

THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

EPOCH INSIGHT

THE

FINAL WAR

China's secret war against America



The Greatest Threat of Our Time

THE THREAT POSED BY COMMUNIST CHINA is the most pressing geopolitical challenge of our generation. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to replace the United States as the world's sole superpower within the next three decades.

While this goal has been recognized by U.S. officials and experts alike, some have failed to appreciate the expansiveness of the CCP's efforts to undermine the United States, both from within and without.

Chinese military strategists have termed the campaign "unrestricted warfare." Under this doctrine, an array of tactics that fall short of kinetic warfare are used to subvert, weaken, and attack the United States. It's an operation that has been underway for decades, going largely unnoticed by the mainstream media until recent years.

This special report of Epoch Insight will delve into various facets of the CCP's plan to destroy the United States. This includes the regime's plans to build a military that can conquer Taiwan and challenge U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific.

More insidious are the CCP's efforts to weaken the United States from within. It has engaged in rampant theft of U.S. technology, refined its approach to influencing American minds on social media, and has sought to infiltrate the political class.

This report seeks to aid in the understanding of the nature, goals, and methods of the CCP—as only then can the dangers presented by the communist regime be countered.

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief




ON THE COVER

The Chinese communist regime has a decades-long plan to systematically defeat the United States.

DANIELO/SHUTTERSTOCK

INSIGHT

by THE EPOCH TIMES

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EPOCH INSIGHT

6 | The Long Game

China aims to supplant the United States within the next three decades.



Chinese People's Liberation Army soldiers during military training in China on Jan. 4, 2021. | STR/AFP via Getty Images

Special Report

12 | Molding Minds

China's disinformation campaigns targeting Americans are becoming more sophisticated.

18 | Military Ambitions

Inside the Chinese military's plans to conquer Taiwan—and then the world.

26 | Tech Threat

How U.S. technology is fueling the Chinese military.

34 | Infographic

China's Secret War Against America.

40 | Hypersonics Race

China is leading the United States in the push to develop cutting-edge missiles.

46 | CCP Spies

A look at some cases in the U.S. crackdown on Chinese espionage.

50 | Campuses Co-Opted

Beijing's multifaceted plan to infiltrate American universities.

56 | Land Buys

U.S. officials are sounding the alarm on China's purchases of U.S. farmland.

64 | The Final War

An Epoch Times documentary delves into the CCP's 100-year plot to defeat the United States.

66 | Transnational Repression

Communist China establishes global presence through overseas police stations.

70 | Elite Capture

U.S. politicians are key targets of Beijing's influence operations.

The Report

The CCP Threat



A soldier gestures outside the Forbidden City in Beijing on Oct. 22, 2020.

PHOTO BY NICOLAS ASFOURI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Columns

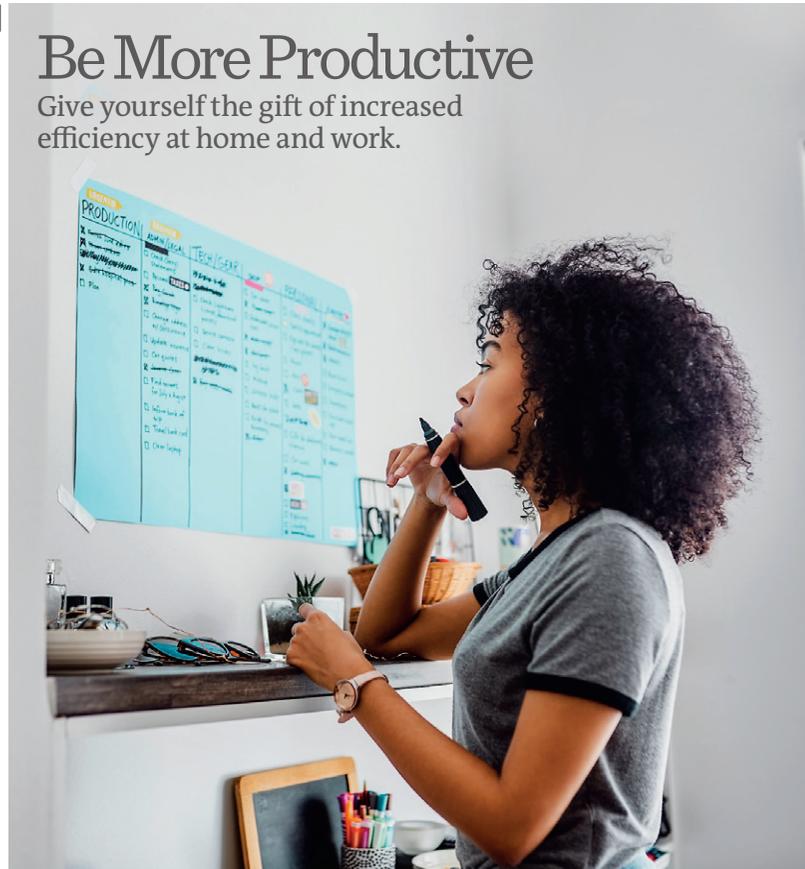
- 80 | Gas Prices**
The current low gas prices are merely a lull before the new year's storm.
- 81 | China**
Apple shifts production within China from Taiwanese to Chinese companies.
- 82 | Recession**
High interest rates and inflation significantly reduced purchasing power.
- 83 | Sustainable Debt**
ESG bond issuance slumped in 2022 as greenwashing headaches persist.
- 84 | Government Stimulus**
The global economy is going into stagnation with elevated inflation.
- 85 | Stock Market**
How should investors prepare for a volatile market in 2023?

Profile

- 86 | Jennifer Sey**
On leaving Levi Strauss and Co. to fight for children during the pandemic.
- 90 | Spread Respect**
The best way to earn the respect of others is to respect them first.

Lifestyle

- 92 | A Very Posh Address**
A fabulous estate ideal for entertaining in Beverly Hills.
- 94 | Beautiful Barcelona**
Come explore the many marvels of the old city of Barcelona.
- 102 | Be More Productive**
Give yourself the gift of increased efficiency at home and work.
- 97 | Be the Landlord's Favorite**
Help ensure a lease renewal with these suggestions for renters.
- 98 | Gifts From the Heart**
A selection of thoughtful, attainable, and enduring tokens of love.



America has turned a blind eye to China's ambitions, says *Michael Pillsbury*

Michael Pillsbury, director for Chinese strategy at the Hudson Institute, during an interview in Upperville, Va. on Oct. 25, 2022.

PHOTO BY PATRICK MAULER/THE EPOCH TIMES

COMMUNIST THREAT

The 100-Year Plan **TO UNSEAT THE US**

By Terri Wu & Jan Jekielek



THE SOVIETS ONCE warned the United States about China: “China has betrayed us in Moscow. And you are next. They’re going to squeeze you dry, and then they’re going to turn on America.”

That’s according to Michael Pillsbury, director for Chinese strategy at conservative think tank Hudson Institute, who sounded the warning in an interview on EpochTV’s “American Thought Leaders.”

The warning came in 1969; Pillsbury was at his first job at the United Nations after completing a doctorate in Chinese studies at Columbia University. One of his assignments was to read Central Intelligence Agency materials about Russia’s view of China.

Years earlier, relations between the two communist powers had ruptured to the point of complete estrangement.

Through these classified documents, Pillsbury learned the Soviets’ perspective: “China had global ambitions to take off the communist movement, first from the Soviet Union, and then dominate the whole world.”

However, the Soviets’ warning wasn’t taken seriously then, by Pillsbury or the United States.

It “sounded to me like a boyfriend talking about his ex-girlfriend, warning that she’d break my heart like she broke his,” Pillsbury wrote in his book “The Hundred-Year Marathon: China’s Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower.”

Driven by wishful thinking or what Pillsbury describes in his book as “false assumptions,” such as that fragile China needed help, China was on the path to democracy, and “China wants to be—and is—just like us,” the U.S. government ignored the Soviets’ warning.

Such wishful thinking has persisted in the decades since, with a temporary pause during the Trump administration.

Chinese communist leaders have been able to achieve this, according to Pillsbury, through a strategy of “inducing complacency to avoid alerting [the] opponent” of Beijing’s real intentions.

Winning a race is easier when your opponent doesn’t know that the race has begun, Pillsbury noted in his book.



A People’s Liberation Army soldier stands guard in front of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, in this file photo.

And Chinese leaders want to keep it this way for as long as possible.

As a result of this strategy, the Chinese regime is still on track with its plan to take over the world, the author told The Epoch Times.

“The ultimate mistake is activating the enemy whom you could have stolen from, [who] could have fueled your power to rise to No. 1,” he said.

“That’s why Xi Jinping has been so careful.

“Xi Jinping has avoided giving the Americans a Sputnik moment or a Pearl Harbor attack that would galvanize our country.”

‘The 100-Year Marathon’

The hundred-year marathon, the title of Pillsbury’s book, refers to commu-

nist China’s long-term effort to realize its “strong nation dream,” mentioned in Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s maiden speech in his new role as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary in 2012. The plan is built around a narrative highlighting the West’s humiliation of China in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Against this backdrop, China seeks to rise to become the new hegemon, replacing the incumbent: the United States. The aim is to achieve this goal by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the Party’s takeover of China.

In the book, Pillsbury wrote that the CCP learned many strategies from China’s history, especially the Warring States period, a tumultuous era of 200 years that ended when the Qin Dynasty first unified China in 221 B.C. During that

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: STEPHEN SHAWER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; -/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; OLIVER KINS (JIANQI) ORIGINAL UPLOAD/EPHON WINDO VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



(Top Right) Henry Kissinger (front row, 5th L), special adviser to President Richard Nixon, and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai (front row, 6th L) pose with their delegations for a group photo in Beijing on Oct. 22, 1971. (Above Right) Henry Kissinger, Chinese leader Mao Zedong (R), and Zhou Enlai in Beijing, in the early 1970s.

period, seven states fought one another through alliances and betrayals.

The central theme of this era, according to the CCP’s historical interpretation, is that one state would rise above and rule the world. Hiding one’s strength until the optimal striking moment was thus essential to achieving that objective. Pillsbury described the Warring States framework as a major underpinning of the Chinese communist playbook for dominating the world.

According to him, the United States needs to map the current competitive situation with China and take specific actions to address the challenge posed by the communist regime. He called the ex-

tremely tough rhetoric utilized by some U.S. officials and scholars, such as those calling for a complete decoupling from China, a “hoax” because he didn’t think super hawks—those who take a hard-line approach to China—were focused enough on legislation and policies that can make a difference. Blanket hawkish rhetoric without specifics is unlikely to win votes in Congress, Pillsbury said.

Chinese Politics ‘Obscure and Secretive’

During the regime’s all-important 20th Party Congress in October 2022, a twice-a-decade meeting during which Xi secured his bid for a third term as CCP

leader, one particular incident drew considerable attention.

On the first day of the week-long event, former CCP leader Hu Jintao was escorted out of a meeting in front of all present media.

Chinese state-run media would later say Hu was removed for health reasons. The statement was posted only on Twitter, which is inaccessible in China.

Many, though, were unconvinced by the official explanation.

Pillsbury said he, too, like many others, watched the video clip of Hu’s removal several times. He interpreted it as “a sign of Xi Jinping’s power that even a former president can be dismissed with a wave of the hand.”

This recent incident reminded Pillsbury of the “obscure and secretive” ❖



Chinese leader Xi Jinping (L) looks on as former leader Hu Jintao is escorted from the closing session of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, at The Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Oct. 22, 2022.

nature of Chinese politics. The opacity of the Party's inner workings was such that the U.S. government wouldn't find out about the significant power struggles within the CCP until well after the fact, Pillsbury said.

He recalled that as a China expert at think tank RAND Corporation, the first memo he wrote to national security adviser Henry Kissinger in 1973 was about 10 significant internal CCP power struggles and how the Americans only learned about them afterward through the storytelling of the winners.

The policy issues at play in these power struggles, Pillsbury said, are "really quite chilling."

"They are debating whether or not to take a really serious, aggressive step. And sometimes, the moderates win; sometimes, the hawks win. But this is all obscured to the outside world," he said.

Pillsbury gave an example during Kissinger's second trip to China in October 1971, a month after Mao Ze-

dong's second-in-command Lin Biao died in an airplane crash. "They had already killed off their vice president, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, quite a few military leaders, and Kissinger is taking his motorcade to go see the Chinese Prime Minister, and he does not know this has happened."

In his book, Pillsbury detailed how the U.S. government was unaware of the CCP infighting and underestimated the strength and influence of the Chinese hawks.

He listed "China's hawks are weak" as one of five false assumptions underlying the United States' wishful thinking on China, along with the more commonly known notion that "engagement brings complete cooperation." Over the decades, the United States had hoped that Beijing would, through engagement, cooperate with Washington and ultimately be assimilated into the Western-led global order.

Then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pointed out that same mistaken as-

sumption in his China policy speech at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library in California in July 2020, four years after the book's publishing.

"We imagined engagement with China would produce a future with bright promise of comity and cooperation," Pompeo said at the time. "But today—today we're all still wearing masks and watching the pandemic's body count rise because the CCP failed in its promises to the world. We're reading every morning new headlines of repression in Hong Kong and in Xinjiang."

US Aided Communist China's Rise

According to Pillsbury, the United States showed China the way to become a superpower despite Beijing's initial reluctance.

An example was the Bank of International Settlements, the prestigious club of rich countries' central banks. China joined the club in 1996. According to Pillsbury, China didn't want to

do it initially. "We are not a capitalist country. We are not going to the Bank of International Settlements," it said, according to Pillsbury.

Yet the U.S. government persuaded China by explaining the benefits. "You will learn what all the other central banks are planning for the coming year in terms of interest rates, reserves, and so forth," the U.S. government said, according to Pillsbury. And in the same way, Washington helped Beijing with entering the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other U.N. specialized agencies, Pillsbury said.

The World Bank played an integral role in assisting China's rise. In his book, Pillsbury wrote that at a meeting with former CCP leader Deng Xiaoping in 1983, World Bank executives "secretly agreed that a team of economists would study China intensively and, looking ahead twenty years, recommended how China could catch up to the United States."

The World Bank team, he wrote, made a series of private recommendations in 1985, consciously endorsing the CCP's socialist approach with "no genuine effort to advocate for a true market economy."

Decades later, during the pandemic, the United States would continue to give China a free pass, Pillsbury noted. In August 2021, the U.S. intelligence community issued an inconclusive report at the end of a 90-day COVID-19 origin investigation ordered by President Joe Biden. According to the report, the Chinese regime would need to fully cooperate with an investigation to determine whether or not the virus came from a laboratory in Wuhan.

"What wishful thinking it is to think we can stroll into the Wuhan laboratory and say: 'Please show us your books. Please show us your experiments,'" Pillsbury said.

Earlier, in April 2020, Washington Post columnist Josh Rogin revealed that U.S. diplomats and officials warned in a 2018 cable—two years before the pandemic—about the "grave safety concerns" at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a biosafety level 4 lab specializing in the study of bat coronaviruses.

"And what do we say about it being unsafe? Condemn this lab or close it down? Get a team in there to see if the PLA [People's Liberation Army] is making nerve gas or not. No. The recommendation was to give money to the lab to upgrade its safety," Pillsbury said.

"Our government officials still see China as a friend and an ally."

Personal Wake-Up Call

In his book, Pillsbury wrote that he bought into such wishful thinking for many years, and was himself a member of the U.S. team that aided China's rise, having held postings in the Department of Defense and State Department.

In 1997, he started questioning the story that China was on the road to democracy. That year, he visited a village near Dongguan in southern China's Guangdong Province to witness the emerging "democratic" elections. Through conversations with locals in Mandarin, Pillsbury discovered the unwritten rules of the game: Candidates weren't allowed any public rallies, advertisements, or campaign posters.

The candidates were also prohibited from criticizing any CCP policies. "The only thing a candidate could do was to compare his personal qualities to those of his opponent. Violations of these rules were treated as crimes," he wrote.

Pillsbury, in the interview, mentioned another critical moment in the past decades: Beijing complained that the United States was slow in sharing new scientific discoveries with China; it hadn't received information about a nanotechnology discovery published in the journal *Scientific American*.

As a result, the United States created a minister counselor for science and technology in the U.S. Embassy to facilitate scientific transfers to China.

Recommendations

Pillsbury said that his first policy recommendation to counter Beijing's designs was to document the current competitive landscape. "We've got to get the public to understand how close China is to surpassing us now, sector by sector," he said.

In the interview, he mentioned "a huge challenge over the defense of Taiwan," the democratic, self-ruled island which Beijing views as its own territory. Pillsbury considers the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022—a bill that provides almost \$4.5 billion in security assistance to Taiwan in the next four years and stipulates severe sanctions to deter China from escalating hostile actions against the island—very important, describing it as a "new focus on Taiwan policy." While the bill didn't pass during the last Congress, it has a shot in 2023 as the Republicans take control of the House, according to Pillsbury.

The author made 12 policy recommendations in his book, but the first he considers the most important. He ended the book with the following:

"The first step, recognizing that there is a marathon, may be the most difficult to take, but it is also the most important.

"America may fail to recognize the problem and may refuse to face the long-term scenario of China not only surpassing us but also growing to double and then triple the size of our economy, by 2049. Then China will have won, by default." ■



The P4 laboratory (C) at Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on May 13, 2020. Top U.S. officials have accused the WIV of being the source of the COVID-19 pandemic.

FROM: KEVIN FRAYER/GETTY IMAGES; HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

*Social media platforms such as Facebook
“have removed tens of thousands of
accounts suspected of inauthentic
manipulation attributed to China in the
past three years,” a report says.*

PHOTO BY DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN

MIND DOMINANCE

THE CCP'S DISINFORMATION WAR ON US SOCIAL MEDIA

News Analysis **BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE**

CLUSTERS OF NEW social media profiles emerge and interact with long-dormant accounts, seemingly exchanging viewpoints from across the American political spectrum.

Some sport American flags for profile pictures; others have images of beautiful women. Almost all are anonymous, though some impersonate real people.

In tweets, posts, and messages, they spread their views. Some stridently defend a woman's right to have an abortion, others the right to life. Some defend the Second Amendment, while others vehemently champion gun control. Some claim that the United States is descending into a leftist tyranny. Still more say it's headed toward fascism.

Above all, they post memes disparaging the United States' political parties and governmental institutions. One meme depicts President Joe Biden with a caption excoriating the Build Back Better slogan. Another meme depicts Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) insinuating that the lawmaker has financial ties with Putin's Russia.

It would be easy to conclude that these clusters of accounts are a perfect representation of the political polarization that has seized the United States in recent years. But that conclusion would be wrong.

None of these accounts are operated by U.S. citizens.

They're part of a wide-reaching series of interconnected influence operations conducted for the benefit of China's communist regime, and they're just the tip of the iceberg.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which rules China as a single-party state, is increasingly manipulating what U.S. citizens see and believe by sowing discord and rancor on social media. Such influence operations, far from being mere propaganda, are deployed in the pursuit of the CCP's greater strategic ambition of undermining and displacing the United States as the leader of the international order.

To be sure, the CCP's ambition of replacing the democratic West with Sino-centric authoritarianism isn't new. But the methods that the regime



The Chinese regime obtains data of American users through social media giants such as TikTok.

is employing in its overseas influence operations are.

According to the testimony of security experts, lawmakers, and numerous reports, the CCP is adapting its strategy for psychological warfare against the weaknesses of open societies, and it's evolving its influence campaigns from corny propaganda about the glory of communism into subtler, more insidious disinformation campaigns intended to make Americans give up on their own country.

Rubio, who was himself the subject of a meme in one such influence operation, said that the effort is inextricably linked to the regime's desire to undermine and destroy the United States.

"The Chinese Communist Party is laser-focused on undermining and, ultimately, overthrowing the United States," the Florida senator told The Ep-

och Times in an email. "It is working overtime to dominate and influence Americans in academia, technology, as well as local and federal government."

"The United States must not be naïve to this threat, and it starts by recognizing and banning the companies, organizations, and software the CCP uses to influence Americans."

China's War on the American Mind

To understand why the CCP is exploiting social media to sow division among the American public, it's necessary to understand what the regime believes its influence operations are striving toward.

The Pentagon's 2022 China Military Power Report, which distills the Defense Department's most authoritative assessments of China's strategy and capabilities, highlights the development of

them into behaving in a manner more in accordance with the regime's desires.

"The goal of CDO is to achieve what the PLA refers to as 'mind dominance,' defined as the use of propaganda as a weapon to influence public opinion to effect change in a nation's social system, likely to create an environment favorable to China and reduce civilian and military resistance to PLA actions," the report said.

"PLA articles on CDO state that seizing mind dominance in the cognitive domain and subduing the enemy without fighting is the highest realm of warfare."

The reason why the CCP is turning Americans against one another by inflaming polarization is simple enough then: A nation at war with itself is hardly capable of fighting against communist China.

"PLA articles on cognitive domain operations state that seizing mind dominance in the cognitive domain and subduing the enemy without fighting is the highest realm of warfare."

Pentagon's 2022 China Military Power Report

Sam Kessler, a geopolitical advisor with risk management firm North Star Support Group, said that the CCP's new influence operations ought then to be considered within the broader context of its military doctrines and strategies.

Foremost among them is the regime's doctrine of "Unrestricted Warfare," through which the CCP commits all aspects of society to achieve victory, as well as its strategy leveraging the "Three Warfares" of legal, media, and psychological war.

"[The CCP] are implementing a cognitive and asymmetrical war, which are subversive operations aimed at causing fear, confusion, disruption, and polarization within American society as well as in other targeted countries," Kessler said.

CCP Sparking 'Societal Collapse' of US

By framing how Americans discuss the issues of the times, and by polarizing them to the point of being unable to work with one another, Kes-

ler believes that the CCP is setting the stage to ensure that the United States is incapable of meeting a crisis and more likely of sliding into a national death spiral.

"The goal is to weaken the foundation of a society and its institutions by employing a long game type of strategy that usually targets unsuspecting individuals and groups," Kessler said.

"This can be implemented to cause distrust in American institutions ... Once these things become tainted and eroded in the long term, it is usually very difficult to repair them. As a result, history has shown these methods [are] highly effective in causing societal collapse if not just chaos when allowed to happen over a long period of time."

Perhaps nowhere is this ambition more clear than in the case of "Dragonbridge," a recently discovered malign influence operation conducted in support of the CCP and its goals.

Intelligence firm Mandiant, which uncovered the ongoing operation, found that the campaign seeks to aggressively undermine U.S. interests by discouraging Americans from voting, inflaming political tensions, and claiming that the United States is covertly responsible for what's actually CCP aggression.

The Dragonbridge operation does this by impersonating legitimate groups, plagiarizing and altering news articles, and posing as U.S. citizens eager to criticize the United States' record on race and social justice issues.

According to Kessler, such efforts are part and parcel of the regime's strategy for weakening the United States from the inside.

"In many ways, cognitive warfare is more effective in draining a society's ability to be ready to respond when



The CCP seeks to shape the behavior of Americans to the detriment of the United States by exploiting U.S.-based social media platforms.

there's more confusion, poor morale, and depleted mental stamina," Kessler said.

"After all, if the internal backbone of a society is weakened, wearied, and mentally exhausted through these targeted influence campaigns, then it is more susceptible to being manipulated and controlled by foreign adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran."

CCP Influence Ops Are Increasing

It was unclear in previous years if the regime would take direct action against that backbone. The regime has historically targeted members of the Chinese diaspora with pro-communist propaganda, and there's a steep learning curve from such operations to more broadly sowing political enmity among American citizens en masse.

