're literally trying to steal our corn seed.

Through its cyber hacks, communist China has also acquired the blueprints of America's most sophisticated weapons systems—thereby significantly narrowing

the technology gap between our militaries. For example, China's fifth-generation jet fighters are accurate knockoffs of the most advanced U.S. planes, the F-22 and F-35. With its manufacturing might, China can build far more of these fifth-generation fighters than U.S. taxpayers can afford—giving its military both Stalinesque quantity and American quality.

Stealing our weapons systems is but one goal of Chinese hackers. They seek to embed Trojan viruses throughout our military software. In a war scenario, they'll drop our planes and satellites from the sky and misdirect the navigation systems of our missiles and ships.

It's long past time for the U.S. government to draw a very clear line in the sand with the communist Chinese.

- They laugh at us now while Congress forms yet another committee to study the CCP's abuses but does nothing.

- They shake with mirth while President Joe Biden and his Pentagon say we're in a "competition" rather than a "conflict" with China.

- They mock our FBI with its more than 1,000 hacking investigations going nowhere—even as that same FBI far more aggressively arrests and prosecutes so-called domestic terrorists guilty of nothing more than patriotism and standing up for their families and rights against a 'woke' left.

It's time for Congress to declare communist Chinese cyber hacks as acts of war punishable by appropriately measured responses in kind.

It's time for the FBI to treat China's cyber hackers not as criminals but as enemy combatants. While the 16 prisoners of war are stripped of their constitutional rights, China's hackers simply game our justice system and thereby clog up our courts.

It's time for Rep. Mike Gallagher's (R-Wis.) House Select Committee on communist China to demand the release of all so-called top secret documents that will inform the American people of the real depth of the Chinese hacker threat. And if Gallagher et al. need any further evidence of the seriousness of the Chinese cyber warfare threat, they can read my 2015 "Crouching Tiger" book or, better yet, Frank Gaffney's "The Indictment."

When communist China hacks our personal accounts, it seeks to build profiles on us, particularly those who are critics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Of course, criminal elements within the state-sponsored wing of China's hacking brigades are also busy stealing our money or identities, creating untold havoc in American lives.

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

Peter Navarro holds a doctorate in economics from Harvard. One of only three senior White House officials to serve with Donald Trump from the 2016 campaign to the end of his term, Navarro was chief China hawk and manufacturing czar. His White House memoirs are "In Trump Time" and "Taking Back Trump's America." Follow Navarro at PeterNavarro.Substack.com



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