That has changed, however. In a matter of only three or four years, the regime and its sponsored actors appear to have doubled down on creating chaos internationally, as is documented across several reports published by intelligence firm Recorded Future.

One 2019 report, for example, found that from 2016 to 2019, CCP influence operations fundamentally differed from those of other adversarial nations such as Russia.

Russia's operations rely on bot networks and "troll farms" that operate

in coordinated online influence campaigns aimed at destabilizing target nations by increasing intranational strife. Such campaigns create distrust and confusion among voters in democratic societies, and thereby erode the society's capacity to respond to more overt threats from the nation directing the influence operation.

"Cognitive warfare is more effective in draining a society's ability to be ready to respond when there's more confusion, poor morale, and depleted mental stamina."

Sam Kessler, geopolitical adviser, North Star Support Group

Prior to 2019, the CCP largely exploited the United States' open media environment to promote positive views of China and communism. Its state-backed influencers used paid advertising and bot networks to earn favorable views abroad.

By 2022, however, another report found that the CCP had successfully pivoted into a new phase of influence operations, marked by the targeted messaging of well-defined audiences that were segmented based on granular demographic data, not unlike that used by

global marketing and research agencies.

"2019 marked a turning point in China's use of online disinformation, with foreign-facing computational propaganda increasing rapidly," the report stated.

"In the post-2019 period, inauthentic campaigns and online personalities have become staples of CCP propaganda. YouTube, Facebook, and other global social media platforms have removed tens of thousands of accounts suspected of inauthentic manipulation attributed to China in the past three years."

These new accounts, according to Recorded Future, likely receive guidance or material support from the CCP's United Front Work Department, a powerful agency charged with overseeing global influence operations, and the regime's top intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security.

What's more, the swift evolution in tactics and strategy could indicate that the regime is learning to conduct psychological warfare from a more senior partner like Russia, whose own cyber tactics the new Chinese methods closely resemble.

"China and Russia have forged a very close partnership that has greatly evolved during the last three decades," Kessler said. "It's very possible that we'll

witness a formalized strategic alliance between China and Russia to counter the U.S. and the West more directly at some point in our lives, if it hasn't occurred already."

"As a result, Beijing and Moscow have improved their defense and security ties in addition to other things like economics, infrastructure, energy, and natural resources. This especially includes cyber partnerships between China and Russia in terms of cooperation and coordination regarding information security and operations between the two."

Data at Heart of CCP Influence Campaigns

Given the regime's newfound focus on cognitive domain operations and its increasingly strident behavior in attempting to undermine the interests of the United States, Americans may rightly wonder what it is that powers China's disinformation machine.

The answer is data.

Indeed, the regime is leveraging vast troves of data on American citizens every single day as part of its effort to disrupt the United States from within.

The 2022 Recorded Future report found that the CCP's deployment of "precise communication," a means of conducting influence operations based on targeted audiences, required an extraordinary amount of in-depth data organized at the level of individuals, communities, and nations, and further tailored to account for culture, economics, religion, and personal interests, among other factors.

"China's implementation of this strategy requires an in-depth understanding of target audiences, which is being attained—with the aid of international firms—through area studies research, in-country surveys, and online behavioral data," the report said.

Moreover, the report said, the regime's propaganda arms were almost certainly clients of China Data Matrix, a China-based media monitoring company "that claims to have 'complete coverage' of Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Line, and other major platforms, web portals, communities, forums, and blogs from over 100 countries and 10 languages."

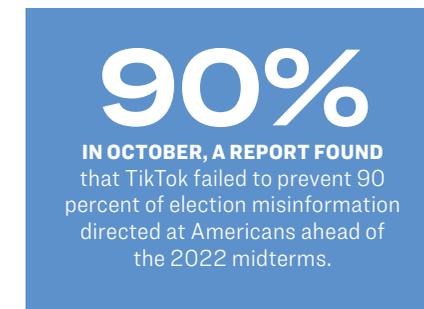
It's perhaps unsurprising then that CCP laws categorize data as a national resource, subject to communist collectivization, and therefore mandate that all data stored in the country or by Chinese companies must be handed over to the Party upon request.

This need for data to fuel the regime's influence operations also makes the presence of Chinese-owned companies in the United States problematic.

The type of data that might be gleaned from social media giant TikTok through its China-based parent company ByteDance, for example, could be used to directly inform the construction of an influence campaign by communist authorities.



Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) believes that "the U.S. is failing to take the threat of the CCP seriously."



House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas) is acutely aware of the problem. He believes that the regime's ability to obtain the data of American users through companies like TikTok is a key part of the puzzle.

"Unfortunately, it is no surprise that the CCP is working to sow political discord among the American people. The U.S. is failing to take the threat of the CCP seriously," McCaul told The Epoch Times in an email.

"Bytedance, a CCP-controlled company, operates the most popular social media network among American youth, and CCP entities are buying up our sensitive data. A Republican-led House is going to attack these threats head on."

Defending an Open System Is Difficult, but Possible

The CCP seeks to shape the behavior of Americans to the detriment of the United States. It aims to do this by exploiting the openness of American society and U.S.-based social media platforms. The threat of domestic crisis stemming from influence operations is rising.

Developments in recent months show that the CCP is gaining in its quest to polarize Americans and undermine the American political system.

In November 2022, China-backed bots spammed Twitter, taking over hashtags and blocking out regional searches in order to prevent users from seeing anti-lockdown protests occurring across China.

In October 2022, a report found that TikTok failed to prevent 90 percent of election misinformation directed at Americans ahead of the 2022 midterms, including advertising that contained explicitly false information intended to prevent Americans from voting.

In September 2022, Meta dismantled several China-based influence operations, the substance of which was described in the opening of this story.

China-based actors have tried to influence U.S. elections, attempted to undermine U.S. stability by creating racial enmity and attempted to discredit and even attack Chinese dissidents running for Congress.

According to another Recorded Future report published in October 2022, such efforts will only increase in the years to come.

"China's state-sponsored influencers are almost certainly conducting malign influence operations targeting English and Chinese-speaking U.S. audiences with divisive political multimedia content on social media," the report stated.

All is not lost, however. According to Kessler, there's hope in transparency, and the ability of CCP agents to stir political vitriol and undermine U.S. national security lessens every time such an effort is made clear.

To that end, Kessler said that the future of TikTok is just one weathervane that one could use to tell which way the wind is blowing.

"Recently, there have been greater efforts to deter the level of influence that TikTok has on the American mediascape," Kessler said. "It will only continue to grow as more lawmakers, federal officials, and investigators associate TikTok with Chinese state media as well as being a tool of Chinese espionage."

"Treating it as a tool of espionage and subversive warfare will either eliminate TikTok from the American mediascape or at least completely reform it with algorithms that won't be designed at harming the social fabric of the country and its children." ■

A submarine of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy participates in a naval parade at sea near Qingdao, Shandong Province, China, on April 23, 2019.

PHOTO BY MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

MILITARY

A PLAN FOR

GLOBAL CONQUEST

INSIDE THE CCP'S BID TO CONQUER TAIWAN AND THEN THE WORLD

News Analysis BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE



ON A CRISP, SUNNY DAY IN October 2022, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Xi Jinping appeared in full military fatigues at a command center in eastern China and ordered the regime's military wing to prepare for any war.

Though such bellicosity has become something of the norm in Chinese communist diplomacy, the looming threat of an invasion of Taiwan and a much-anticipated meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden rendered the words more potent.

Indeed, just days later, Xi met with Biden in Indonesia. Shortly after the talk, Biden said that there was no need for a new Cold War and that the United States would pursue peace and stability with China in the Taiwan Strait.

The CCP issued a statement of its own mere hours later, quoting Xi.

Cross-strait peace and stability and Taiwan's independence are as irreconcilable as water and fire, Xi said, according to state-owned propaganda outlet Global Times.

It was just the latest statement from the CCP threatening the lives of so-called separatist forces in Taiwan, a label that Xi and his regime apply to the president of Taiwan and virtually all of the island's democratically elected government.

The rhetoric of war emanating from the communist regime at every turn as of late has been equally matched by its military development. Now, a growing number of experts believe that a CCP invasion of Taiwan is not only likely, but inevitable and that such a war would be just one step on the path to supplanting the United States from its position as leader of the global order.

James Fanell, a government fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in Switzerland and former director of intelligence and information operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, explained that the CCP is playing a long game.

"Due to the continuing guidance of the past three leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, the PRC has been on a 20-plus-year military modernization program," Fanell said, using an acronym for the official name of communist China, the People's Republic of China.

The CCP's military wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), has a two-pronged goal, he said: To seize Taiwan and topple America from its place of prominence on the global stage.

"This ongoing PLA modernization program is

aimed at supporting the CCP's strategic ambition to displace the United States from the Indo-Pacific, and to ultimately restore the PRC to what they believe is China's rightful position as the leader of the world," Fanell said.

"Today, that entails leading the global order across all levers of national power, especially in the military domain, both conventional and nuclear."

Total Military Superiority

Speaking on the subject of conventional military buildup last year, Dakota Wood, a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, said that China's military now numerically dwarfs that of the United States in almost every area of measurement and that the CCP would have the advantage of numerous land, air, and sea-based systems in any conflict.

"Numerically, it's very concerning," Wood said during an Oct. 18, 2022, interview with NTD, a sister media outlet of The Epoch Times. "As an example, we've got fewer than 300 ships in the U.S. Navy. Of those, 100 are at sea on any day. Of that 100, about 60 are in the western Pacific.

"The Chinese navy alone is 360 ships. So, just in numbers, even if our ships are far better than theirs, it's still a 6-to-1 disadvantage."

Fanell said that this numeral superiority is the result of an effort that was decades in the making and spanning numerous CCP leaders.

"The initial focus of the PRC's military modernization program beginning in the early 2000s was largely focused on asymmetric weapons, like anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles," Fanell said.



"CCP leaders have embarked on what may be the most threatening weapons development to date: the massive buildup of the PRC's nuclear arsenal."

James Fanell, government fellow,
Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Such investments, he said, initially helped to build out the regime's "counter-intervention" strategy. More commonly referred to as "anti-access/area-denial" in the West, the counter-intervention strategy was designed to block U.S. forces from engaging in the Indo-Pacific, thereby ensuring that no Western intervention was possible for a CCP invasion of Taiwan or the



forced acquisition of other claimed territories in the South and East China Seas.

"For the next 20 years, the PRC's Central Military Commission prioritized the buildup of its Navy to provide the PLA an overmatch of anti-access and area-denial forces," Fanell said, referring to the regime's top military body.

"During that time, we saw the initial focus on the buildup of the PLA Navy's submarine forces, and, over the past decade, that focus shifted into mass production of frigates, destroyers, cruisers, and large-deck amphibious warships. The culmination of the naval modernization program was epitomized by the fielding of three aircraft carriers."

Such vessels include the Type 075, an amphibious assault ship that's vital to future missions aimed at conquering Taiwan, and the Type 055, a heavy cruiser now capable of launching hypersonic nuclear missiles designed to target U.S. aircraft carriers operating in the Indo-Pacific. That armament, according to Naval News, could make the CCP's cruisers

"the most heavily armed warships worldwide."

These new vessels and armaments are thus serving to transition the CCP's navy from mere numerical superiority to a qualitative advantage as well, capable not only of preventing the United States from effectively deterring conflict but also of overcoming American forces in open battle with next-generation weapons.

According to Fanell, that development hasn't been limited to China's navy, but also extends to its ground and air forces.

The CCP's conventional military development is far from the most concerning part of its quest for hard power, however, and only scratches the surface of what the regime hopes to accomplish through military might.

"In the past two years, we have seen the CMC [Central Military Commission] shift focus again to a new generation of asymmetric weapons such as hypersonic missiles and swarming unmanned systems from the sea, air, and land," Fanell said.

"Most importantly, CCP leaders have

Chinese military DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missiles are displayed at a military parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on Oct. 1, 2019.

embarked on what may be the most threatening weapons development to date: the massive buildup of the PRC's nuclear arsenal," Fanell said.

Nuclear Breakout

The CCP has steadily worked to expand and modernize its nuclear arsenal across the triad of land, sea, and air capabilities and the discovery of more than 100 new missile silos in the deserts of western China in the past two years did little to quell concern of a new bid by the communist power to double down on nuclear terror.

The vast expansion of the regime's nuclear arsenal, which the Pentagon anticipates will reach 1,000 weapons by 2030, isn't the only problem for the United States, however. Indeed, the drastic improvement in the quality of technology of China's weapons may be an even larger threat.

The regime's new hypersonic and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), such as the CCP's Dongfeng-41 (DF-41), boast multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle systems. These systems allow each missile to be armed with multiple warheads (10 in the case of the DF-41), each of which can strike out at its own target while the missile is in orbit.



(Top Left) U.S. Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall speaks at the National Press Club in Washington on April 19, 2022.

(Above) A flag-lowering ceremony takes place at Liberty Square in Taipei, Taiwan, on Aug. 9, 2022.

(Left) China's sole aircraft carrier, the Liaoning (R), arrives in Hong Kong on July 7, 2017.



An expert says the CCP's military wing has a two-pronged goal: to seize Taiwan and topple America from its place of prominence on the global stage.

cates its nuclear and conventional missiles so that prying eyes can never be certain if a silo is housing a regular missile or a nuclear one.

That situation led Adm. Charles Richard, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, to assert that the regime was engaged in a "strategic breakout" that would enable it to meet and then exceed the United States' own capabilities.

"As I assess our level of deterrence against China, the ship is slowly sinking," Richard said during a 2022 speech.

"It is sinking slowly, but it is sinking, as fundamentally they are putting capability in the field faster than we are."

It was a grim assessment, but one with which Fanell ultimately agreed. Moreover, Fanell warned that such a nuclear breakout could presage a change in the regime's military doctrine concerning the use of nuclear weapons in a conflict. The CCP formally maintains a policy of no first use, meaning that it has vowed not to initiate nuclear conflict and to never use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states.

"This 'strategic breakout' portends to shift the PRC's so-called 'no first use' policy to one of 'first use' where Beijing can threaten nuclear blackmail against the U.S. and its allies from coming to Taiwan's defense," Fanell said.

"This change is by far the most destabilizing PRC military modernization to date, one that will directly affect Taiwan's freedom, regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, and even shift the global balance of power in the near and long term."

To that end, the CCP has consistently refused to partake in talks aimed at nuclear nonproliferation and, according to the U.S. defense strategy, is explicitly expanding and modernizing its own nuclear arsenal with the purpose of threatening the United States.

Likewise, the CCP's ambition to create a multipolar world with itself at the center of world events is central to its core strategic goal of displacing the United States. Thus, while the United States seeks solutions to diplomatic and military quandaries that will maintain the status quo, the CCP has no intention of doing anything of the sort. The regime's goal is to destroy the status quo, not to preserve it.

Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall addressed that very subject during a talk in September 2022.

"One of the most significant changes has

Thus, each of the CCP's 1,000 new nuclear weapons could boast as many as 10 nuclear warheads. As such, if the CCP has already built enough DF-41s to stock all of its newly constructed silos, it could have increased its nuclear warhead stockpile 14 times over.

"In the space of 24 months, the PLA Rocket Force built 350 new ICBM silos in Central and Western China," Fanell said. "These new silos are assessed to support the DF-41 ICBM.

"With each missile having 10 multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles, this development has increased the PRC's nuclear arsenal from some 250 warheads to over 3,500."

Much to the chagrin of Western analysts, however, it's impossible to say with certainty how many nuclear weapons or warheads the regime actually has in its possession, as the CCP co-lo-

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L: DREW WANGER/GETTY IMAGES, ANNABELLE CHH/GETTY IMAGES, ANTHONY WALLACE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



been the nuclear breakout of China,” Kendall said. “The only nation-state that [now] has the capacity, the resources, and the strategic intent to really threaten the United States as a leader in the world ... is China.”

‘The Invasion Will Come’

To answer the question of why all this newfound bombast? Why the shiny new military and nuclear weapons? The answer appears simple enough: The CCP intends to use overwhelming force in the near future and, by most accounts, its first target will be Taiwan.

The CCP claims that Taiwan is a rogue province of China that must be united with the mainland, and refuses to rule out the use of force to achieve this goal. Its leadership has indeed explicitly threatened war on the issue numerous times.

Taiwan has never been controlled by the CCP, however. The island nation has been self-governed since 1949 and boasts a thriving democratic government and market economy.

Washington, meanwhile, diplomatically recognizes China but doesn’t endorse the CCP’s claims over Taiwan, while also maintaining economic and legal ties with Taipei, which bind it to provide the arms necessary for the island’s defense.

Much of the worry among Western analysts and strategists has thus focused on how the United States and its allies can deter an ever-expanding PLA from gobbling up Taiwan.

But some believe that the invasion can’t be prevented, only fought.

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Spalding said the tension over the situation between the CCP, Taiwan, and the United States would end in conflict and that it’s too late to deter such an outcome.

“The situation will be resolved,” Spalding said. “It will be resolved when the Chinese invade Taiwan. There is no way to deter it.

“The resolution is the invasion and the invasion will come at the time of China’s choosing. There’s nothing we can do at this point to stop it.”

To that end, Spalding said that the CCP’s military and foreign policy toward the United States was clearly oriented to push Washington away from entering such a conflict in the defense of Taiwan. Regardless of the outcome, Spalding said, such a war would end in global catastrophe and, perhaps, nuclear war.



(Left) Anti-landing spikes are placed along the coast of Taiwan’s Kinmen islands, which sit just two miles from the mainland China coast (background), on Oct. 20, 2020. (Below) U.S. Army soldiers disembark upon their arrival by plane at an air force base in Swidwin, Poland, on April 23, 2014.

FROM TOP: SAM YEH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

1,000 WEAPONS

THE PENTAGON anticipates that the CCP’s nuclear arsenal will reach 1,000 weapons by 2030.



Regardless, the regime was committed to destroying Taiwan’s democratic way of life with force, according to Spalding, also a contributor to The Epoch Times. CCP leadership was smart enough to understand that the free Taiwanese people would never voluntarily unite with communist China.

“They’re not going to abandon their military force when it comes to taking Taiwan,” he said. “They think that that’s the only way to get reunification.”

And the regime is likely right in that regard, Spalding said. Taiwan is Asia’s most thriving democracy with a world-class market economy and a populace that enjoys broad civil and political freedoms.

“There’s no way that they’re going to convince the Taiwanese people through peaceful means to join China after what they did to Hong Kong,” he said, referring to Beijing’s brutal suppression of the Asian financial hub.

“There is no way that the Taiwanese population is going to want to come under the yoke of the Chinese Communist Party.

“Everybody’s eyes are wide open. The only question to ask is when is that invasion going to come?”

US Must Acknowledge New Cold War

On the issue of Taiwan and the inevitability of catastrophic conflict, Fanell offered a more hopeful stance, believing that the deterrence of such a war was still possible, though requiring immediate and vigorous action from the United States.

“In order to take on this threat, the United States must first acknowledge that the threat is existential and one that it must dominate the ‘whole of government’ agenda regardless of which political party is in power,” Fanell said.

“As it relates to the military realm, the U.S. must reprioritize its national security strategy away from one of cooperation and competition with the PRC to one of a war footing against the CCP, which is in a Cold War with the U.S.”

To that end, Fanell called on Congress to pass a bill to expand the U.S. Navy to at least 355 combat vessels in the same kind of massive increase achieved by legislation in 1940, when the United States expanded its maritime power to defeat the Imperial Japanese navy in World War II.

Similarly, he said, the United States would need to further arm Taiwan, Japan, and its other allies with weapons capable of sinking PLA fleets. While many such sales had already been approved by Congress, he noted, bureaucratic red tape and regulations were slowing the flow of weapons to the point that orders placed by Taiwan now wouldn’t reach the island for years to come in some cases.

“The bureaucratic red tape must be set aside and the munitions must begin to flow, even in this year,” Fanell said.

Ultimately, Fanell said, the CCP is in a war with the United States, albeit a cold one. And the United States has no hope of winning that war or preventing a global conflict if it doesn’t admit that such a new cold war exists.

Only through its own expansion and modernization, Fanell said, could the United States hope to remain in its place as leader of the free world.

“Ultimately, the United States must build up both conventional and nuclear force posture, along with a combined command and control structure for those forces,” Fanell said.

“[Such is necessary] in order to force CCP leaders back to the ‘drawing board’ to reconsider the success of any attempt to invade Taiwan or conduct any other such act of military expansionism.” ■

Chinese soldiers march at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Sept. 30, 2022.

PHOTO BY NOEL CELIS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

TECH WAR

BORROWED SWORDS



CHINA'S MILITARY IS BUILT WITH US TECHNOLOGY

News Analysis BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

IN CALIFORNIA, A FORMER U.S. Army pilot sells classified aviation research to China's communist regime.

In Kentucky, leaders of a defense contracting company allegedly conspire to sell technical drawings to China and illicitly introduce Chinese parts into the Pentagon's supply chain.

In Illinois, a China-based company allegedly bribes workers to steal proprietary communications technology from their American employers.

In Washington, a government agency is believed to be hacked by China-based cybercriminals who specialize in collecting national defense secrets.

These events highlight just some of the numerous methods that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is using to co-opt next-generation U.S. technologies for the benefit of its own military modernization program.

Indeed, U.S. technology is fueling communist China's military development to such an extent that experts believe, and reports attest, the issue presents a clear and present danger to both the United States and the international order that it leads.

Questions linger. How does U.S. technology find its way into the hands of the CCP? Why don't the companies providing that technology do more to stop it? How deep does the threat to the United States really go?

Insider Threat

As CEO of strategic risk and counterintelligence firm BlackOps Partners, Casey Fleming's job these days mostly focuses on sounding the alarm and working to counter the CCP's strategy of hybrid warfare, which he considers to pose an existential risk to the United States.

In large part, he says, espionage conducted by actors in or associated with U.S. companies supercharges the development of the CCP's military wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

"The CCP obtains our technologies through cyber espionage, CCP or PLA 'employees,' or compromised American employees through monetary compensation or blackmail, including contractors and in the supply chain," Fleming told *The Epoch Times*.



(Left) A People's Liberation Army Air Force WZ-7 high-altitude reconnaissance drone in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, China, on Sept. 27, 2021. **(Above)** An illustration of the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency's Falcon Hypersonic Test Vehicle emerges from its rocket nose cone and prepares to reenter the Earth's atmosphere.

"Mostly, it obtains technology through espionage and IP theft, though roughly one-third is through legitimate means including partnerships and CCP law requirements."

To that end, a Department of Justice statement in November 2021 reported that 80 percent of all economic espionage prosecutions conducted by the department since 2018 involved conduct that directly benefited the CCP.

Likewise, former Air Force and Space Force Chief Software Officer Nicolas Chaillan said that insider threat is a leading cause of the technology transfer between the United States and China, and that the CCP is sending people to infiltrate American institutions of all varieties.

"Insider threat is probably the most underestimated threat of all these top organizations on the commercial side," Chaillan said in 2021.

"The fact is, the Chinese Communist Party is really sending a lot of people to our universities and to our most in-

novative companies. There is a very big risk of exfiltration of data from within."

While the concept of insider threat often seems theatrical or even conspiratorial to the average citizen, the fact is that communist China's most terrifying next-generation weapons are the direct result of such efforts.

Indeed, it was through insiders at the United States' top nuclear facility that the CCP was able to subvert U.S. research, using it to develop the regime's own hypersonic missiles.

Hypersonic Missiles Built on US Tech

In the summer of 2021, the CCP secretly launched a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile around the world. When news of the event was revealed to the public in October, it didn't take long for experts and lawmakers alike to assert that the test couldn't have been conducted without the aid of stolen U.S. technologies and research.

"From this test, to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, to Xinjiang, U.S. technology has contributed to the Chinese Communist Party's ability to kill Americans, conduct dangerous research, and commit genocide," Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) wrote in an email at the time.

"U.S. companies need to choose: Are you with us, or are you with this genocidal communist regime?"

Gallagher's statement, it turned out, was half right.

The CCP did enhance its ability to kill Americans with U.S. research. That research didn't come from a private corporation this time around, however. It came from the Department of Energy.

The regime's nuclear-capable hypersonic weapons were developed, at least in part, by people who were trained at the United States' top nuclear laboratory.

To date, at least 162 top research scientists from the Los Alamos National Laboratory were systematically recruited by the CCP to work on new weapons

platforms, according to an investigative report released last year by strategic intelligence firm Strider Technologies.

The report found that the subsequent research those scientists conducted for China advanced the regime's military in profound ways, and helped to develop hypersonic missiles, jet engines, deep-earth penetrating warheads, stealth

able contributions to [China's] hypersonic, missile, and submarine programs that present an array of security risks for the United States and the entire free world," the report said.

Of the 162 scientists now in the employ of the CCP and its military machine, the report found, at least 59 were part of the regime's flagship talent



"Insider threat is probably the most underestimated threat of all these top organizations on the commercial side."

Nicolas Chaillan, former chief software officer, U.S. Air Force and Space Force

submarines, and unmanned autonomous vehicles.

Much of that research conducted by the former Los Alamos scientists now directly threatens U.S. national security and could be used against U.S. forces in the event of a conflict.

"Former Los Alamos scientists have made, and continue to make, consider-

recruitment program, the Thousand Talents Program, which seeks to attract overseas Chinese educated in elite programs back to the mainland to propel the regime to dominance.

As such, the report said that similar episodes could be likely across the whole government.

"Similar recruitment efforts may ❖

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L. NOEL LOEWS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF DARPA, JARED QUAMINSKI/CONSERVATIVE PARTNERSHIP INSTITUTE

be widespread among U.S. government-funded laboratories, academic research institutions, and major centers of innovation,” the report said.

“These programs are leveraging taxpayer-funded research to advance [China’s] economic development and military modernization.”

China’s rapid military modernization isn’t limited to weapons platforms, however. To understand this, it’s vital to look deeper at the systems those weapons themselves rely on, systems that too often are also illicitly sourced from the United States.

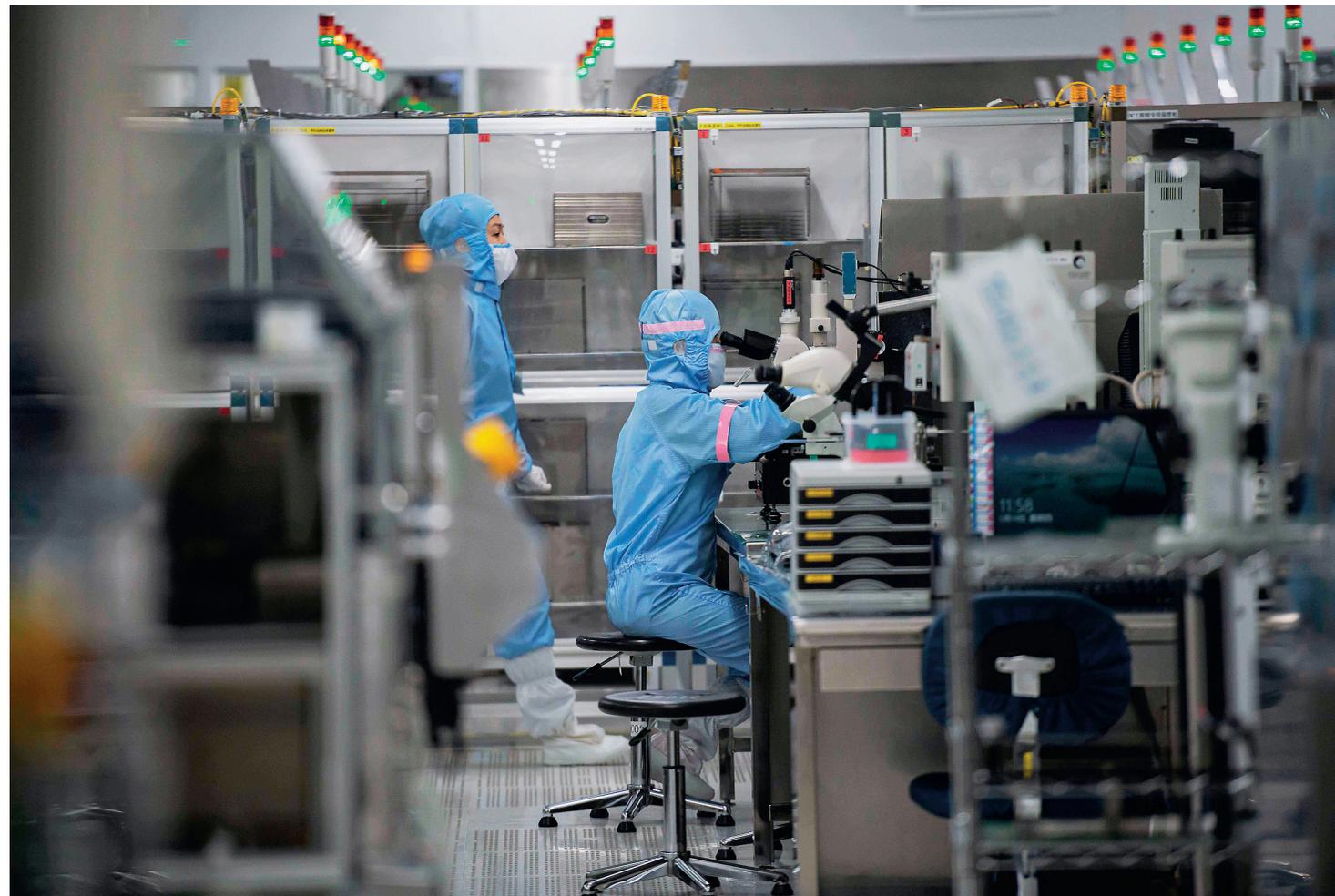
Artificial Intelligence and Quantum Computing

When discussing the technologies sought after by the CCP, Fleming said that the regime places a premium on next-generation research that could help it to leapfrog the United States’ technological development.

“All technology is sought by the CCP but there is an added emphasis on AI, quantum computing, semiconductors, and cyber,” Fleming said.

“Nearly all Chinese military technologies are built on stolen IP [intellectual property] from the U.S. and our free-world allies. A limited number are from stolen IP stemming from previous partnerships with Russia.”

In short, the regime seeks AI to sort and leverage vast amounts of data, quantum computing to give that AI unprecedented processing power, and semiconductors to do that quantum computing.



Workers during production at Renesas Electronics, a global Japanese semiconductor manufacturer, in Beijing on May 14, 2020.

considers data itself to be a “national resource” and therefore subject to communist collectivization. Any data stored by businesses in mainland China is subject to the regime’s national security, intelligence, cybersecurity, and data export laws, which were designed to facilitate technology transfer.

The regime’s 2021 data protection law requires that CCP officials vet certain data collected within China before it’s sent abroad. Likewise, the regime’s 2016 cybersecurity law requires network operators to provide technical support to public and national security organizations. The regime’s 2017 national intelligence law meanwhile requires that all organizations “support, assist, and cooperate with national intelligence efforts,” by handing over any and all data upon request, including proprietary information.

This cluster of laws serves to effectively politicize U.S. companies operating in China by funneling their IP and most prized technologies to CCP authorities.

“All foreign companies operating in China and Hong Kong must provide all the intellectual property, trade secrets, and data of their companies and clients

to the CCP,” Fleming said.

“This includes all consulting firms and banks operating in China. Every company.”

To that end, the CCP’s authoritarian approach to data collection for the purpose of supercharging its own development is a leading method of how U.S. technologies end up in the Chinese communist military.

But given that it’s been the case for many years, and given that the widespread problem of insider threat is well known, does there come a time when U.S. companies continue along with the status quo for so long and with so little thought as to be considered complicit in aiding the military development of the CCP?

Killing With a Borrowed Sword

A 2022 report by the nonprofit Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC) and consultant group Horizon Advisory found that several U.S. companies were, in fact, complicit.

Numerous U.S. companies provided both direct and indirect support to the CCP, the report said.

Amazon, Apple, Dell, Facebook, GE, Google, Intel, and Microsoft all engaged in deals and maintained business links “that may directly or indirectly support China’s state surveillance, military modernization, and human rights.”

Technology at Georgetown University (CSET), the PLA is making “significant progress” adapting AI to combat and combat support technologies.

only 24 that dealt with the purchase of the types of high-end semiconductor chips used for AI applications. Nearly all of them were from U.S. manufacturers.

Similarly, military-affiliated organizations within China are actively working with U.S. tech corporations to further develop their AI capabilities with the explicit purpose of improving the regime’s combat efficacy.

A previous CSET report, for example, found that U.S.-based chipmaker Intel conducted research with China-based company 4Paradigm.

That research was ostensibly on optimizing memory in very large databases. Intel previously wrote in an email to The Epoch Times that the research was academic in nature. Such research was marred, however, by the fact that 4Paradigm at the time maintained a contract with the PLA to develop AI decision-making and human-machine

teaming software for use at the battalion and company levels of China’s military.

The manner in which research originating from Los Alamos and Intel was delivered to the CCP regime raises important questions as to the relationship between U.S. research institutions, whether they be public or private, and communist China.

Namely, what can be done to prevent the flow of technology to the CCP, and at what point are U.S. companies complicit in aiding the nation’s greatest strategic competitor and potential military adversary?

CCP Laws Created to Steal Technology

The flow of research and technology from the United States to China doesn’t always indicate corporate malfeasance. More often than not, CCP law is to blame.

One reason for this is that the CCP

“U.S. technology has contributed to the Chinese Communist Party’s ability to kill Americans, conduct dangerous research, and commit genocide.”



Rep. Mike Gallagher

But to what end does the regime plan on using these critical and emergent technologies?

In a word: Combat.

According to a 2022 report by The Center for Security and Emerging

Importantly, the report found that the majority of the regime’s access to such technology was almost entirely dependent on American IP.

Out of 66,000 public contracts issued by the PLA, the report found, there were

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: NICOLA SASSO/ARPA VIA GETTY IMAGES; ANDREA VERRELLI/GETTY IMAGES; U.S. HOUSE OFFICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



An artificial intelligence application in Shanghai on June 18, 2021. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army is making “significant progress” adapting AI to combat and combat-support technologies, a report says.

80%

A DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE statement in November 2021 reported that 80 percent of all economic espionage prosecutions conducted by the department since 2018 involved conduct that directly benefited the CCP.

162
SCIENTISTS

AT LEAST 162 TOP RESEARCH scientists from the Los Alamos National Laboratory were systematically recruited by the CCP to work on new weapons platforms, according to a report.

violations,” the report said.

The trend has been in full swing for many years and most of the companies involved continue to work with the CCP in a manner that allows the regime to clone their technologies and which directly undermines U.S. national security.

In 2014, for example, Intel agreed to invest \$1.5 billion in a holding company owned by Chinese semiconductor manufacturer Tsinghua Unigroup, a company that was later blocked from purchasing U.S. companies because of its connections to the Chinese military.

Later, in 2015, Intel was banned from selling certain microprocessors intended to help update a Chinese supercomputer that the U.S. government believed was being used for nuclear weapons research.

Also in 2015, computer giant Dell entered into a partnership to develop advanced cloud computing, big data, and

smart cities with Tsinghua Tongfang, a Chinese state-owned software company and subsidiary of Tsinghua Holdings, a company that sells communications equipment to the Chinese military.

The same year, the U.S. Navy was forced to seek new servers for a system used to track and defend against enemy missile attacks because it was discovered that IBM had sold the same technology to China-based Lenovo, effectively ensuring the Chinese military would have access to the same technology.

In 2016, telecommunications giant Cisco formed a \$100 million joint venture to develop IT infrastructure, data centers, and networking equipment with Inspur, a company known to service clients that provide China’s military with missile research.

Also in 2016, U.S.-based Hewlett Packard entered a joint venture with a subsidiary of Unisplendour, called H3C.



A security officer walks past a Google booth at the first China International Import Expo in Shanghai on Nov. 5, 2018.

means to weaken the adversary and kill its will to fight.”

The only way to win that war, proponents of such tech bans believe, is through decoupling completely from communist China economically and barring the transfer of vital technologies. Only by preventing the free flow of IP to the regime, and forcing companies to invest instead in the United States, can the ascent of the regime be overcome.

To that end, the Biden administration has made strides to sever the parasitic relationship between American IP and Chinese military companies.

It has banned nearly two dozen Chinese manufacturers of advanced semiconductor chips from using U.S. research and tech, reinvested billions of dollars into developing new chip plants to entice tech corporations back to the United States from vulnerable overseas positions, restructured its Indo-Pacific strategy to pull supply chains for vital technologies away from China, and made the unprecedented effort to ban the CCP from purchasing advanced semiconductor chips made with U.S. research, even if those chips were made elsewhere in the world.

Whether or not such moves will prove enough to curb the CCP regime’s

H3C was later blacklisted by the United States for its support of communist China’s military modernization.

In 2017, Microsoft partnered with the state-owned China Electronics Technology Group to develop servers for CCP institutions including a customized “secure” version of Windows 10 for the regime.

In 2019, a lead scientist from Google’s AI team contributed to research used to improve the accuracy of China’s stealth fighters. Google said that wasn’t the purpose of its contributions.

In 2021, Goldman Sachs and Sequoia Capital invested a substantial portion of more than \$700 million raised by 4Paradigm, the China-based company with an open contract to develop AI decision-making software for the PLA.

Later in 2021, Apple CEO Tim Cook signed a secretive \$275 billion agreement with CCP leadership to ensure access to supply chains and other services in China. The agreement established ventures to handle data and security law compliance in China, an effort in which a New York Times investigation found “Apple has largely ceded control to the Chinese government.”

Each of these examples and the many more like them, the VOC report said, provided insights into how U.S.-based companies had become tools for the ascent of China’s military at the ever-increasing risk of the United States.

The CCP, the report found, effective-

ly co-opted U.S. tech companies as third parties in its struggle against the democratic West, in a new play on the sixth-century adage of “killing with a borrowed sword.”

Communist China ‘At War With US’

Given the risk posed by the continued intermingling of the United States’ top research firms and agencies with the many tendrils of the CCP, some security experts have called for an outright ban on what they call forced technology transfer.



“Nearly all Chinese military technologies are built on stolen IP [intellectual property] from the U.S. and our free-world allies.”

Casey Fleming, CEO, BlackOps Partners

Fleming is among them.

“The CCP is at war with the U.S. and the free world and it wants to gain complete control over the world at any cost,” Fleming said.

“This war is unlike any war we have faced in the past and is termed ‘unrestricted hybrid war.’ It achieves military objectives by using all non-military

military development and avert a catastrophic conflict remains an open question.

For Fleming, much more remains to be done.

“The only path forward is an immediate and complete decoupling of all key current and future technologies from the CCP’s China.” ■



An Intel booth at the China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference in Shanghai on July 30, 2021. Companies such as Intel continue to work with the CCP in a manner that allows the regime to clone their technologies and that directly undermines U.S. national security.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: REUTERS/ALY SONG, JOHANNESSELE/AR VIA GETTY IMAGES, SAMIRABOUADU/THE EPOCH TIMES

INFOGRAPHIC

China's Secret War Against America

Methods of subversion and unrestricted war used to undermine the United States

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY (CCP) is using a series of unconventional warfare tactics designed to achieve the goals of war against the United States without engaging in troop-on-troop combat.

Many of these tactics were detailed in the 1999 Chinese military book "Unrestricted Warfare" but draw from older deception tactics and from programs that were set into motion by the Soviet Union. The key goals are to win a war without fighting openly, to seize control of a society gradually, to steal an economy, and to use methods to intentionally keep the public distracted and unaware.

Among the overarching strategies is the process of subversion. The Soviet Union used subversion to spread its "communist revolution," and the CCP has adopted many of the same strategies to export its "China model." Subversion is a process to seize control of a country by destroying religion, morals, traditions, and everything that makes the country function. The end goal is to bring the country into a state of chaos so the public will support outside intervention to install a new form of government.

STEP 1

DEMORALIZE

STEP 2

DESTABILIZE



MEDIA WARFARE

The Chinese regime uses public information platforms to distract, lie, or alter perceptions. For instance, on Twitter and Facebook, the regime has deployed vast bot networks to amplify propaganda and disinformation about the 2019 Hong Kong protests and the pandemic.



PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

This tactic focuses on altering the way a group of people interprets information or sets emotional triggers around key narratives. The regime has indoctrinated the Chinese people to perceive criticisms of the regime as being directed toward China and the Chinese people, which in turn triggers a patriotic response.



DISINFORMATION

The regime creates staged incidents or false reports, which are then spread through credible news outlets overseas. For instance, during the pandemic, many Western media and organizations reported the regime's official COVID-19 figures, despite a wealth of evidence showing that Beijing was underreporting cases.



MISINFORMATION

Outright false information is spread for the purpose of confusing and muddling debate and analysis. Chinese diplomats have spread unfounded conspiracy theories, including that COVID-19 was brought to China by the U.S. Army, to deflect attention away from the regime's mishandling of the initial outbreak and its potential role in causing the pandemic.



CULTURE WARFARE

Beijing has expanded its influence in Hollywood by bankrolling top-tier films and using China's massive market as a lure. This allows the regime to censor topics and promote propaganda in American films.



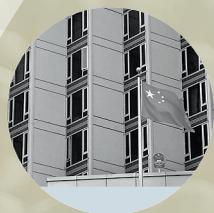
MEMETIC WARFARE

The introduction and spread of ideas among a targeted population in order to introduce concepts and eventually influence the culture.



PROPAGANDA WARFARE

The U.S. operations of Chinese state-run broadcaster China Global Television Network and newspaper China Daily publish Beijing's propaganda in the United States. China Daily also buys online and print inserts in Western publications, including Time magazine and the Los Angeles Times, to push Beijing's talking points to a mainstream audience.



OVERSEAS GOVERNANCE

The Chinese regime maintains control over Chinese communities in foreign countries through its Overseas Chinese Affairs Office and other organs.



DIPLOMATIC WARFARE

Diplomacy is used to push issues, condemn actions, or run intelligence operations. In recent years, Chinese officials have engaged in "wolf warrior" diplomacy to attack those who criticize Beijing over a range of issues, including its mishandling of the pandemic, aggression toward Taiwan, and human rights abuses.



POLITICAL INFILTRATION

The regime in Beijing infiltrates political circles and organizations that can influence politics, such as business groups and think tanks. It also wields its economic influence on U.S. companies that do business in China. These business groups may then go on to influence political candidates or the selection of candidates in U.S. elections.



FRONT OPERATIONS

The Chinese regime's United Front Work Department directs a network of overseas Chinese cultural and business groups, student groups, and media that advance Beijing's agenda and coerce others to do the same.



SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS

This is the control or creation of movements in a society to launch protests or attacks against a targeted group or issue. Local Chinese groups are often mobilized by Chinese consulates to hold pro-Beijing protests, and surveil and harass overseas-based dissidents.



ECONOMIC WARFARE

Under the strategy of "rob, replicate, and replace," the Chinese regime aims to steal intellectual property (IP) from U.S. companies, replicate the technology, and ultimately replace U.S. industries in the global market.

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STEP 2

DESTABILIZE CONTINUED



CYBERWARFARE

Chinese hackers linked to military and intelligence services have launched massive cyberattacks on U.S. companies and government bodies, stealing trade secrets and troves of sensitive personal information.



SMUGGLING WARFARE

The Chinese regime utilizes organized crime networks or humanitarian fronts to develop smuggling channels into a country which can be used for additional subversive operations.



SANCTION WARFARE

Beijing uses sanctions as a deterrent against actions that would affect its own interests or as a weapon to attack a key industry in another country.



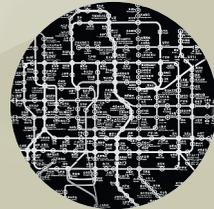
LEGAL WARFARE

Using this tactic, an adversary manipulates international legal systems to block or stall action, legalize illegal activities, or outlaw legitimate activities.



RESOURCE WARFARE

Using this tactic, an adversary gains control of, or plans attacks against, a country's natural or human resources. For instance, China dominates global production of rare-earth minerals, which are key components in the manufacturing of electronic devices.



INFRASTRUCTURE WARFARE

Through its infrastructure investment project called the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing seeks to advance its political and economic influence by financing ports, railways, roads, and digital infrastructure in partner countries across Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America.



DRUG WARFARE

China is the largest source of the precursors to produce fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, and fentanyl analogs that enter the United States via Mexico, and the regime is doing very little to stop its flow, despite promises to do so. Synthetic opioids were the cause of more than 71,000 deaths in the United States in 2021.



EDUCATION WARFARE

There are 18 Beijing-funded Confucius Institutes on U.S. college campuses as of April 2022, down from a peak of 110. More than 500 Confucius Classrooms have operated in K-12 grade schools. The centers promote Chinese propaganda and censor discussion of issues that Beijing deems sensitive.



HONEYTRAPS AND BLACKMAIL

After luring influential people, such as politicians and business leaders, into compromising situations, the regime can then blackmail them.



STRONG-ARM AND INTIMIDATION TACTICS

Street gangs and organized crime networks are utilized to threaten or kill dissidents and influential critics.



ENVIRONMENTAL WARFARE

This tactic involves using environmental issues to manipulate or block the supply of resources. Despite signing the Paris climate accord, China, the world's largest carbon emitter, has ramped up its coal-fired power capacity while building and financing hundreds of coal-fired power plants in developing countries.



COUNTERFEIT WARFARE

China is the largest source of counterfeit goods exported to the United States. In fiscal year 2021, U.S. Customs seized nearly \$1.9 billion worth of fake products from China, accounting for almost 60 percent of total seizures.



INTELLIGENCE WARFARE

Beijing maintains a broad intelligence network to understand how a target operates.



TELECOMMUNICATIONS WARFARE

Through telecom giant Huawei, Beijing seeks to control 5G networks around the world. Huawei's equipment could be used for spying or to disrupt telecommunications networks.



TRADE WARFARE

Beijing has undermined global free and fair trade through unfair trade practices and mercantilist domestic policies, such as imposing tariffs and limiting market access to countries that don't comply with Beijing's wishes.



SPY WARFARE

Beijing utilizes spies to carry out political subversion, intelligence gathering, economic theft, and influence operations.



FINANCIAL WARFARE

Manipulating currency, controlling banks to cause booms or busts, and creating counterfeit foreign currency are common tactics. Chinese firms listed on U.S. stock exchanges also don't comply with U.S. audit rules; they now face delisting as a result of a 2020 law.



TECHNOLOGICAL WARFARE

The Chinese regime seeks technological superiority, in the hope that other nations will lag behind in economy and defense. Besides its vast campaign of IP theft, the regime is pouring billions of dollars into research on artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and next-generation wireless networks.

INDUSTRIAL WARFARE

The regime has propped up Chinese companies to be leading manufacturers in critical industries, including pharmaceuticals, aluminum, and steel, by issuing subsidies, dumping goods in foreign markets, and using other unfair trade practices. It now aims for China to become a high-tech manufacturing powerhouse, under its "Made in China 2025" plan.

STEP 3

CONFLICT



GUERRILLA WARFARE

The use of small, specialized fighting groups to disrupt an adversary. Operations include attacks on supply lines, destruction of resources, and assassinations.



CONTROLLED OPPOSITION

The creation of groups or movements that appear to support an adversary's interests and that can be used to play both sides of a conflict.



TERRORIST WARFARE

The use of terrorist attacks on civilians in order to direct public sentiment and opinion.



PROXY WARFARE

The manipulation and supply of foreign fighters to fight wars without open engagement.



POISONING WARFARE

Using poisons to kill or weaken targeted populations. This was a communist tactic during the Soviet era, when the USSR issued directives to poison water supplies in the event of a war with the United States.



SLEEPER AGENTS

Activating dormant spy networks to launch terrorist or clandestine operations.



ATOMIC WARFARE

Launching a preemptive nuclear strike from shipping containers, suitcase bombs, or from a proxy state to destroy strategic targets



BIOCHEMICAL WARFARE

Deploying chemical weapons and biological agents to create disease and chaos, or to wipe out population centers.



ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE

Using the electromagnetic pulse generated by nuclear weapons to destroy an electricity grid and most electronics.

STEP 4

INTERVENTION



ELECTRONIC WARFARE

Attacking the electromagnetic spectrum to hijack communication networks and disrupt command and control systems.



SPACE WARFARE

Destroying strategic satellites to disable crucial systems relied upon by the target nation and its military.

An illustration of an X-51A
WaveRider hypersonic flight
test vehicle in flight.

PHOTO BY U.S. AIR FORCE ILLUSTRATION

ARMS RACE

THE RACE TO

HYPERSONIC DOMINANCE

CHINA IS GOING ALL OUT TO DEVELOP THIS CUTTING-EDGE WEAPONRY

News Analysis BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

WHEN NEWS BROKE about a secret Chinese hypersonic missile test in 2021, the world was stunned. Pentagon officials appeared blindsided by news reports that a hypersonic missile had circled the earth before descending to hit near its target. Lawmakers demanded that long-delayed military research be reinvigorated to counter the threat.

The United States and China have both worked tirelessly to further develop their hypersonic capabilities since then, and according to one expert, the United States is losing the race.

“China has effectively taken the lead in the hypersonic weapons race due to the breadth and depth of its technology investments,” said Rick Fisher, a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center, a security-focused think tank.

“We are only seeing the beginning of their weapons developments in this field.”

Fisher points out that the United States and China are in a race to develop hypersonic weapons, and whoever deploys the weapons first may decide who guides the international order in coming decades.

No Defense Against CCP’s Hypersonic Weapons

The reason that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is so interested in developing hypersonic weapons technology is fairly simple: The United States can’t defend against them. At least not yet.

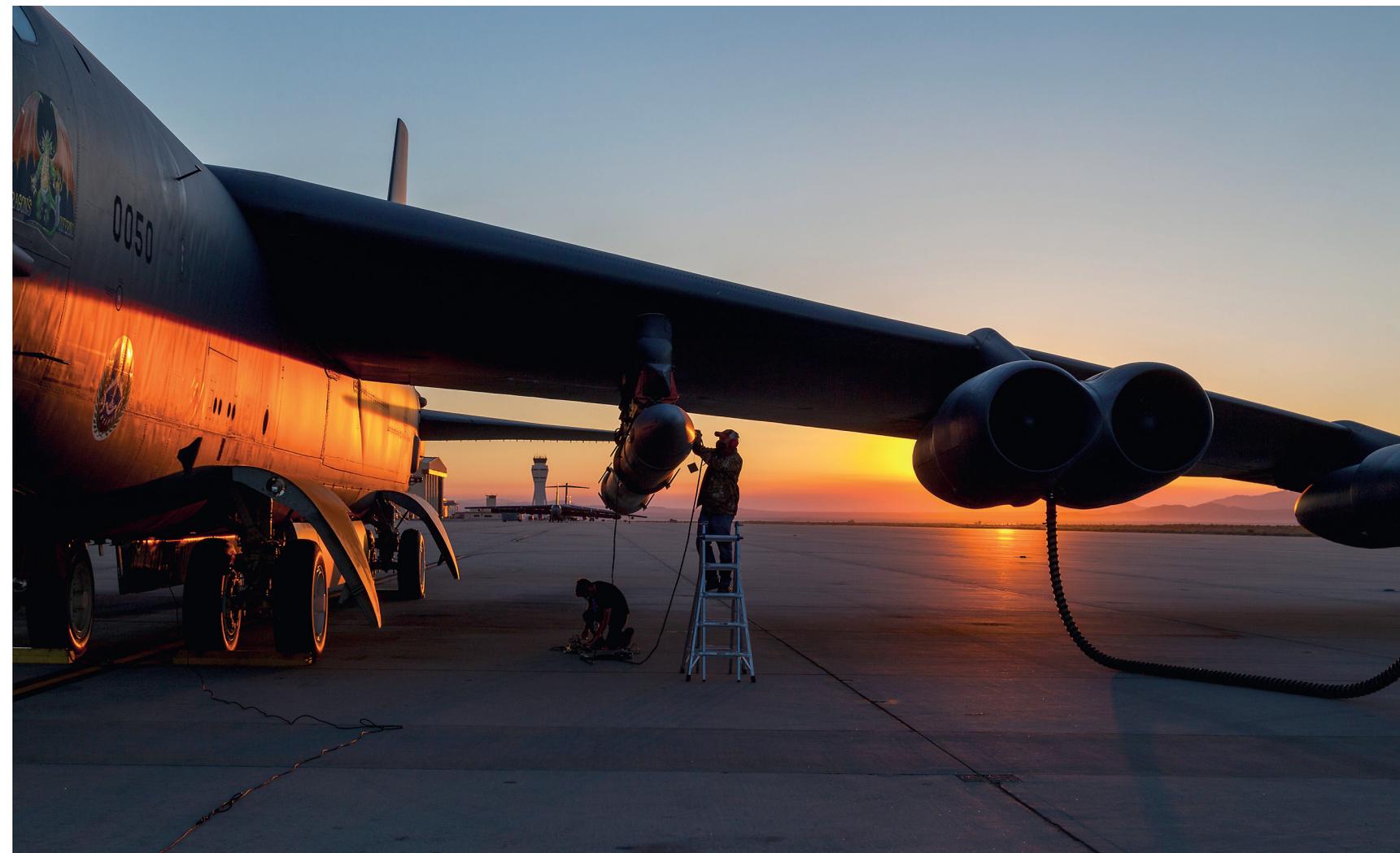
During his testimony to Congress on the subject in 2018, then-Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Michael Griffin said that CCP forces were already developing the hypersonic capabilities necessary to hold U.S. assets at risk.

“China has fielded or can field ... hypersonic delivery systems for conventional prompt strike that can reach out thousands of kilometers from the Chinese shore and hold our carrier battle groups or our forward-deployed forces on land ... at risk,” Griffin said.

“We, today, do not have systems that can hold them at risk in a corresponding manner, and we do not have defenses against those systems.”

That’s because the type of hypersonic missiles being developed by the CCP behave in a manner far different from the traditional ballistic missiles that the United States missile defense architecture was designed to counter.

While the technical definition of a hypersonic missile refers to any missile that travels at



U.S. Air Force personnel make final preparations prior to a captive-carry test flight of a prototype hypersonic weapon at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Aug. 8, 2020.

least five times faster than the speed of sound, or Mach 5, common parlance typically uses the term to refer to one of two varieties of missile.

The first is hypersonic cruise missiles, which use high-tech jet engines to propel them at super speeds. The second is hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV), which are launched on a regular missile before detaching and navigating through the atmosphere at high speed.

Unlike traditional ballistic missiles, HGVs don’t follow a parabolic trajectory into and out of the atmosphere and can maneuver through the atmosphere as they fly to their destination.

Because of their speed, maneuverability, and lack of a ballistic trajectory, the weapons can evade earth-based radar systems until the final segment of their flight and, even when such sensors register a hypersonic launch, there are few systems capable of doing anything about it.

That makes the weapons incredibly enticing to CCP authorities, which are eager to gain a tech-

An illustration of DARPA’s Hypersonic Technology Vehicle (HTV-2).



nological edge against the more advanced U.S. military. Moreover, just like in 2018, the United States still doesn’t have the capacity to defend against such technology, as was affirmed in October 2021 by then-U.S. ambassador for disarmament Robert Wood.

“We just don’t know how we can defend against that technology,” Wood said of the test. “Neither does China, neither does Russia.”

US Hypersonics Programs Struggle to Catch Up

To say that China’s HGV launch caught the United States on the back foot would be an understatement. Though the United States began research into hypersonic missiles in the early 2000s, the nation largely abandoned its HGV research following two failed tests in 2011.

Indeed, between April 2010 and July 2022, the United States conducted just 21 hypersonic missile tests. The CCP, meanwhile, conducted hundreds.

Gen. John Hyten, then-vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in October 2021 that a “brutal” Pentagon bureaucracy and risk-averse culture among military leadership had stifled efforts to build credible hypersonic weapons systems. In turn, he said, the CCP had seized the initiative.

“Single digits versus hundreds is not a good place,” Hyten said of the hypersonic tests conducted by the two countries.

“The pace [at which China is] moving and the trajectory that they’re on will surpass Russia and the United States if we don’t do something to change it. It will happen.”

The CCP’s hypersonic test in 2021 demonstrated that if push came to shove the regime could strike the U.S. homeland with a nuclear missile. The United States is responding, but it’s unclear whether it will meet the threat in time.

There are at least eight programs across the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) dedicated to the development of hypersonic systems, many of which received bumps in funding following the CCP’s hypersonic demonstration.

Fisher believes that such efforts are vital if the United States is to field its own capabilities and begin to retake China in the hypersonic race.

“For its part, the United States in the next three years will deploy medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles armed with a maneuverable hypersonic warhead that eventually could hit moving targets like ships at sea,” Fisher said.

“There are also U.S. programs to develop hypersonic tactical range cruise missiles but these may not emerge until much later in this decade.”

The Pentagon, however, hasn’t made a final decision on whether it will acquire the weapons once they are completed. None of the eight prototypes mentioned are associated with programs of record.

That’s problematic for U.S. efforts to deter CCP aggression given that an October 2022 report by the Congressional Research Service found that China has likely already fielded operational HGVs, potentially armed with nuclear warheads.

The Pentagon hasn’t publicly released the

Military vehicles carrying DF-17 missiles participate in a military parade at Tiananmen Square in Beijing on Oct. 1, 2019.



Between April 2010 and July 2022, the United States conducted just 21 hypersonic missile tests. The CCP, meanwhile, conducted hundreds.

findings of its classified reports analyzing the readiness of the CCP's programs, but the regime's latest, highly accurate hypersonic capabilities are expected to be fielded by 2025.

The United States' hypersonic projects, meanwhile, are slated to appear between 2025 and 2028.

Aside from new hypersonic weapons, the United States' Missile Defense Agency and Space Development Agency are developing a hypersonic missile defense system that, according to a separate briefing by the Congressional Research Service, will deploy a satellite-based tracking layer for global detection of hypersonic missiles launches by 2023, though it too likely won't be fully operational until 2025.

That means that, should the United States fail to deploy new hypersonic weapons before 2028, the CCP will have an unprecedented strategic and nuclear advantage for as long as three years.

As of yet, however, the United States lacks the capability to defend against an attack by an HGV such as the one the CCP launched in 2021. In the best-case scenario, the United States will have deployed the systems necessary to detect and track such missiles by next year, but not necessarily to destroy them.

China Investing in Wide Array of Hypersonics

As the United States struggles to kickstart its long-neglected hypersonic weapons programs, the CCP and its military wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), continue to advance hyperson-

ics development in a black box of uncertainty.

Behind a new Iron Curtain, little can be said of the regime's current hypersonic capabilities. What is known is that the regime has developed several hypersonic-capable weapons, many of them nuclear-capable.

Most famously, the regime's Dongfeng-17 (DF-17) missile was developed explicitly to be equipped with an HGV. Other missiles in the PLA arsenal could be outfitted with similar technology, however, including variants of the DF-16, DF-21, DF-26, DF-31, and DF-41.

According to Fisher, this means that the CCP's hypersonics program could affect short, medium, intermediate, and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBMs). In other words, missiles of all ranges.

"There are indications that future versions of PLA ICBMs will be armed with multiple small HGV warheads," Fisher said.

"In addition, the PLA has tested orbital launched HGVs from a Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS) that may or may not represent an in-production weapon."

The most dangerous scenario, Fisher said, was that the regime could decide to use the threat of such bombardment to deter the United States from defending its allies or partners. Such a threat could only meaningfully be countered by the deployment of new space-based systems.

Fisher said that the greatest threat facing the United States in the near term was the possibility that China would field ICBMs each equipped with

multiple nuclear HGVs. The United States would only be able to defend against such weapons, he said, with space-based energy weapons that would target the missiles in their boost phase, before they reached orbit and became untrackable.

Fisher's comments resembled similar advice made by a congressional report, which found that "interceptor missiles, hypervelocity projectiles, laser guns, and electronic attack systems," could be used to defend the United States from China's new weapons.

The problem with that situation is that those technologies either don't yet exist or haven't yet been deployed.

Given that fact, Fisher said the United States would have to pursue other options if presented with the threat of hypersonic warfare from China. Namely, disrupting the attack by striking the systems used to track and control them.

"The U.S. has non-missile interceptor options for defeating or degrading PLA FOBS-launched HGV strike weapons," Fisher said.

"It can make sure that the PLA does not exploit its bases in Antarctica for tracking and guidance of FOBS platforms, [and] destroy the PLA space tracking and control base in Argentina immediately during any conflict."

Fisher's comments referred to one of the CCP's space observation stations in Patagonia, which is operated by the PLA in pursuit of a top-secret mission, possibly including missile guidance.

CCP Seeks to Undermine US Defenses

Fisher's fears that the CCP could deter the United States from involvement in a future conflict appear to align with most research on the subject.

A 2021 report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, an influential congressional advisory body, found that the CCP was working to develop and deploy HGVs alongside multiple retargetable reentry vehicles (MIRV), a form of warhead that contains multiple smaller warheads that can each be directed toward a separate target.

Likewise, defense officials have long warned that the CCP was modernizing its military with the explicit purpose of developing technologies capable of undermining and overcoming U.S. defenses. The worry is that the CCP doesn't seek security, but fundamentally to alter the rules-based international order by replacing the United States as the world superpower by using nuclear coercion.

"China has ambitions to be the great power on the face of the earth," Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall said earlier in the year. "They have ambitions to be the global great power."

"To do that, they basically have to displace the United States."

"They are studying how we fight ... and designing systems that are intended to defeat us," Kendall said.

To that end, one key reason the CCP is developing hypersonic weapons appears to be the ability to deter the United States from involving itself in a conflict that China starts, whether that conflict is over the future of Taiwan or something else entirely.

The CCP's actions also suggest that the regime hopes its burgeoning hypersonic arsenal will allow it to mold U.S. behavior. Just days before a visit of then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan, for example, the regime released the first public footage of the DF-17 hypersonic missile during a test fire.

Analysis of how the regime is deploying its new-found capabilities may also indicate its intent.

A new report by Blue Path Labs, published by the China Aerospace Studies Institute, found that the PLA increased the number of its missile brigades by 33 percent from 2017 to 2019.

Vitally, three separate brigades are believed to be equipped with the DF-17 and its HGVs. These are the 614, 627, and 655 Brigades, of which both the 614 and 627 maintain either garrison or headquarters in provinces immediately adjacent to Taiwan.

In all, however, there is perhaps no better indicator of the regime's intent than in the hypersonic nuclear weapons themselves.

While most of the United States' burgeoning hypersonic missiles aren't nuclear capable, as many as half of the PLA's 40 missile brigades likely are, according to the 2022 Index of Military Power, published by conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation. There also is a real concern that China's lack of investment in precision weapons, as opposed to massively destructive nuclear first-use weapons, demonstrates its dedication to nuclear proliferation and blackmail.

James Acton, co-director of the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, wrote in 2017 that one way to determine whether the regime intended to use nuclear coercion was to see whether it developed more accurate HGVs.

"One possible indicator of China's intentions is the accuracy of its glider," Acton said. "For a conventionally armed glider to be militarily effective, it must have an accuracy of a few meters. A nuclear-armed glider would be effective if it were 10 or even 100 times less accurate."

The CCP has now developed and tested its glider and, when the regime launched its HGV, it ultimately landed some 24 miles from the target. That's too far away for a conventional warhead to matter, but not for a nuclear one. ■



"China has effectively taken the lead in the hypersonic weapons race due to the breadth and depth of its technology investments."

Rick Fisher, senior fellow, International Assessment and Strategy Center

8 PROGRAMS

THERE ARE AT LEAST eight programs across the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency dedicated to the development of hypersonic systems.

33%

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FROM L: GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION

CCP SPIES: THE CASE FILES

IN RECENT YEARS, THE U.S. government has cracked down on the Chinese regime's sprawling espionage campaign targeting all sectors of American society.

FBI Director Christopher Wray has said that Beijing is targeting the United States' technology and trade secrets "on a scale that's unprecedented in history." In February 2022, he said that more than 2,000 FBI investigations were directly tied to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) efforts to steal information or technology.

The Justice Department has said that roughly 80 percent of all its economic espionage charges concern cases that would benefit the Chinese regime in some way.

Actors involved in China's state-sanctioned campaign of theft are varied, from cyberhackers to Chinese intelligence officers to researchers. Their targets include entities and individuals across the United States' business, academic, political, and civic communities.

Here are some examples of prosecutions of Chinese espionage:



NAME: Lin Qiming

LOCATION: New York

CRIMES: Conspiracy; interstate harassment

STATUS: Fugitive at large

STORY:

LIN QIMING, AN ALLEGED CHINESE agent, contracted a private investigator (PI) in New York in the hope of manufacturing a political scandal to undermine the campaign of Yan Xiong, a Chinese dissident and then-candidate for U.S. Congress, prosecutors say.

Xiong, a naturalized U.S. citizen and Army veteran who served two tours in Iraq, has long been a target of the Chinese Communist Party for his participation as a student leader in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and for his later support of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

Lin conspired with the PI he hired to implicate Xiong in several schemes, which all were designed to undermine or destroy his congressional bid, according to prosecutors. These included plots to engage Xiong with prostitutes, bring tax evasion charges against him, and to fabricate evidence that Xiong possessed child pornography.

Lin also suggested that the PI hire an attractive woman to become a volunteer for Xiong and then implicate him in prostitution, court documents say. When the PI told Lin it would cost \$40,000 to carry out the job, Lin responded, "No problem. The money is not a problem."

Lin further encouraged the PI to use "cops, or lawyers, or the courts" to pressure Xiong and said, "We will have a lot more of this in the future," according to the court filing. He added, "Right now, we don't want him to be elected."

After all these schemes failed, Lin encouraged the PI to physically harm Xiong by either beating him or forcing him into a car crash.

It's alleged that Lin is a retired Chinese intelligence agent who continues to perform work for the Chinese Ministry of State Security, the regime's top intelligence agency. He is currently a fugitive and believed to be located in China.



NAME: Xu Yanjun

LOCATION: Ohio

CRIMES: Conspiracy; economic espionage; trade secret theft

SENTENCE: 20 years in prison

STORY:

XU YANJUN BECAME A STATE AGENT of the CCP in 2003. In 2013, he began actively recruiting employees from companies around the world that were considered to be industry leaders in the field of aviation, prosecutors said.

Xu worked on behalf of the CCP under multiple aliases for years, often misrepresenting himself as a university affiliate from China, and would pay recruits from industry-leading businesses to travel to China. These recruits often worked under the false assumption that they would be merely exchanging ideas or giving a presentation at a university when, in fact, they would be delivering company secrets to the CCP.

The targeted individuals received stipends, compensation for travel costs, and other payments from Xu, all of which were funded by the CCP's intelligence agencies.

The tables began to turn on Xu in 2017,

when he solicited a GE Aviation engineer in Cincinnati to visit China. He asked the engineer to give a report at a Chinese university, covering highly technical topics such as the company's engine structure design. The following year, he sought the system specifications and design processes from the same employee.

Other Chinese agents downloaded some 200 photos of the targeted GE engineer's family, some of whom lived in China, in bid to coerce him into becoming a spy, prosecutors said at trial. The engineer began secretly cooperating with the FBI in November 2017, after agents conducted a search of his home.

Xu was subsequently arrested in Belgium while traveling to meet the engineer in 2018, and became the first CCP spy ever to be extradited to the United States.

He was convicted in 2021 and later sentenced to 20 years in prison.



NAME: Wu Chenyan and Chen Lianchun

LOCATION: California

CRIMES: Smuggling and computer fraud

SENTENCE: 3 years probation each

STORY:

HUSBAND WU CHENYAN AND WIFE Chen Lianchun worked as research scientists for Pfizer. Wu moved to China in 2010 to start his own medical company, TheraMab, which opened a lab in 2012 focusing on mRNA research.

Chen remained in the United States, however, and continued working on mRNA research for Pfizer through 2021. Beginning in 2013, Chen began illicitly accessing the company's computers, from which she copied confidential materials related to vaccine development for a period of about five years. She then emailed those materials, including DNA and mRNA sequencing data and confidential vaccine research and development information, to her husband in China.

Wu appeared on the FBI's radar in 2019, when a Pfizer PowerPoint presentation that included his name was discovered by authorities while investigating a Chinese man convicted of violating U.S. export controls.

In 2021, Wu closed his lab in China and attempted to move it to the United States. He didn't declare any of the chemical and biological materials packed in five separate suitcases on his customs form, nor to the customs officer while passing through inspection.

Nevertheless, customs agents discovered the samples in Wu's possession, along with medical equipment and research documentation, as it all was found to be improperly packaged.

In all, Wu was carrying nearly 1,000 unlabeled centrifuge tubes, which appeared to contain proteins, and multiple containers of unknown chemicals. Some samples were even labeled as hazardous, and one bore a skull and crossbones image and the word "harmful if swallowed ... toxic if inhaled."

The pair were subsequently arrested, pleaded guilty to their crimes, and were sentenced to three years of probation.



NAME: Yang Fan

LOCATION: Florida

CRIMES: Conspiracy; firearms violations

SENTENCE: 4 years in prison

CLASSIFIED

STORY:

YANG FAN WAS A LIEUTENANT IN the U.S. Navy trained in anti-submarine warfare. He previously worked in a patrol aircraft and as a tactics instructor at a Navy facility in Florida, where he held top-secret security clearance and was serving on active duty at the time of his crimes.

Yang formed an online relationship with Chinese citizen Ge Songtao, a businessman, prior to becoming a naval officer but continued to meet throughout Yang's time in the service, including when he was in Navy flight training. In 2016, while Yang was stationed in Florida, he recommended that Ge hire Yang's wife as an employee.

Ge hired Yang's wife to work at his Shanghai-based company, Shanghai Breeze Technology, which exported maritime equipment from the United States to China. In 2021, both Ge and Yang's wife were sentenced for using the company to illegally import U.S. military raiding boats to China.

Yang's wife allegedly received more than \$300,000 in payments from Shanghai Breeze, its creditors, and Ge's

executive assistant and co-defendant, Zheng Yan. The money was used to pay her salary, business expenses in the United States, and for goods that Ge ordered Yang and his wife to purchase. The funds were frequently routed through the Yangs' family business.

Yang also purchased two 9 mm handguns for Ge at his request and was reimbursed for both purchases. He falsely claimed the firearms were for himself on both occasions, giving law enforcement the records they needed to arrest him on firearms charges.

Prosecutors say Yang also hid his and his family's relationship with Ge from the Navy, going so far as to request time off for a supposed family trip to Disney World. Instead, they traveled to Nebraska for an in-person meeting with Ge.

Yang also lied about his relationship with Ge on a questionnaire, failed to disclose the extent of his contacts with Ge, hid a bank account that he maintained in China, and failed to disclose that he had an expired Chinese passport, according to prosecutors.



NAME: Wang Shujun

LOCATION: New York

CRIMES: Conspiracy to act as a foreign agent

STATUS: Trial in progress

CLASSIFIED

STORY:

WANG SHUJUN HELPED TO FOUND and later served as secretary-general of the New York-based pro-democracy nonprofit Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang Memorial Foundation, which is named after two former Chinese Communist Party (CCP) reformist leaders.

Since at least 2011, however, Wang is alleged to have used his position and influence within the Chinese diaspora community to spy on dissidents and covertly feed information on their lives to Chinese intelligence so that it could be used in the CCP's ongoing campaign of transnational repression.

Wang, along with his CCP intelligence handlers He Feng, Ji Jie, Li Ming, and Lu Keqing, was charged with conducting espionage and transnational repression schemes in the United States and abroad on behalf of China's MSS.

Under the direction of his handlers, Wang targeted specific individuals and groups that the CCP deemed subversive, including those he was close to through his organization, prosecutors say.

These included pro-democracy activists from Hong Kong, advocates for Taiwanese independence, and Uyghur and Tibetan activists.

The four agents also directed Wang to obtain information on particular topics and matters of importance to the MSS and to deliver the personal information of dissidents he met through the foundation, according to court filings.

Wang provided such information to the MSS for years by using encrypted messaging applications and emails, as well as during face-to-face meetings in mainland China, court documents show. Prosecutors say he also delivered telephone numbers and other contact information belonging to Chinese dissidents to the MSS, directly resulting in those people being targeted or arrested by the CCP.

One of the people Wang allegedly informed on was Albert Ho, a Hong Kong-based politician and founder of an organization that supports protesting students. Hong Kong authorities subsequently arrested Ho in 2010 and he remains in jail serving several sentences connected with his participation in pro-democracy activities in Hong Kong.

Wang, who was arrested in March 2022, is awaiting trial. His alleged handlers are fugitives believed to be at large in China.

CCP SPIES: THE CASE FILES

Students on campus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass., in this file photo.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM B. PLOWMAN/GETTY IMAGES

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

WILLIAM BARTON ROGERS FOUNDER

CCP INFLUENCE

Infiltration of College Campuses

China's sprawling plan to co-opt America's elite institutions

News Analysis BY VENUS UPADHAYAYA

THE CHINESE REGIME is ramping up efforts to infiltrate U.S. universities to gain access to valuable research and mold the minds of the next generation of America's thought leaders, advocates and experts warn.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Silencing Dissidents

A major part of Chinese influence operations in U.S. universities involves controlling public opinion about the



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

CCP. This has always involved silencing those who speak out against the regime and its abuses.

To that end, Chinese international students themselves and Chinese student associations have become tools by which the regime can suppress dissenting voices on campus. Over the years, there has been a spate of incidents in which Chinese student groups with links to the Chinese consulate have successfully suppressed or attempted to suppress voices critical of the Party at U.S. universities.

"In my view, the newer generation of international students from China seems to be a lot more nationalistic than the ones I have met in college," Se Hoon Kim, director of the Captive Nations Coalition of the Committee on Present Danger: China, said. The Captive Nations Coalition is an advocacy body representing groups victimized by the CCP.

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

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

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

FBI Director Christopher Wray in a speech early this year offered an example of the Chinese regime threatening and harassing students at U.S. univer-

sities for merely exercising their right to free speech.

"In a recent incident at one Midwestern university, for example, a Chinese American student posted online praise for those students who were killed in the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. And almost immediately, his parents called from China, saying that Chinese intelligence officers had shown up to threaten them because of his post," he said.

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

"I think some of the Chinese students in my school are CCP members.

I can tell they are not simply students. They could be spies or informants," Kong told *ProPublica* at the time.

Confucius Institutes Simply Rebranded

Confucius Institutes, the Beijing-funded language centers criticized as conduits of propaganda, have drawn considerable pushback in recent years, resulting in the closing of 104 of the 118 centers across U.S. colleges and universities.

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

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

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

Espionage

China's theft of research and technology from American universities has been a direct assault on U.S. innovation leadership. Recently, there has been more



Pro-democracy demonstrators surround a truck transporting People's Liberation Army soldiers on their way to suppress protesters at Tiananmen Square in Beijing in 1989.

clamor about the theft of sensitive technology adding another angle to China's meddling in U.S. universities.

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

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

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

During the Cold War, technology competition between the United States and the Soviet Union was characterized by research and development programs that were divorced from one another. But in today's interconnected world, U.S.-China competition is more complicated because both countries' research ecosystems are deeply connected through shared research projects, talent circulation, and commercial linkages that include supply chains, markets, and joint research ventures, according to the report.

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

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

Late in 2021, former chair of Harvard University's chemistry department ♦♦



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

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

However, the Biden administration ended the China Initiative in February 2022 amid allegations of racial discrimination. While an internal review found no racial bias in the department's approach, the program was shuttered over the concern of a perception of bias, Assistant Attorney General for National Security Division Matthew Olsen said at the time.

Chinese Funding

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

"Part of China's sort of grand strategy

is not only stealing economic and security-related secrets, specifically in technology from around the world, but it's also shaping how China is viewed," Oxnevad said. This means that discussions on subjects like human rights violations, the Tiananmen Square massacre, and atrocities like the Great Leap Forward will continue to get censored. This concern has brought up a louder debate about Chinese funding to U.S. universities.

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

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

Last year, Michelle Bethel, a board

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

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

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

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

"That vast financial leverage creates an incentive for universities like MIT to look the other way while the CCP abuses human rights and threatens U.S. national security," he said.

An MIT spokesperson told The Epoch

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

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

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

"Every proposed engagement that involves an organization or funding source from China, once it has been evaluated for compliance with U.S. law and regulation, is further reviewed by committees of senior administrators to consider risks related to national security, economic competitiveness, and civil and human rights," the statement said.

What Should the US Do?

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

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

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

The second kind of cooperation should be between the United States and its "friends around the world" like

\$1.5 BILLION
U.S. UNIVERSITIES RECEIVED
 nearly \$1.5 billion in gifts and contracts from China from 2014 to 2020, according to the Department of Education.

\$1 MILLION
AFTER THE CLOSURE of Confucius Institutes, some host institutions were made to refund money to the Chinese regime, in certain cases in excess of \$1 million, according to the National Association of Scholars.

Australia, another popular country with Chinese international students. Treverton said that's important because if the United States closes its doors to Chinese students, they'll go elsewhere.

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

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

[Confucius Institute] or similar program."

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

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

Metz said that he's started to witness a shift in universities, which, for the first time, are starting to reconsider their investments in China.

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

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

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

Metz said that online tool will look at everything from gifts and research partnerships to Confucius Institutes, investments, and state-supported harassment and censorship of students. ■



Then-President Donald Trump signs a memorandum on addressing China's laws, policies, practices, and actions related to intellectual property, innovation, and technology, at the White House on Aug. 14, 2017.

FROM: KREIDER/3/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
 CHRIS KLEPONS-POOL/GETTY IMAGES

AGRICULTURE

A cotton field in Ellis County, Texas, on Sept. 19, 2022. Texas ranks No. 1 in China's agricultural land ownership, according to the Department of Agriculture.

PHOTO BY ANDY JACOBSOHN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHINA

EYES

US

FARMLAND

**AMERICAN OFFICIALS
TACKLE THREAT POSED
BY CHINA LAND
PURCHASES** *BY TERRI WU*

SID MILLER WON HIS third term as the Texas agricultural commissioner in November 2022. 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 the sale of land to China. "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've given the owner access to the state's electricity grid. Miller first sounded the alarm about the issue with an Epoch Times reporter in November 2022.

"Food security is national security, and China's efforts are a direct threat to both."

Rep. Dan Newhouse

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 No. 1 in China's agricultural land ownership, according to the state-by-state data shared by the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Production and Conservation agency.

As of Dec. 31, 2020, China owned 325,686 acres of U.S. agricultural land, according to the USDA. While the acreage under Chinese ownership is slight-



ly less than 1 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

(L-R) WH Group Chief Financial Officer Guo Lijun and Executive Director and Chairman Wan Long, Smithfield Executive Director and President Larry Pope, and Smithfield Chief Financial Officer Kenneth Sullivan attend a press conference in Hong Kong on April 14, 2014. Long was a member of the CCP's National People's Congress, the regime's rubber-stamp legislature. The WH Group bought Smithfield Foods Inc., the largest pork producer in the United States, for \$4.7 billion.

FROM TOP: PHILIPPE LOPEZ/ARND BRONKHORST/GETTY IMAGES; SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

The "increase of Chinese purchases of U.S. farmland" is a "great concern," according to a congressman.



2022 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 7 to 9 percent of the world's productive farmland, according to a May 2022 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 more than 146,000 acres with hog farms and processing plants in North Carolina, Missouri, Utah, and Virginia.

WH Group's chairman, Wan Long, was a member of the CCP's National People's Congress, the regime's rubber-stamp legislature, for more than 15 years, according to a 2013 Senate hearing testimony. PBS NewsHour 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: tapping into Smithfield's global brand, its good record on food safety, and advanced hog genetic technology.

These are the 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 United States 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.”



“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.’ That would fix the problem.”

Sid Miller, commissioner of agriculture, Texas

Threat

Similar to the case of Shuanghui, the Chinese owner of the land in southern Texas—billionaire Sun, 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,” Sun’s company states 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 as Newhouse: “We’ve got to treat them for what they are: the enemy.”

He pointed out that Americans can’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.

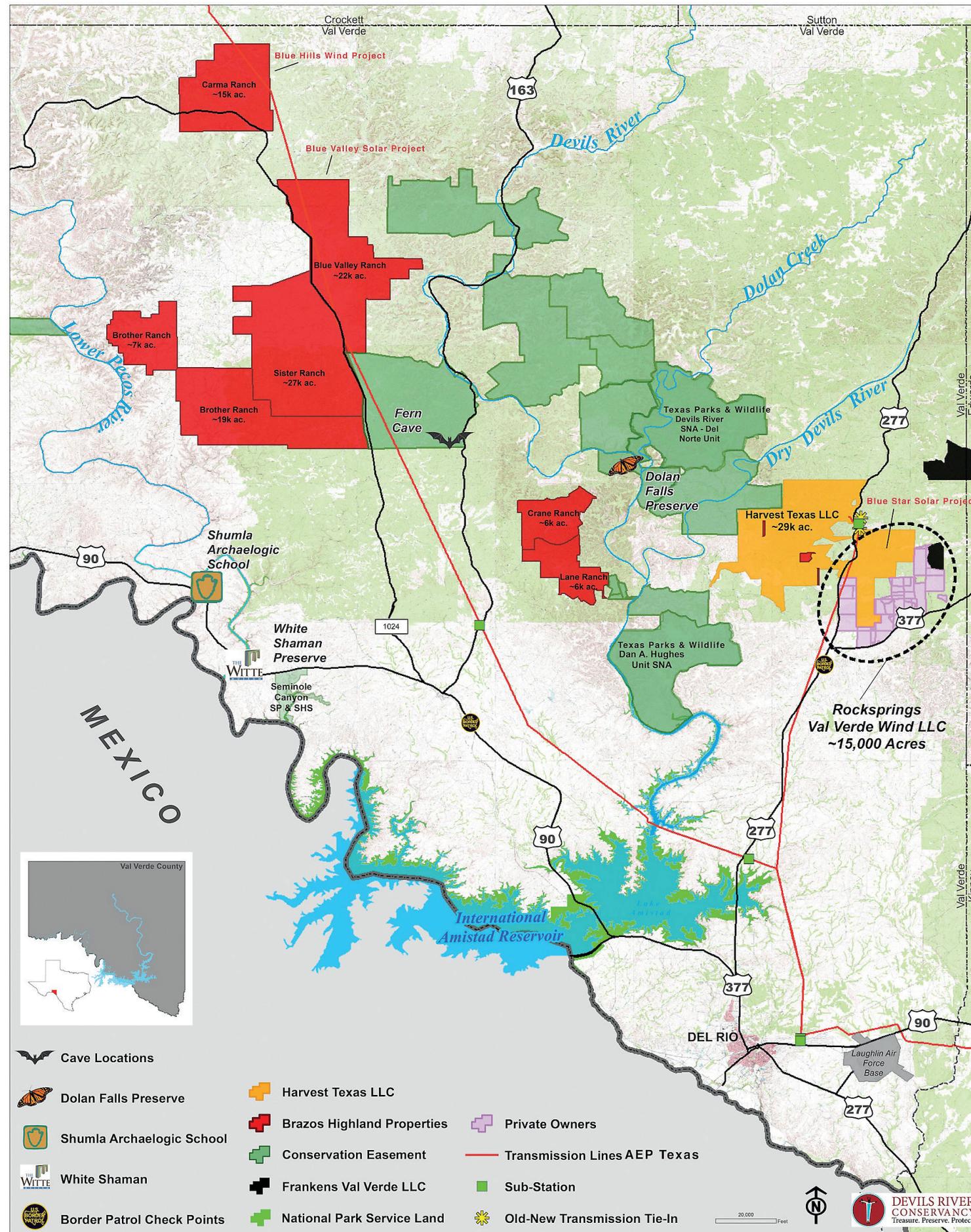
“We need to do what I call a little cowboy logic. We could pass simple legislation and say, ‘Look, if we can’t buy agricultural land in your country, you’re not allowed to buy land in our country,’” Miller said. “That would fix the problem. It’s just so simple.”

He’s 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 said, 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, 2022, 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.



A map of the 140,000-acre agricultural land that Chinese billionaire Sun Guangxin acquired in Val Verde County, Texas, and the locations of its three energy generation projects: Blue Hills Wind, Blue Star Solar, and Blue Valley Solar.

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 more than 9 million acres of U.S. agricultural land, of which only 1 percent was for other use, and Germany had 5 percent of “other land” out of more than 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, possibly with an end game to harm us. This needs to stop,” he said.

Texas has more farmland than any other state, at 126 million acres, according to a February 2022 USDA report. The Lone Star State leads the nation in agricultural exports of cotton and cattle, USDA data show.

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.

In 2021, he worked with state Rep. Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) and state Sen. Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) on the Lone Star Infrastructure Protection Act, which would ban Texas businesses and governments from doing business with foreign entities from China, Russia, North

FROM: SUZANNE CORDERO/AFVIA GETTY IMAGES. COURTESY OF THE DEVILS RIVER CONSERVANCY

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 planned mill's owner, Fufeng Group, has reputed ties to the Chinese Communist Party through its chairman.



Korea, and Iran if the transactions would provide the enterprises with remote access to or control of critical infrastructure. The bill was passed in June 2021.

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 2022, according to records of Texas grid operator Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). In October 2022, 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 reached out to GH America Energy for comment but received no response by press time.

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, 2022, 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 pur-

chases 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 Communist 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 commissioner of agriculture, Wilton Simpson, expressed a similar concern in December 2022.

In an August 2022 report, conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation

urged more states to take action, stating, "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 non-resident aliens, foreign businesses and corporations, 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, the NALC stated. ■

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CHINA'S THEFT OF US AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY

What the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can't buy, it steals. Agricultural research and development enhance food production efficiency, a top priority for the regime, which sees food security as critical to its ability to preserve domestic stability and thus maintain its rule.

Several Chinese scientists in recent years have been prosecuted for stealing U.S. agricultural tech secrets.

In April 2022, Xiang Haitao, a Chinese national who worked for Monsanto, a U.S. agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology company, was sentenced to 29 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release and a \$150,000 fine for economic espionage. Xiang was arrested in June 2017 at an airport with a copy of Monsanto's proprietary algorithm called "the Nutrient Optimizer." He had attempted to steal the algorithm, which helps farmers optimize agricultural productivity, in order to benefit a Chinese state-run research institute, prosecutors said.

Another Chinese national, Mo Hailong, also known as Robert Mo, was sentenced to 36 months

in prison in October 2016. He had stolen corn from cornfields in Iowa for his Chinese employer—Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group Company (DBN), a Chinese conglomerate with a corn seed subsidiary company—to reverse-engineer the genetically modified seeds. This was a shortcut solution suggested by Mo's boss to fix China's inability to feed its population.

"DBN is the largest ag company in China. We found out that China had in their five-year plan that it was a priority for them to grow in their corn industry—and particularly in the genetically modified corn industry. So, what we're seeing here is potentially agents of a foreign power," said FBI special agent Byron Militello in an FBI video released in March 2022.

The court also confiscated the two farms that Mo had bought and used in Iowa and Illinois during the course of his conspiracy. The stolen seeds were trade secrets of DuPont Pioneer, a U.S. seed producer, and Monsanto. The Justice Department estimated the cost of developing such a seed at five to eight years of research and a minimum of \$30 million to \$40 million.



A farmer harvests soybeans in a field along the Mississippi River near Wyatt, Mo., on Oct. 17, 2022.

FROM: ALLANSTEIN/THE EPOCH TIMES; SCOTT TOLSON/GETTY IMAGES

CCP AMBITION

The Final War

An Epoch Times documentary exposes the CCP's 100-year plan to defeat America

By Emel Akan

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST Party (CCP) poses the biggest existential threat to the United States, yet few Americans are aware of that threat, according to a new documentary.

The latest Epoch Times investigative film “The Final War—A 100-Year Plot to Defeat America” seeks to expose the hidden stories of U.S.–China relations over the past seven decades. The film was screened for the first time on Oct. 13 at an event sponsored by The Heritage Foundation in Washington.

The documentary follows Epoch Times award-winning investigative journalist Joshua Philipp and retired U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Robert Spalding on their journey of “awakening” to the CCP’s secret war on the United States.

“The Final War” traces the origins of the CCP and its 100-year plan and demonstrates how the communist leadership has continually advanced its little-known agenda through skillful deception.

After combing through a trove of in-depth data and conducting interviews with senior CCP insiders, the China investigative team at The Epoch Times has shown that the regime in Beijing has been carrying out its strategy to destabilize the United States since it

came into power in 1949.

“The goal of this documentary is to relate to everybody the full picture of what’s happening beneath the surface in the Chinese Communist Party,” Philipp told attendees of the event.

While the documentary has been in the works for two years, it’s based on more than a decade of research and the collection of information from sources inside China, he said.

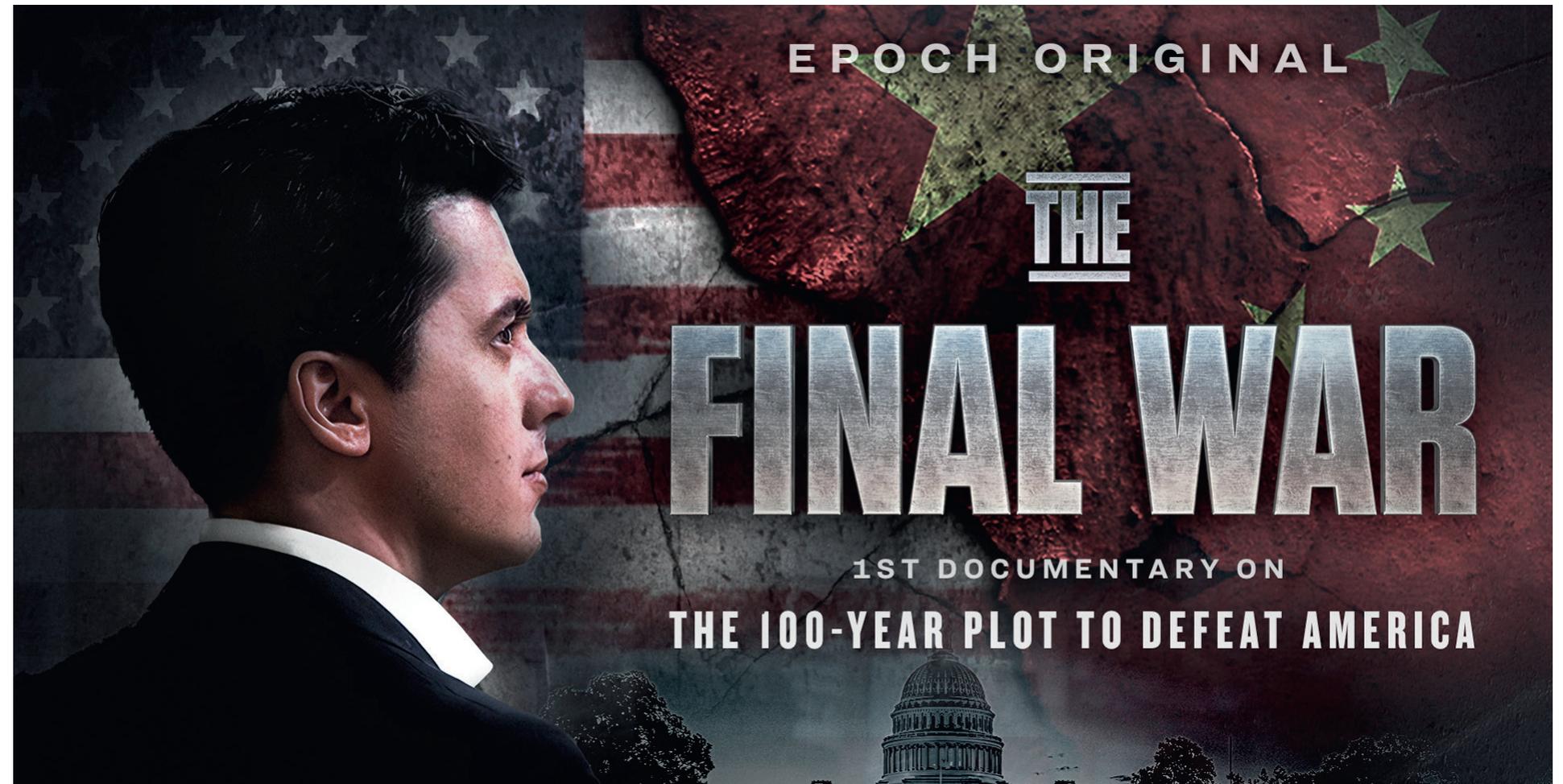
The documentary was created by the same team that produced the 2020 viral hit “Tracking Down the Origin of the Wuhan Coronavirus,” which featured internal Party whistleblowers, leading experts, and former U.S.–China policy officials.

Speaking at a panel discussion following the screening of “The Final War,” Peter Navarro, a former trade adviser to President Donald Trump, commended the film for its professionalism and high quality.

“This film will be important in terms of messaging the existential threat that the Chinese Communist Party is to this country,” Navarro said.

‘A Hybrid Warfare’

The documentary, written and directed by Katherine Hu, seeks to convey that the CCP is no longer far from fulfilling its decades-long goal and that the United States



“The West has supported China and given it the money, the wherewithal to compete with us.”

Thomas Cromwell, author

can’t afford to lose “a war between justice and evil, freedom and communism.”

While many people are focused on China’s massive and rapid military expansion, a hybrid warfare is currently underway, according to Casey Fleming, CEO of BlackOps Partners and one of the interviewees in the documentary.

Fleming, who’s an expert on U.S.–China security and counterintelligence, believes that there are more than 100 types of hybrid warfare, including the shipping to the United States from China of fentanyl, which is the No. 1 cause of death for Americans aged between 18 and 45.

“This is World War III. It’s 1939 all over again,” Fleming said during the panel discussion.

He also cited China-owned TikTok as

The Epoch Times investigative film “The Final War—A 100-Year Plot to Defeat America” by investigative journalist Joshua Philipp seeks to expose the hidden stories of U.S.–China relations over the past seven decades.

an example, describing it as “a weaponized military application in the hands of our children.”

“When you’re at war, there is no left, there is no right. There is no black person, there is no white person,” Fleming said. “We’re all in this together.”

Another panelist, Sean Lin, a veteran who served as a U.S. Army microbiologist and a survivor of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, believes that Americans vastly underestimate the Communist Party’s strength and influence.

The documentary provides a comprehensive chronicle of the tactics the CCP has executed for decades, Lin told The Epoch Times.

As someone who was born and raised in China, Lin said he hoped the film could be subtitled in Chinese so that not only Americans but also Chinese people could learn the truth about the CCP.

‘Everybody Needs to Watch It’

The documentary has six chapters, the first two discussing the CCP’s role in recent global conflicts and how the regime weaponized the global COVID-19 pandemic. The third and fourth chapters delve into the CCP’s 100-year plan and how it has fed the West a carefully crafted mirage. Chapter 5 describes how the regime has infiltrated, divided, and subverted U.S. society. The final chapter explores the tools at our disposal to confront the CCP threat and safeguard America’s security, values, and freedom.

“The documentary was extremely factually accurate; it was powerful,” Nazak Nikakhtar, one of the viewers, who previously served as assistant secretary for industry and analysis at the U.S. Department of Commerce, told The Epoch Times.

“And it’s a truth that’s been hidden for a long time that finally, some good people made the effort to put in the time and put in the detailed research to expose these threats that we’ve ignored for a long time. I hope it’s not too late, but everybody needs to watch it.”

“The documentary’s deep under-

standing of the history of China is very apparent,” said Anders Corr, a China expert, principal at Corr Analytics, and author of “The Concentration of Power: Institutionalization, Hierarchy, and Hegemony.”

Corr, who’s also a contributor at The Epoch Times, said the film’s “expertise on the history of China is very apparent in terms of understanding not only the Chinese Communist Party as a black box but the personalities within the party that are driving this hegemonic totalitarian, anti-American ambition.”

After watching the film, Thomas Cromwell, publisher and author of the book “The Triumph of Good,” said the “documentary was very informative.”

“It went into so much depth about the background behind the strategy of the Chinese Communist Party and the 100-year marathon,” Cromwell said.

The film also highlights the fact that, unlike in the case of the Soviet Union, “the West has supported China and given it the money, the wherewithal to compete with us,” he said. “It’s really our responsibility and that’s the thing that we can address.” ■



A panel discussion for the first screening of “The Final War—A 100-Year Plot to Defeat America” at The Heritage Foundation in Washington on Oct. 13, 2022.

FROM TOP: THE EPOCH TIMES; CHEN/EN/ND

CHINA'S GLOBAL POLICE STATIONS

Overseas police service stations serve to aid CCP's transnational repression

FAIRFIELD INN & SUITES
Marriott

109 E. BROADWAY

新日光大廈
New Sunlight Building

美國長樂公會

陈平清
诊所

针灸
痛症
妇科
646-354-8828

男科
皮肤
痔疮
917-802-2229

物理
治疗

豪福昇拉麵館

107 646-998-3175

蘭州拉麵麻辣香鍋麻辣燙

The America ChangLe Association in New York on Oct. 6, 2022. An overseas Chinese police outpost in New York, called the Fuzhou Police Overseas Service Station, is located inside the building.

PHOTO BY SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Commentary BY PETER DAHLIN

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY (CCP) is engaged in a multipronged campaign to establish its power overseas, especially over the ever-growing Chinese diaspora.

It started for real with the launch of Operation Fox Hunt, a campaign to hunt down Party members, state functionaries, and those working in or with public entities, and it seems to have been initiated following CCP leader Xi Jinping's "anti-corruption" campaign.

The message being sent is clear: You won't be safe just because you leave China. At the same time, and growing in strength since, the CCP's United Front Work Department has been hard at work co-opting local Chinese media organizations around Asia, Australia, North America, and Europe. In Australia, about 95 percent or more of all local Chinese language media toe the Party line.

With the migration from China increasing and the number of asylum-seekers jumping by almost 800 percent since Xi took power in 2012, it isn't surprising that the Chinese regime is working hard to establish a clear presence overseas. The latest development of this campaign is the establishment of overseas Chinese police service stations.

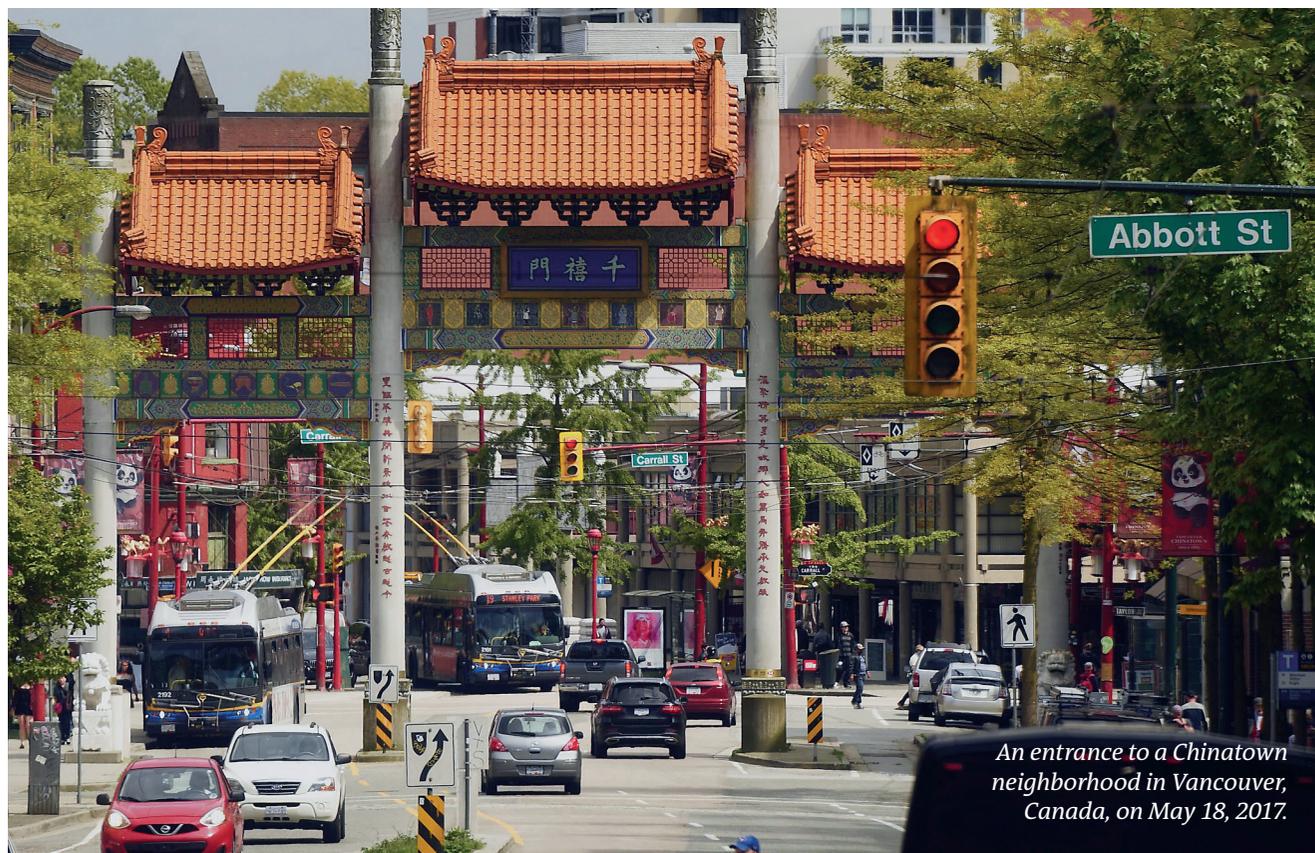
When Safeguard Defenders first exposed this operation with its "110 Overseas" investigation, 54 stations were identified, mostly in Western countries, that are run by two local police jurisdictions. New information continues to trickle in, and on Dec. 4, the Spain-based human rights nongovernmental organization released a follow-up investigation—"Patrol and Persuade"—and the number of stations now identified has reached more than 100, with several more police jurisdictions in China running such stations.

The purpose is becoming more apparent, with one such jurisdiction claiming that it was "using overseas Chinese to govern overseas Chinese."

In fact, since first revealing this information, additional stations in New York and also Los Angeles have been uncovered, as well as in Vancouver and one unknown location in Canada, bringing the total number of stations in the United States and Canada to eight—although the actual number is likely higher.

Overseas Chinese Police Service Stations

The stations, which, as far as is known, started appearing in 2016 and expanded in 2018—in direct contravention of Beijing's statement that these stations were established, without the host country's knowledge or approval—to assist ♦



An entrance to a Chinatown neighborhood in Vancouver, Canada, on May 18, 2017.

Chinese citizens during the pandemic.

The way it works is that police in a certain jurisdiction—particularly those that have seen significant emigration, such as Fuzhou—reach out to local trade or cultural associations in those cities and areas where many people from the city or region happen to live. Chinese emigration, after all, tends to be group-oriented; if many from Fuzhou have settled in one region, others who emigrate tend to want to go to those places for a support network and a shared language, culture, and food.

The police will thus approach an existing association and ask them to take on the task of running the stations. Here's when things get a bit more complicated. As these are run by local police, the stations vary significantly in their appearance. In some cases, such as in Budapest and Dublin, they'll establish a proper office, hang out signage and plaques declaring that they're overseas police service stations—always without informing the host country government—and have a more strict physical presence.

In other cases, the office of the association itself will be used, while the address and phone number announced will go to a front, which can be an auto mechanic, as in Porto, Portugal; a convenience store, such as in Toronto, Canada; or a restaurant, as in Glasgow, Scotland.

Similar operations also exist around Asia and particularly Africa, but such establishments are done in public, with the full cooperation of the host government; otherwise, the operations are

strikingly similar to the clandestine stations in the democratic world.

To understand the overall purpose and the role they play, this quote from the Nantong is illustrative: “At present, representatives of overseas Chinese and overseas students have been hired in the United States, Australia, South Korea and other places as overseas liaison officers to cooperate with domestic officers both internally and externally.”

Here alone, without going into the use of such stations to assist police back in China with “persuasion” operations of targets China wants to be returned, a number of issues arise. As the Netherlands, Ireland, and Canada have shown, they consider the establishment of such stations, regardless of their duty, to be illegal and in violation of the Vienna Convention. All three countries have ordered them to shut down. The fact that they've been established secretly—without informing host governments and that their presence is almost only known in the Chinese language—has allowed them to operate undetected for so long.

The associations that actually run the stations, per command from the local police jurisdictions, are also in breach of administrative regulations. Any association needs to be registered, and Safeguard Defenders believes most of them are, as they've existed for a long time. However, they aren't registered to perform these duties or act in any way as a liaison for the Chinese police or government. Hence, regulatory action can and

90%
OR MORE OF ALL LOCAL CHINESE language media to the Party line.

800%
THE NUMBER OF asylum-seekers from China has jumped by almost 800 percent since Xi took power in 2012.

100 STATIONS
MORE THAN 100 Chinese police service stations have been established overseas, according to a group.

DON MACKINNON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FOX HUNT

The international manhunt for high-value targets,

Operation Fox Hunt, is carried out by China's Ministry of Public Security (MPS) under the leadership of the CCP's “anti-corruption” watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

At the Party Congress in late October 2022, the CCDI

presented new data showing that since its start in 2014—a consequence of Xi's domestic “anti-corruption” campaign—Fox Hunt has successfully forced more than 11,000 Chinese nationals back to China, including several thousand who returned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Methods range from using extraditions and INTERPOL red notices, although very rare,

to the more common involuntary return methods, such as “persuasion” by going after family members living in China, sending agents abroad to harass and intimidate targeted individuals in their new home country, and kidnappings.

So far, 84 cases of these stations playing a role in “persuasion” operations to force people back to China against their will have been

identified. This reveals that the Chinese regime lied about the purpose of these stations, claiming that they assist the local diaspora community in renewing driver's licenses and other minor administrative tasks.

To stop these stations from operating and to ensure that the activities themselves don't continue to go unnoticed in a different form, a number of steps need to be taken.

must be taken against any association found to violate administrative regulations.

More importantly, to avoid simply shutting down the stations, only for their actual activities to be carried out clandestinely, via, for example, United Front Work Department-affiliated associations, means that security service needs to launch a formal investigation and, where evidence allows, bring forth criminal charges.

That 84 cases of “persuasion” operations have been carried out, including two cases related to Operation Fox Hunt, is likely just the tip of the iceberg. The targets are often low-profile and low-value targets, and if returned, they're rarely heard from; if they refuse, they likely go silent. Finding such cases is very hard, and dedicated investigations are required. Safeguard Defenders sees such cases in Canada, Portugal, Sweden, Scotland, and the United States.

But in many other countries, they're being treated merely as a political issue via the foreign ministries—that isn't enough and risks allowing the activities to continue.

Since Safeguard Defenders' initial investigation, several more stations have been identified in the United States and Canada. An initial investigation by security police has already identified many others, at least in Europe. Further investigation will reveal more and is an essential step forward.

After Safeguard Defenders exposed one case of such “persuasion” operations carried out by one of the stations in Madrid, the Chinese Foreign Ministry responded by saying that “bilateral treaties [extraditions] are cumbersome” and that some European countries turn down such requests—offering this as an excuse for why the ministry found it acceptable to carry out such “persuasion” operations nonetheless. And that's despite Spain maintaining an extradition treaty with China and often approving such requests.

In the United States, the FBI, in late October,

unsealed two more indictments concerning Fox Hunt operations in the country, as well as in Canada, bringing the total number of known indictments to three. This is a very positive step, but with China claiming to have successfully concluded more than 11,000 of them, it's a drop of water in a large sea. No other country has so far undertaken any similar action. Since Beijing claims to have persuaded 230,000 people to return to China between April 2021 and July 2022 alone—and only related to those wanted for fraud and related crimes—it's hard to not assume that such persuasion operations are carried out on a large scale not just in the United States and Canada, but also in Europe and elsewhere.

On the plus side, the websites of these associations that run the stations often post incriminating information, and tracking down the individuals hired or appointed to run the stations is relatively straightforward. That the police back in China sometimes feel the need to publicize their work to secure the approval of their superiors also helps, as open-source research using Chinese police bulletins, police newspapers, and local media can be very helpful.

Ordering the stations to shut down by explicitly stating that they violate the law, launching formal investigations into the operations of these stations, and filing criminal charges where possible while evaluating the legality of the associations' registration are all key steps to move forward. Until such is done, the Chinese diaspora across the United States, Canada, and elsewhere will live in fear, be unable to speak out freely, and be denied their democratic rights in their new homeland.

For them, it's a matter of basic democratic freedoms that are being denied to them because of communist China's growing presence overseas, where these stations are yet another tool in “using overseas Chinese to govern overseas Chinese.” ■

In the cases of Netherlands, Ireland, and Canada, the Chinese police stations have been established secretly, without informing host governments, which has allowed them to operate undetected for a long time.

CHINA'S INTERFERENCE IN US POLITICS

WESTERN ELITES ARE A
PRIME TARGET OF BEIJING'S
INFLUENCE EFFORTS

President Joe Biden (R) and Chinese leader Xi Jinping shake hands as they meet on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, on Nov. 14, 2022.

PHOTO BY SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

AMERICA'S MOST POWERFUL China supporters include our top politicians, businesses, and academic institutions. Their interests are reflected by political groups, committees, centers, and think tanks supported by big money donations, investors, tuition, and media with financial links to the regime in Beijing.

Their relative silence about the dangers of an expansionist and totalitarian state that engages in genocide safeguards more than \$650 billion in annual U.S.–China trade and the \$2.3 trillion worth of U.S. institutional investment there.

America's China elites seek the continuance of free trade with the country and, to that end, a minimization of conflict that requires backing down from American values. The principle of prioritizing China profits over the defense of democracies, the international rule of law, freedom, and human rights is also apparent in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the rest of Asia. Countries and businesses thirst for short-term revenues and compromise their values as necessary.

Xi Jinping, China's dictator, understands the dynamic, as did those who preceded him. Even though, as a communist, Xi tries to destroy capitalist free markets and what he sees as the capitalist imperialism of the United States and Europe, he'll cooperate with individual business and political leaders in the short term if they, wittingly or not, serve the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) long-term goals. These include the replacement of U.S. "hegemony" with that of Beijing.

American elites help when they look the other way as Beijing captures territory and markets in Asia and forces technology transfers to China's corporations, including through cybertheft and industrial espionage. These elites prove that they're a "friend of China" by not supporting the independence of Taiwan or mentioning the CCP's human rights abuses, up to and including genocide. Extraordinary profits are reserved for companies that lobby for China in Washington.

A notable and criminal silence on the CCP ensues, which spreads from the president of the United States, who pulls his punches against Beijing, throughout ♦♦

Commentary **BY ANDERS CORR**

the entire Congress and down to local levels. Politicians who complain about China's abuses are portrayed as awkward rubes, thus threatening their campaign funding, political party support, and future political career.

U.S. President Joe Biden is the best example. He climbed the political hierarchy, including through his "expertise" in foreign policy, by ticking all the right boxes. While Biden denied that China would "eat our lunch" on the campaign trail as late as 2019, he reversed himself in 2021. But his 2021 focus was on beating China in domestic infrastructure and green technologies, neither of which Beijing sees as key battlefields for its goal of global hegemony.

Beijing wants the United States to spend taxpayer dollars on railways, roads, and electric vehicles that could help China if we buy from Chinese companies or if trillions of dollars in government spending increases U.S. inflation, interest rates, and the risk of recession. It did all of that, which must have made Xi cheer, along with his allies in Moscow, Tehran, and Pyongyang.

The CCP uses influence operations, election interference, and political warfare to channel the United States into self-destructive economic and military backwaters. To this end, the CCP has a massive bureaucracy, called the United Front Work Department (UFWD), that controls organizations and individuals globally—and within China—to engage with any individual or group that isn't a member of the CCP. That includes attempts to influence U.S. leadership. Even those not formally part of the UFWD can be used, as all Chinese nationals and companies are required to report intelligence back to Beijing whenever asked.

The CCP, including through the UFWD, has funded political candidates and paid millions in advertising to the world's top newspapers. It threatens prominent dissenters globally and pays or cooperates with internet trolls, criminals, terrorists, and thugs. It organizes fake protests with paid protesters and bribes heads of state with millions of dollars, both directly and indirectly through family and friendship networks.

"China is engaged in a highly sophisticated malign foreign influence cam-



Then-Vice President Joe Biden walks out of Air Force Two with his granddaughter and son Hunter Biden (R) upon their arrival in Beijing on Dec. 4, 2013.

The annual U.S.-China trade amounts to \$650 billion, and U.S. institutional investment in China is worth \$2.3 trillion.

paign, and its methods include bribery, blackmail, and covert deals," FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a 2020 speech. "Chinese diplomats also use both open, naked economic pressure and seemingly independent middlemen to push China's preferences on American officials."

The Joe Biden Case

Chinese operatives do their best to hide, but the evidence sometimes leaks through. It links the president and his family members to billions of dollars worth of business with Chinese companies, including its biggest military contractor, a facial recognition compa-

ny, and a defunct oil company caught in bribery scandals.

As vice president in 2013, Joe Biden took his son Hunter Biden on Air Force Two to China, helping boost his profile for Chinese business deals. Twelve days after the trip, a company called BHR Partners was reportedly registered. BHR is controlled and mostly funded by large Chinese companies. Hunter became one of the company's nine directors. BHR did approximately \$2.5 billion worth of business by 2019. That year, Hunter owned 10 percent of the company.

One of Hunter's business associates claims that Joe participated with Hunter

and James Biden, Joe's younger brother, in one of the China-linked businesses called SinoHawk. The associate, Anthony Bobulinski, has text messages that he says show plans for 10 percent of that venture to be held by Hunter for Joe "the big guy" Biden.

In one of the deals, involving China's oil company CEFC, Hunter admitted that its chairman sent a 2.8-carat diamond to Hunter's hotel room. The 2017 gift was a "thank you" for a single dinner conversation. Hunter, a lawyer, agreed during that conversation to represent a CEFC affiliate, Patrick Ho, who the FBI ultimately investigated for bribery of heads of state in Africa.

Hunter negotiated almost \$5 million in retainers and consulting fees. CEFC agreed to pay Hunter \$100,000 per month and to pay James \$65,000 per month. Hunter reportedly requested keys to a shared office with CEFC in

Washington for Joe, James, and a Chinese executive.

It's hard to imagine that Hunter and James would have these highly lucrative opportunities without Joe's support and political prominence.

The FBI arrested Ho at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York a few months after Hunter agreed to represent him. Ho's first call seeking help was to James Biden, who referred him to Hunter. In 2019, Ho was convicted of paying bribes amounting to millions of dollars to African leaders.

There has been next to no accountability for the Biden family's questionable China relations. Republicans, who won control of the House of Representatives in November 2022, are planning a major investigation.

The Trump, Bush, and Clinton families also have had links to China business. The failure of Congress to thoroughly investigate these cross-party sources of malign foreign influence is an indicator of the power of Beijing's enduring influence in Washington.

The Eric Swalwell Case

Congress should dig as deep as it can because China's influence affects not only the top rungs of presidential politics but all the way down to the local level as well.

The most prominent example is Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.), allegedly identified as a rising star by China's civilian intelligence agency, the Ministry of State Security (MSS), when he was just a city council member in a small Bay Area town. He and other U.S. politicians were caught in a "honey trap"

that a suspected Chinese spy, Christine Fang, conducted from 2011 to 2015. Axios broke the story.

Fang first approached Swalwell in 2012, when he was a council member in Dublin, California. At the time, Fang was a student at a nearby university. She was also president of its Chinese Student Association and headed its chapter of the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs (APAPA) group, which promotes Asian American and Islander political involvement. She used the latter title in most of her politicking.

Of course, all U.S. citizens, regardless of race, should be encouraged to vote and get involved in politics. American democracy is strong because of its diversity, including the involvement of its Asian and Pacific Islander communities. But the APAPA allowed a non-U.S. citizen of an adversary nation into a leadership position. If its website is any indication, it's biased toward communist China, just as are many mainstream politicians.

China is mentioned on more than 60 of its website pages. Only two mention Taiwan. None of its pages mention Uyghurs or the genocide against them. None mention the sensitive topics of Tibet or Falun Gong. The bias is clear, and the civil society conduit for China's intelligence services to use identity politics for its malign purposes should be addressed by Congress.

Chinese consulates around the world often have a decisive influence on who leads Chinese student associations abroad, so Fang's leadership position in her two student organizations may not have been entirely coincidental. Her

Then-Vice President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping toast during a State Luncheon for China at the U.S. State Department in Washington, on Sept. 25, 2015.





American elites help when they look the other way as Beijing captures territory and markets in Asia and forces technology transfers to China's corporations.

real reason for being in the United States, according to U.S. officials cited by Axios, was to influence U.S. politicians on China-related issues and to gather sensitive political intelligence, including highly personal data about politicians that's otherwise unavailable to the public.

Fang's method for breaking into political circles was to invite politicians and business people to speak at her student events and, while there, mingle with



Then-Dublin, Calif., Councilmember Eric Swalwell and Christine Fang at an October 2012 student event. Swalwell was caught in a "honeytrap" that Fang, a suspected Chinese spy, conducted from 2011 to 2015.

Chinese Consulate officials. She exuded a sense of wealth, driving a white Mercedes and traveling to regional and national conferences, rallies, and at least one event held by the Chinese Embassy in Washington.

She volunteered at political offices and used her links to politicians to place possibly unwitting subagents with them as interns or staff, according to Axios. She helped with fundraising events and introduced donors to candidates.

Fang's strategy paralleled Chinese and Russian operations before and after. A successful MSS operation in the 2000s placed a staff member in U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein's (D-Calif.) office. Another in the Bay Area sent local politicians to China on all-expenses-paid junkets. Russia has used a similar strategy, such as Maria Butina's attempted infiltration of conservative groups, including the National Rifle Association, to influence the 2016 elections.

Fang reportedly volunteered her election fundraising for the politicians she sought to influence over the long term, hoping their careers would later take

The Chinese Consulate in San Francisco on July 23, 2020. Chinese consulates around the world often have a decisive influence on who leads Chinese student associations abroad.

off. On at least two occasions, with Midwestern politicians, she allegedly engaged in romance, including "a sexual encounter with an Ohio mayor in a car that was under electronic FBI surveillance. ... The mayor asked why Fang was interested in him, [and] Fang told him she wanted to improve her English," according to a U.S. official cited by Axios.

Swalwell, who was elected to the House of Representatives in 2012, was ultimately Fang's most successful mark; by 2015, he was appointed to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Fang acted as a fundraising "bundler" for Swalwell's 2014 reelection. She introduced donors to him and placed an intern in his Washington office. While Swalwell refuses to answer questions from the media about whether he had a sexual relationship with Fang, she was close enough to him to become Facebook friends with his father and brother.

In 2015, the FBI warned Swalwell about Fang, and he cut ties. She abruptly left the country, but there are reportedly many more like her.

Bottom Line: Remove Political Access for Adversaries

The bottom line requirement to defeat China's political influence in the United States should be tougher laws against foreign influence from adversary nations. That means no more Chinese state media ads in our newspapers. No more of Beijing's troll armies being allowed on our social media. No more campaign donations, bundlers, or political family business with adversary-linked individuals and companies. Businesses and universities that rely on China-linked revenues should acknowledge their conflict of interest and recuse themselves from lobbying for soft-on-China policies.

Loopholes in existing laws around the world must be closed. China finds it too easy, especially because of its economic heft, to influence global politics in a manner that will eventually lead to its own hegemony. ■

FROM TOP: PHILIP PACHEO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; SCREENSHOT/SOCIAL MEDIA

The Week



A respiratory therapist works with a COVID-19 patient in the ICU at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago on Jan. 31, 2022.

PHOTO BY SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

Biden Administration Extends COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Jan. 11 confirmed it has extended the federal COVID-19 state of emergency.

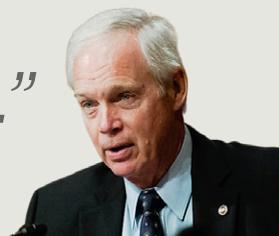
HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra issued a declaration, saying that "after consultation with public health officials as necessary," the administration decide to renew the emergency declaration that

was first issued in early 2020 under the Trump administration. The federal emergency has been renewed about a dozen times since then.

"The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency remains in effect, and as HHS committed to earlier, we will provide a 60-day notice to states before any possible termination or expiration," a spokesperson for HHS told news outlets."

“The American people have a right to know the extent to which your agency was aware of and tracked COVID-19 vaccine adverse events.”

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), in a letter to the CDC.



“This [committee] is about the First Amendment.”



Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), on a new House select subcommittee to investigate the “weaponization of the government” by federal law enforcement agencies under Democrat President Joe Biden’s administration.

1,300 CRIMINALS

The Department of Homeland Security released more than **1,300 convicted criminal illegal aliens** into the United States in the last three months of 2022.

30 YEARS — The Biden administration has released its U.S. National Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization, which outlines a plan to eliminate emissions and achieve net-zero carbon status within the next 30 years.

\$5 BILLION

Crypto exchange FTX has recovered more than **\$5 billion in cash** and liquid cryptocurrencies and securities, an attorney for the company confirmed.

\$3.5 BILLION

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has announced an executive order committing another **\$3.5 billion to water quality projects in the state.**

12 Rounds

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker has announced that he signed a **ban on “assault weapons” and magazines that hold more than 12 rounds.**

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: GRAEME JENNINGS - POOL/GETTY IMAGES; ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JON CHERRY/GETTY IMAGES

CONGRESS

House Panel Probes Into Biden’s Classified Document Stash

THE HOUSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE has launched an investigation into President Joe Biden’s handling of classified records from his time as vice president, following the discovery of sensitive materials in an insecure closet at a think tank, with the panel chair expressing concern that Biden may have compromised sources and methods in mishandling the documents.

Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.) said in a statement on social media that he’s launching an Oversight Committee investigation into the matter and has demanded that the White House and the National Archives and Records Administration provide documents and information related to their handling of Biden’s classified document stash.

VACCINE

Reenlistment Unclear for Discharged Troops Over COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE is formally ending the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for the U.S. military and the National Guard, but it didn’t provide any signal as to whether those discharged for refusing the vaccine would have any chance of being reenlisted.



U.S. soldiers at a COVID-19 vaccination site in Fort Knox, Ky., on Sept. 9, 2021.



Delta Airlines planes taxi at LaGuardia airport in New York on Jan. 11, 2023.

NATION

Operations Resume After All Flights Grounded Across US: Federal Agency

FLIGHT OPERATIONS in the United States have resumed after all flights across the country were grounded, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said on Jan. 11.

“Normal air traffic operations are resuming gradually across the U.S. following an overnight outage to the Notice to Air Missions system that provides safety info to flight crews,” the FAA said in a statement.

The failure of a key pilot notification system operated by the agency late on Jan. 10 prompted the agency to order all airlines to ground planes in the United States.

The agency’s Notice To Air Missions system, which is critical for relaying essential information to flights, failed for the first time in history.

CENSORSHIP

Pfizer Board Member Pressured Twitter to Censor COVID-Related Posts: Emails

A PFIZER BOARD MEMBER who used to head the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lobbied Twitter to take action against a post accurately pointing out that natural immunity is superior to COVID-19 vaccination, according to an email.

Dr. Scott Gottlieb wrote on Aug. 27, 2021, to Twitter executive Todd O’Boyle to request Twitter take action against a post from Dr. Brett Giroir, another former FDA commissioner.

“This is the kind of stuff that’s corrosive. Here he draws a sweeping conclusion off a single retrospective study in Israel that hasn’t been peer reviewed. But this tweet will end up going viral and driving news coverage,” Gottlieb wrote.

Giroir had written that it was clear natural immunity, or post-infection immunity, “is superior to vaccine immunity, by ALOT.” He said there was no scientific justification to require proof of COVID-19 vaccination if a person had natural immunity. “If no previous infection? Get vaccinated!” he also wrote.

Giroir pointed to what was at the time a preprint study from Israeli researchers that found, after analyzing health records, that natural immunity provided better protection than vaccination. The study was later published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases* following peer review.



President Joe Biden and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador shake hands at the National Palace in Mexico City on Jan. 9, 2023.

MEXICO

Mexican President Praises Biden for Not Building Border Wall

MEXICAN PRESIDENT Andrés Manuel López Obrador has praised President Joe Biden for taking a stand against the U.S. border wall, and criticized conservatives during the North American Leaders' Summit. It comes as the United States sees a surge in illegal immigration across the southern border.

"You, President Biden, you are the first president of the United States in a very long time that has not built not even one meter of wall. And that—we thank you for that, sir, although some might not like it—although the conservatives don't like it," López Obrador said in a joint press conference.

He thanked Biden for maintaining a "relationship of cooperation" with Mexico and for not subjecting Mexicans who "live and work in a very honest fashion" in the United States to harassment. "They're not suffering raids as it unfortunately used to happen in the past."

UK

Antipsychotic Prescriptions for Children in England Have Nearly Doubled in a Decade

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN and young people prescribed antipsychotic drugs in England almost doubled between 2000 and 2019, according to new research.

A study by the University of Manchester's Centre for Women's Mental Health published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* looked at the records of 7.2 million children and adolescents, aged 3 to 18, registered at selected English general practices over the period of 2000 to 2019.

Researchers found that although the overall percentage who were prescribed antipsychotics was low, it had increased to 0.11 percent in 2019 from 0.06 percent in 2000.

One psychologist told *The Epoch Times* that the increase was "extremely concerning."

ASIA

Philippine Court Rules Disputed Sea Exploration Deal With China, Vietnam 'Unconstitutional'

THE PHILIPPINE SUPREME COURT has ruled that the country's 2005 oil exploration deal with China and Vietnam was unconstitutional for allowing foreign entities to exploit natural resources in Philippine territories in the South China Sea.

The Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) was signed on Mar. 14, 2005, by state-run Philippines National Oil Company, China National Offshore Oil Corporation, and Vietnam Oil and Gas Corporation, covering 55,169 square miles of sea area.

The Supreme Court said the JMSU was deemed unconstitutional because it allowed foreign corporations wholly owned by China and Vietnam to undertake natural resource exploration in Philippine waters without proper safety procedures.

WORLD

Global Economy 'Perilously Close' to Recession, World Bank Warns

THE GLOBAL ECONOMY will come "perilously close" to slipping into a recession this year, the World Bank warned in its latest semi-annual report.

The international lender slashed its global economic growth forecast by close to half, to 1.7 percent, led by slowing growth in the world's top economies of the United States, Europe, and China. This estimate is down from its previous prediction of 3 percent six months ago.

If the projection is accurate, this would represent the third-weakest annual expansion in about 30 years, just behind the COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession and the 2008–2009 financial crisis.

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Perspectives



An Apple store in Shanghai on Oct. 16, 2014. Apple is shifting production to Chinese companies from Taiwanese firms.

PHOTO BY JOHANNES EISELE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



OIL LANG SYNE

Today's cheaper gas is the calm before the storm. **80**



APPLE KISSES UP TO CHINA AGAIN

Apple stabs Taiwan in the back with iPhone shift to China. **81**



FALTERING AMERICAN CONSUMERS

Spending growth has slowed just about to a standstill. **82**

INSIDE

Thomas McArdle



Oil Lang Syne

Today's cheaper gas is the calm before the storm

WITH SOME regions of the United States enjoying gasoline prices below \$3 a gallon after a summer that saw the national average exceed \$5 for the very first time, it's tempting to lull oneself into thinking cheap gas will last. In fact, it won't last for very much longer at all, especially with this administration's never-ending hostility to the fossil fuel economy, which provides more than 80 percent of our energy.

Now, add to this the troubling warnings from European Union leaders regarding the geopolitical consequences of President Joe Biden's green fanaticism, specifically the ill-named Inflation Reduction Act he signed in 2022, a thinly disguised environmentalist wish list that reduces global temperatures little, if at all.

At the end of December 2022, EU trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis cautioned that the \$369 billion bill could send the EU into the arms of communist China, rendering Beijing's ongoing economic "overtures and propositions" more attractive. And earlier in December 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron, visiting Washington, actually went so far as to say that the Democrats' billions of dollars in green energy and electric vehicle subsidies will "fragment the West."

The European Commission says the United States' massive green spending threatens the EU's industrial base.

After the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan a year and a half ago, in which 13 American service personnel were killed, and the signal to friend and foe alike of U.S. impotency and ineptitude likely enticed Russia's Vladimir Putin to invade Ukraine, sending a shock through global oil markets, an energy policy that ends up further empowering China would add insult to injury.

GasBuddy, which follows and reports prices at the pump throughout the country, projects that gas prices could rise drastically as early as May. Patrick De Haan, GasBuddy's chief of petroleum analysis, told CNN, "The national average could breach \$4 a gallon as early as May—and that's something that could last through much of the summer driving season."

In this environment, imagining prices at the pump staying low in the short months ahead is like investing in a dry well.

But it could end up being much worse; De Haan warned of a "high level of uncertainty" during 2023. Demand for fuel will rise as the weather warms up, but there are other factors at play. Will oil exporter Russia continue to underperform in an unpredictable war of aggression against Ukraine? Will recession ravage the West's economies? Will Saudi Arabia and the rest of OPEC continue to restrict global oil supplies? How damaged will communist China's economy be after its oppressive clampdowns against a COVID resurgence? And will the U.S. Federal Reserve continue to tighten money, and for how long?

Today's lower prices at gas stations have come despite the 2 million-barrels-per-day cuts in production that OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia, began implementing in November 2022, a move that was in no small part a reaction to the Biden administration's ham-handed diplomacy during the summer. But the official OPEC policy hasn't prevented some oil-producing nations from increasing output.

Kazakhstan boosted production by 330,000 barrels per day in November, and Algeria, Bahrain, Gabon, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates all either met or exceeded production targets.

On top of shutting down plans for the Keystone XL pipeline, the Biden Interior Department actually had to be forced by court order over the summer to hold a lease sale on federal land, after defying congressional direction to do so every quarter.

The oil refinery business in the United States is staring straight into the eyes of a federal government officially dedicated to its eventual destruction.

Chevron CEO Mike Wirth in June 2022 explained the overall situation to Bloomberg with blunt clarity: "When I began my career, there were more than 250 refineries in the United States. Today, there's half that number, and we've seen refineries close around the world."

He pointed out that "building a refinery is a multibillion-dollar investment. It may take a decade ... you're looking at committing capital ten years out that will need decades in which to offer a return to our shareholders."

And Wirth noted, "We haven't had a refinery built in the United States since the 1970s," and today there exists "a policy environment where governments around the world are saying, 'we don't want these products to be used in the future.' And so there really is a dilemma." Much of the dilemma revolves around the left's refusal to accept that during the decades of any transition to non-fossil fuel energy, the world still needs lots of oil and natural gas.

"My personal view is, there will never be another refinery built in the United States," he concluded.

In this environment, imagining prices at the pump staying low in the short months ahead is like investing in a dry well.

Anders Corr



Apple Kisses Up to China Again

Apple stabs Taiwan in the back with iPhone shift to China

APPL IS DOING THE splits. The maker of iPhones, MacBooks, and AirPods is moving much of its production outside of China to the United States, India, and Vietnam.

Simultaneously, the company is shifting production to Chinese companies from Taiwanese firms.

Moves to the West and friendly countries will please Western consumers and governments.

Within China, whose consumers spend a whopping 17 percent of Apple's total revenues, the company is moving production to Chinese companies such as Luxshare Precision, Goertech, and Wingtech from Taiwan's Foxconn.

That makes the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) happy, or at least, less unhappy.

The production split is driven by politics. Apple wants to maintain production in China and the West during an incipient global decoupling between Washington- and Beijing-led trading blocs.

Chinese production will continue to supply China, Russia, and Iran, while non-Chinese production can reliably supply the rest of the world.

Taiwan is a definite loser in the split, as its Foxconn company specializes in Chinese production for Western markets. That specialty is no longer in demand. Vietnam and India are the biggest winners.

Apple's first major order for premium iPhones from Luxshare was reported on Jan. 4 by the Financial Times. It comes shortly after worker riots at Foxconn, allegedly over pay and COVID-19 lockdowns at the plant. The protests hurt the Apple brand, production, and revenues.

They also pressured Apple and served as a convenient excuse for it to move Foxconn production to Luxshare, despite the Foxconn plant having regained speed.

Luxshare previously assembled only non-premium iPhones. With the new contract, the company broke Foxconn's monopoly on premium phones.

The day the news broke, Luxshare shares rose more than 3 percent. Apple's valuation, conversely, fell over the past year to less than \$2 trillion from \$3 trillion.

Cutthroat business practices are a strong possibility. Luxshare was founded by Grace Wang, a former Foxconn worker.

The CCP clearly aims for the replacement of not only Foxconn by Luxshare, but of Apple by China's tech champions.

The latest Taiwanese-to-Chinese production shift follows the same course as many in the past, where a Chinese company cannibalizes a competitor and then develops similar products to outcompete its rival.

The regime in Beijing assists the replacement of its competitors by subsidizing Chinese companies and providing them with lax regulations while increasing regulations, taxes, and propaganda against non-Chinese competitors or fomenting labor strife in their workplaces. If competitors complain, the CCP's only-somewhat-passive aggression increases.

"Apple struggled with iPhone 14 Pro shipments during the holiday season because of Covid restrictions on its primary [Foxconn] factory in China," according to CNBC. Those restrictions increased labor strife and the debilitating drop in production.

The production shifts have occurred for years and through Apple's enabling hand. Luxshare's annual revenues increased to \$24 billion from \$2 billion between 2016 and 2021.

In the latest shift, Luxshare could only bring its technical standards up to the required level for premium iPhone production with a "significant investment from Apple," according to sources cited by the Financial Times.

In November 2022, Luxshare was reportedly producing some iPhone 14 Pro Max units in its plant northwest of Shanghai.

"The transferred order represents a coup for Luxshare, which has been winning an increasing share of Apple's business," according to the Financial Times. "Apple's ties to China have become closer in recent years as Chinese contract manufacturers have won orders at the expense of Taiwanese partners."

But placating the CCP with production and technology transfers only buys Apple time.

Chinese state media criticized the American company. The Global Times claimed that "weakening demand for Apple products ... has dragged down the performance of Chinese suppliers."

The Global Times claimed that Apple's problems stem partly from a "competitive market in China as domestic smartphone brands such as Huawei, Xiaomi, Oppo, and Vivo have gained increasing popularity."

The CCP clearly aims for the replacement of not only Foxconn by Luxshare but of Apple by China's tech champions.

Moving premium iPhone production to a Chinese manufacturer improved Apple's short-term chances of avoiding worker riots and arbitrary rules imposed by the regime. But in the long run, Apple's days in authoritarian China are numbered.

Apple and other international corporations, along with shareholders who have different incentive structures than their CEOs, should watch their backs.

CEOs who pursue the Chinese market with production and technology transfers are investing in their companies' long-term demise.

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Milton Ezrati



Faltering American Consumers

Spending growth has slowed just about to a standstill

SINCE THE RECOVERY from COVID-19 lockdowns began, U.S. households have provided the economy's driving force. Homebuying and homebuilding boomed, and retail purchases soared in 2021 and early 2022.

That picture has changed, however, as rising interest rates have rendered home ownership too expensive for many, and inflation has cut deeply into the buying power of people's incomes. Prospects now hardly point in the direction of growth and prosperity. Instead, they point to a developing recession—if the economy isn't already in one.

Homebuying and homebuilding led for a long time. During the second half of 2020 and 2021, purchases of new homes leaped upward. By the end of 2021, buying was running some 25 percent above pre-pandemic levels. Construction naturally followed, with starts of new housing units rising by the end of 2021, some 24 percent above pre-COVID levels.

Both activities became casualties this year. Inflationary pressures gave the Federal Reserve little choice but to tighten credit. Rising interest rates since March 2022 saw 30-year mortgage rates more than double to 6.80 percent most recently from a low of 3.29 percent. This heightened cost of financing made home ownership simply unaffordable for many Americans. Accordingly, home purchases tumbled after March 2022, falling some 9.5 percent through November 2022. Not surprisingly, starts of new home construction dropped by 16.8 percent.

Residential construction accounts, on average, for only about 3-4 percent of the economy as measured by the gross domestic product, but it affects much else. When

homebuying falls, households buy fewer furniture and appliances as well as home repair supplies. Alone, these secondary effects would've slowed consumer spending, but inflation has burdened the consumer still more.

Even as wages rose at historically rapid rates, inflation raised living costs still faster. During the first three quarters of 2022, the Commerce Department reported that household incomes from wages and salaries rose at a 6.2 percent annual rate. But consumer prices rose at an 8.0 percent annual rate during that time, more than offsetting the purchasing power of their expanded nominal incomes.

Prospects now hardly point in the direction of growth and prosperity.

For a while, people tapped their credit cards to keep up their buying, but such behavior can only go so far. They had to slow the pace of new purchases. So, while retail sales during the first half of 2022 rose at an impressive 9.0 percent annual rate, such sales since June 2022 have barely grown at all. In assessing this remarkable halt in sales growth, it's critical to keep in mind that the retail sales measure is a nominal figure. After considering inflation, the picture shows a decline in real consumer spending.

Especially disturbing is the wide pattern of decline evident in the recent retail sales figures. In November 2022, overall nominal sales fell 0.6 percent from October's level, 7 percent at an annual rate. Only four of the 12 major categories showed any nominal growth at all, much less real growth. Sales of big-ticket items

showed the steepest declines. Auto sales fell 2.3 percent in November 2022 alone, furniture fell 2.6 percent, electronics fell 1.5 percent, and building materials fell 2.5 percent.

This is telling because cash-strapped consumers first cut back on these sorts of outlays. They're easier to postpone. It's harder to cut back on soap, groceries, medicine, and the like. And indeed, health care items and food were two of the four categories to show an increase. Another included bars. Perhaps, householders feel a need to drown their sorrows and find sympathy in their local tavern.

True, November is just one month, and a single month's figures don't make a trend. But usually, the overall figure—whether encouraging or disappointing—consists of a mix of growth in some categories and declines in others. That is to be expected since households typically hold back on one kind of spending when they splurge on another. The month when a working family buys a car is the month when it decides to dine out less than otherwise. It's then telling that November 2022 was almost universally cutbacks. This fact and the more general trends point to more of the same as the economy enters 2023.

If it isn't a pretty picture, the cause of the economic trouble does, however, offer a reason to look for recovery later in 2023. If the Fed's efforts can restrain inflation—not entirely unlikely—households could easily return to more aggressive spending patterns. Success on inflation might also prompt the Fed later in the new year to ease on its credit restraint policies and perhaps reverse its present policy of boosting interest rates. That might foster a return to homebuying and building, if not in late 2023, then in 2024.

ANDREW MORAN has been writing about business, economics, and finance for more than a decade. He is the author of “The War on Cash.”

Andrew Moran



ESG Bonds Hit Brakes

The issuance of sustainable debt slows amid growing ESG pushback

IS THE BOOM OVER FOR global environmental, social, and governance (ESG) bonds?

In 2022, businesses and governments worldwide raised \$863 billion in ESG bonds, a 19 percent decline from the previous year's haul of \$1.1 trillion, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That's the first time sustainable bonds have declined since they were introduced in the financial markets 15 years ago.

Within the ESG bond market, sales slumped across the board. The data revealed an 11 percent decrease in green bonds, a 22 percent slide in sustainability bonds, a 34 percent decline in social bonds, and a 0.2 percent dip in ESG municipals.

Green loans plunged by nearly 31 percent, while sustainability-linked loans were flat.

Analysts say that the bear market, rising interest rates, and uncertainty in the economy drove the notable retreat in ESG bonds.

The other factor that could affect the industry moving forward is regulatory scrutiny. From North America to Europe, regulators are bolstering their oversight efforts of ESG products, especially as accusations of greenwashing—meaning lying or misleading about a company's initiatives to protect the environment—intensify.

Last year, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) proposed clamping down on greenwashing by introducing standards and increasing disclosure requirements for ESG funds.

“We don't know what the SEC will end up actually putting in the rule, but there is no doubt that if they put out some very clear disclosure guidelines ... this is a clarion call to those who maybe should've been doing a better job of reporting about their processes,” Lisa Woll, CEO of The Fo-



Analysts say that the bear market, rising interest rates, and uncertainty in the economy drove the notable retreat in ESG bonds.

rum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment (US SIF), told reporters.

The US SIF recently published a report, titled “US Sustainable Investing Trends,” which found that domestic sustainable investing assets had plunged to \$8.4 trillion at the beginning of 2022 from \$17.1 trillion at the end of 2019.

The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) conducted a series of investigations targeting companies making false green claims. As a result, this past fall, ACM unveiled that apparel retail chain H&M and sporting goods giant Decathlon “made commitments to [ACM] promising to adjust or no longer use sustainability claims on their clothes and/or websites” and pledged up to 500,000 euros (\$537,000) “to compensate for their use of unclear and insufficiently substantiated sustainability claims.”

In the private sector, investors are

demanding better accountability.

Small activist investor Bluebell Capital Partners, which controls about \$250 million in assets, slammed BlackRock for its position on ESG, accusing the firm of having “lost sight with its mission as an investment manager” and adopting “the self-appointed right to share the political debate on environmental and social issues.”

“We are increasingly concerned about (i) the reputational risk (including greenwashing risk) to which you have unreasonably exposed the company, potentially fueling a gap between the ‘talk’ and the ‘walk’ on ESG investing; and (ii) the backlash caused by BlackRock's ESG strategy which has alienated clients and attracted an undesired level of negative publicity,” BlueBell stated in a letter to BlackRock.

Market experts, however, argue that ESG is here to stay. In recent years, the facets of ESG “have become part of the investment mainstream,” says Jon Hale, director of sustainability research for the Americas at Morningstar Sustainability.

“We live in an age of transparency, and stakeholders are demanding better corporate accountability around these types of issues. More end investors want their investments to make a difference,” he said.

But will this translate to better performance for the global ESG market? According to Barclays, international ESG bond sales will top \$460 billion this year.

“We expect green bond issuance to continue to dominate the market thanks to strong demand and a long list of green projects that need funding as companies put decarbonization plans into action,” Charlotte Edwards, head of ESG fixed-income research at Barclays, said in a note, adding that greenwashing risks could affect volumes.

DANIEL LACALLE is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

Daniel Lacalle



2023: The Year of Stagflation

This year, only a few countries are anticipated to reduce debt

AFTER MORE THAN \$20 trillion in stimulus plans since 2020, the economy is going into stagnation with elevated inflation.

Global governments announced more than \$12 trillion in stimulus measures in 2020 alone and central banks bloated their balance sheets by \$8 trillion. The result was disappointing and with long-lasting negative effects: a weak recovery, record debt, and elevated inflation.

Of course, governments all over the world blamed the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the nonexistent multiplier effect of the stimulus plans, but the excuse made no sense. Commodity prices rose from February 2022 to June 2022 and have corrected since. Even considering the negative effect of rising commodity prices in developed economies, we must acknowledge that those are positives for emerging economies and—even with that boost—the disappointing recovery led to constant downgrades of estimates.

If Keynesian multipliers existed, most developed economies would be growing strongly even discounting the Ukraine invasion impact, considering the unprecedented amount of stimulus plans approved.

Now, we face 2023 with even more disappointing estimates. According to Bloomberg Economics, global growth will decline to a worrying 2.4 percent in 2023 from an already poor 3.2 percent in 2022, significantly below the pre-COVID-19 trend but with higher global debt. Total global debt rose by \$3.3 trillion in Q1 2022 to a new record of over \$305 trillion, mostly due to China and the United States, according to the Institute of International Finance.

However, consensus estimates show an even worse outlook. Global



No government wants to acknowledge the risk of central banks reducing their balance sheets.

growth should stall at 1.8 percent, with the euro area at zero growth and the United States at just 0.3 percent, with inflation reaching 6 percent globally, 6.1 percent in the euro area, and 4.1 percent in the United States.

Only a handful of countries are expected to reduce debt in 2023, with most nations continuing to finance bloated government spending with elevated deficits and tax hikes. A world where governments are constantly eroding the purchasing power of currencies and slashing the disposable income of taxpayers with rising taxes is likely to show weaker growth trends and worsening imbalances.

The narrative all over the world is to try to convince us that past-peak but elevated inflation is “falling prices” and that everything is good when debt increases, growth stalls, and the purchasing power of salaries and savings are wiped out slowly.

There’s no success in stagflation. It’s a process of impoverishment that

hurts the middle classes immensely, while excessive government spending is never curbed.

The year 2023 is expected to be the year of stagflation. Of course, most strategists are betting on inflation falling rapidly in the second part of the year, but that seems inconsistent with their estimates of deficit spending and growth.

There seems to be no incentive to reduce the fiscal and monetary imbalances built over two decades, and therefore the result will be weaker growth and impoverishment.

No government wants to acknowledge the risk of central banks reducing their balance sheets. Even the most aggressive strategist fails to dare to estimate a \$3 trillion quantitative tightening because they all know that the effects could be devastating.

The reason why everyone expects 2023 to be divided into two parts, a first half of poor data and a second where growth picks up and inflation plummets, is because market participants need to create a narrative that shows a quick fix to the above-mentioned disaster. However, there’s no quick fix, there’s no soft landing, and there isn’t a chance of solving the problem by keeping elevated deficits, massive central bank balance sheets, and real negative rates.

If we want to look at the options, there are only two: fixing the problem created in 2020—which means a global recession but probably not a financial crisis—or not fixing it—which means elevated inflation, weaker growth, and another bad year for risky assets, which can lead to a financial crisis.

Unfortunately, when governments all over the world decided to “spend now and deal with the consequences later” in 2020, they also created the seeds of a 2008-style problem.

EVA HAMBACH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Fan Yu

How to Invest in 2023

The tide is turning against index funds

THE MARKET’S FIXATION on inflation and the Fed’s interest rate moves appears, at least for now, over. We’re moving onto real concerns such as an economic recession, and for investors, a corporate earnings and growth decline as a result of said recession.

Investors should be prepared to use a few tools depending on how the year unfolds.

Be Defensive

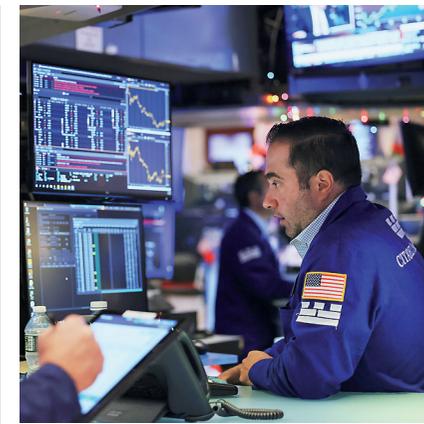
This is partially math. Let’s say you have two portfolios, one fairly defensive and one aggressively growth-oriented, with \$100 in each account to start. The defensive portfolio makes a modest 7 percent total return in 12 months (e.g. 5 percent appreciation and 2 percent dividend yield), ending at \$107. The aggressive portfolio loses 10 percent in the first six months. It would need to gain an additional 19 percent the rest of the way to achieve parity at the end of the year with the defensive portfolio (to end at \$107).

Put differently, in the long term, it’s usually better to pass up higher returns than to suffer losses.

What are defensive stocks? It generally refers to industries that are less economically sensitive such as consumer staples (food and drinks, household products, grocery stores), health care (people need medicine and treatments regardless of the economy), defense and infrastructure (usually funded by government budgets), and utilities (your local electricity distributor).

Don’t Depend on Index Funds

The past decade-plus has given rise to so-called index funds that track the market, or a particular index. This has been popularized by funds and ETFs (exchange-traded funds) managed by Vanguard, State Street / SPDR ETFs,



As the country tips into a recession, market valuations this year can offer a good entry point for a long-term investment.

BlackRock / iShares, among others. Its idea was that a rising tide lifts all boats and investors were content with riding along with the market.

Well, the tide is receding and performance differentiation is now critical. Investors should consider funds managed by active managers who have a positive track record, experience investing in downturns, and longevity. Index funds are cheaper and more preferable in rising markets, but in choppy markets with violent price swings, 50 basis points of “lower expenses” isn’t going to make a difference.

Prioritize Income

After an atypical year where bonds and equities both fell, many experts predict bonds will show a good return in 2023.

“With the bulk of rate hikes behind us and the Fed’s ‘slower but longer’ approach taking shape, we think it makes sense to modestly increase duration

through bolstering core bond allocations, especially in investment grade credit,” Nuveen Asset Management wrote in its 2023 preview for clients. The firm has the highest conviction in high-quality corporate bonds.

The risk/reward tradeoff for bonds has significantly improved, and the current market environment represents a very compelling entry point.

Keep an Eye on the Future

Despite the overall defensive positioning, it’s still wise to place a few secular, thematic bets.

One theme is deglobalization and onshoring. This is caused by rising labor costs in emerging markets but also due to geopolitics as China and Russia continue to isolate themselves. Setting up new production capabilities requires a significant source of raw materials, commodities, and energy. Think of miners such as BHP Group, chemical companies such as Dow, and energy firms such as ExxonMobil.

Another shift is the world’s aging demographics. Boomers are retiring or retired, and there’s a significant demand for medical services, affordable drugs, etc. Investors can look at real estate investment trusts (REITs) that own senior housing, dialysis and care centers, and medical offices. The health care industry, aside from being defensive in nature, also benefits from an aging population.

War preparation and defense is another secular trend. Defense and aerospace firms such as Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman are some of those that could benefit.

These are long-term trends not just for 2023. But as the country tips into a recession, market valuations next year can offer a good entry point for a long-term investment.

MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES



“In 2020, I pushed back on the school closures in my city of San Francisco.”

Jennifer Sey,
former brand
president of Levi
Strauss and Co.

THOUGHT LEADERS

Jennifer Sey on the Courage to Stand Against ‘Wokeism’

Former Levi’s top executive talks about fighting for children during the pandemic

“I was a traitor to what has become almost a religion. ... I was a traitor to my class, which maniacally upheld these ideals that COVID restrictions were for the good of the masses, when in fact, they were doing such great harm,” Jennifer Sey says.

In this recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek sat down with Sey, who was poised to become CEO of Levi Strauss & Co. after working her way up the corporate ladder at the company to Levi’s brand president. Her advocacy against COVID-19 restrictions, especially school closures, changed all that. She’s the author of “Levi’s Unbuttoned: The Woke Mob Took My Job but Gave Me My Voice.”

JAN JEKIELEK: Let’s start with your story. Give us the background of how we got here.

JENNIFER SEY: I worked at Levi’s for almost 23 years, a brand that people around the world love. I love the product. I’m wearing it now. But in 2020, I pushed back on the school closures in my city of San Francisco. This went against the “woke” ideology and the Democratic leadership in my city and state and at the national level.

I pushed back for two years. Ultimately, I was pushed out of the company because I was foolish enough or perhaps courageous enough to say, “This is a lie. This is benefiting no



An empty classroom during the pandemic lockdown at Hollywood High School in Hollywood, Calif., on Aug. 13, 2020.

one, and, in fact, is harming many people and children.” But I was a traitor to what has become almost a religion. And certainly, I was a traitor to my class, which maniacally held that COVID restrictions were for the good of the masses, when, in fact, they were doing such great harm.

MR. JEKIELEK: You were sending your kids to public school, which was atypical of your peer group.

MS. SEY: In the two or three employee levels below me in the corporate hierarchy, you probably couldn’t find a single soul who sent their kids to public school, not in San Francisco. By and large, I was in the vast minority.

So over the course of my two years of kicking and screaming about how wrong this was and how children were being harmed, my peers all sent their kids back to school, because their kids went to private schools. That’s when I thought the light bulb would come on, and people would see the hypocrisy if I

just made it clear in a calm, nice way, but they didn’t, because this “wokeness” is a cloak the left-liberal elite wraps around itself to say, “I care about social justice. I’m a good person. If you threaten to expose that, you need to be banished.”

As Sam Bankman-Fried, the now notorious founder and [former] CEO of FTX, said in an exchange with a Vox reporter, “It’s a game we woke Westerners play so that people like us.” I couldn’t say it any better than that.

MR. JEKIELEK: When did you first notice something was off?

MS. SEY: March 13, 2020, the day that everything locked down in San Francisco. The fear and panic were already being generated. But I was obsessively reading the data, along with my husband, that was coming out of Italy, in which the median age of death was older than 80.

Nobody was bothering to look at actual data or adhere to the pre-pandemic playbook, which states that you

never shut schools down for more than a couple of weeks. And so, my alarm bells went off from the beginning. From day one, my husband and I both said, “Hell no, this is wrong. People are going to be harmed.”

I was outspoken from the very beginning about the school closures.

It wasn’t until September 2020 when our head of corporate communications said: “You might want to think about not doing this. When you speak, you speak on behalf of the company.”

By December 2020, I started to lead rallies with my husband and a few friends, but they were sparsely attended. People were afraid to push back against this religion because you experienced tremendous reputational harm if you did. You were called everything from a teacher-killer to a racist to a eugenicist. People would dare to say to me, while sending their own kids to in-person schools, “You can’t advocate for poor children to be in school.”

I still don’t understand it. It lacks empathy. It’s cowardly. I don’t like fighting, and I like to be liked, but I couldn’t stop, because the hypocrisy enraged me.

By December 2021, I was told, “There’s no longer a place for you. You can’t become the CEO because of the things you’ve been saying and doing. You need to leave.”

I was offered severance. I decided I wouldn’t take that because that comes with the signing of a nondisclosure agreement that would require me to never speak about the terms of my

LEFT PAGE: PHOTO BY JACK WANG/THE EPOCH TIMES; THIS PAGE: RODIN ECKENROTH/GETTY IMAGES

As Sam Bankman-Fried, the now notorious founder and [former] CEO of FTX, said in an exchange with a Vox reporter, “It’s a game we woke Westerners play, so that people like us.”

ousting. I wasn’t OK with that because I was increasingly alarmed at the illiberalism that had taken hold of this institution and other corporate entities across the country.

MR. JEKIELEK: You put your money where your mouth was too, because you would have gotten at least \$1 million or something like that if you had played along.

MS. SEY: I would’ve gotten \$1 million if I had signed the non-disclosure and never spoken of this again.

MR. JEKIELEK: You became even more outspoken after leaving, writing a book and so forth. Along the way, what has happened to your friends and peer group? How has that changed?

MS. SEY: None of my friends and colleagues at Levi’s stood by me during the course of those two years. I’ve heard from a few since who say, “I’m probably not supposed to talk to you, but I hope you’re well.” These are people I knew and worked with for 20 years. With my friends outside of work, it’s more like, “Well, we’re really confused by the things you say and do. We won’t banish you completely, but we find you upsetting.”

And then there are family members that I have no contact with because they deemed what I said to be evil and dangerous, which is what I’ll never truly understand in my heart of hearts. Why couldn’t we all just disagree on the best path forward? Why did I have to be the incarnation of all things evil, even in my own family?

But I’ve also made many new friends, lots of moms from across the country who pushed back on the restrictions and this unfairness directed at children. We come from all walks of life and all sides of the political aisle. I’ve never really had a group of friends so diverse in their upbringing. They’ve been a tremendous support to me.

MR. JEKIELEK: Has your view of humanity changed at all through this?

MS. SEY: It has. I try to be optimistic, but I feel sad mostly. People seem more interested in fitting in with the group than doing the right thing. I didn’t believe that before about my friends. I thought they were critical thinkers who believed in questioning authority and challenging the narrative.

But when it came down to

it, 90 percent of people went with the story they were told and were willing to ostracize and demonize their own friends and family members. They’re true believers. They believed in this bigger cause and couldn’t allow the facts to creep in.

MR. JEKIELEK: In your book, you observe that people high up on the corporate ladder are quite influenced by their kids, who have been going to schools where they’ve been indoctrinated with this woke ideology. That had never occurred to me.

MS. SEY: It’s part of this whole trend toward “I’m your friend, not your parent.” Parents want to be in good [standing] with their kids. And the kids feel guilty. They’ve had every advantage under the sun since forever. They have unimaginable wealth. They have trust funds. They feel very guilty about it, and they want to overcome that guilt.

They do it through the presentation of themselves as social justice warriors. They’ve learned this in their

woke elementary schools. They went to woke colleges. They come home and tell their parents about this, and their parents lean in because they’re the friends, not the parents. They take guidance from their children. They take fashion advice from their children, as well as moral and ethical advice. It’s insane.

MR. JEKIELEK: As we’re finishing here, tell me what you hope people can get out of your book, which, frankly, covers a lot of bases.

MS. SEY: It’s my fondest hope that it gives people a little nudge and a dose of courage to stand up and do the right thing and say what they really think. It’s really the only way to pierce this bubble, this hypnotic bubble we seem to be in, of wokeism. Stand up for your friends and neighbors who use their voices, and use your own. It’s the only way, and it’s the only way we can pierce this mass hypnosis, what appears to be mass hypnosis. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



Students return for the reopening of school in the Brooklyn borough of New York on Dec. 7, 2020.

THIS PAGE: ANGELA WEISS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THE EPOCH TIMES

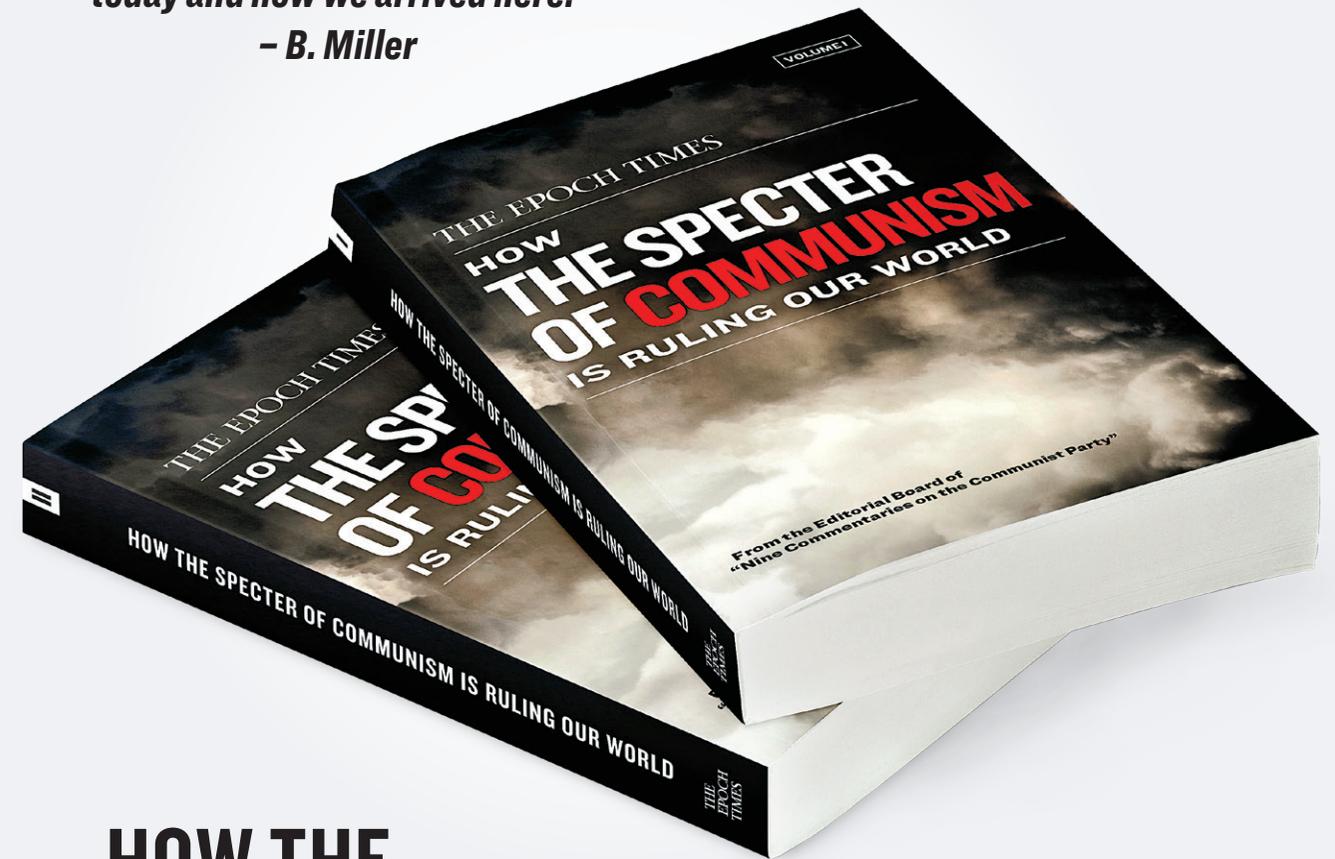
The Book You’ve Been Waiting for ...

“Makes a very clear case against communism and explains how it rules every aspect of life worldwide. A must read if you want to understand the world we live in.”

– Jason E.

“An eye-opening and sobering read on where we find ourselves today and how we arrived here.”

– B. Miller



HOW THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM IS RULING OUR WORLD

The specter of communism did not disappear with the disintegration of the Communist Party in Eastern Europe

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Strive to Be an Ennobler

Treating others in a dignified manner benefits them—and us

By Jeff Minick



RECENTLY, a magazine editor told me that he hopes his writers ennoble their readers.

Now, there's a word rarely heard these days. His comment sent me to my online dictionary for specifics, where I found the definition he doubtless intended: "to lend greater dignity or nobility of character to." Certainly a worthy goal, and one that shouldn't be restricted to the editor's workhorses.

After thinking about it, I concluded that enhancing dignity or nobility in another is in itself a noble goal. If we treat women as ladies and men as gentlemen, we ennoble not only them, but our own souls as well.

Ladies and Gents

But that last thought brings up three more words—"ladies," "gentlemen," and "soul"—that appear as rarely in our daily conversation as the word ennobler. Some even disdain these terms as musty and dated, right up there with "groovy" and "far out."

Yet these old-fashioned concepts continue to find staunch defenders. In her online article "10 Qualities of a Lady," Maria Doll plays on an old saying to make these distinctions: "Being female is a matter of birth, being a woman is a matter of age, but being a lady is a matter of choice." Among Doll's 10 points are a mix of characteristics that mark a lady; among them are manners, dress, civility, and a strong work ethic.

Doll applies many of these

standards to men as well. In her companion piece, "10 Qualities of a Gentleman," she writes: "A gentleman models civility in how he treats others. He demonstrates respect, restraint, and personal responsibility in all his interactions. He is honorable, and values and respects others."

Impart dignity to those in our charge and care, and we ennoble them.

So why introduce "soul" into this equation? Though more complex in its definition than lady or gentleman, most sources mention that an individual's soul is a unique combination of life, thought, feeling, and will. It's the very essence of being human, the core of who we are.

Mix these elements together and we can assert with some assurance that a lady or a gentleman who regards fellow human beings as souls possesses the power to ennoble them.

Ennobling Others

With a little thought and care, it's an easy thing to do. In the workplace, for example, we can use polite language when addressing our co-workers—"please" and "thank you" are basic starters. We can praise the deserving for a job well done. When these same workers come to us with a complaint or a question, we can put down the

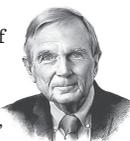
phone and actively listen to them. We can offer encouragement to that new employee who seems so unsure of herself, and we can laugh at ourselves when we commit some minor blunder. A smile and a sense of humor cover a multitude of peccadillos.

The philosophy to which we adhere in how we view our fellow human beings is therefore of vital importance and can determine whether we lift people up or degrade and denigrate them. If an office manager—and I've seen this happen—favors an administrative assistant because of her attractive looks rather than for her skills, whatever his intentions, he wounds her by diminishing her dignity and competence in her own eyes and in the eyes of her peers.

Impart dignity to those in our charge and care, and we ennoble them and ourselves. And the repercussions and rewards of such attempts can be great. Imagine a home, a workplace, a community, and even a nation where people treat their families, friends, and strangers—including those on social media—with respect, as one-of-a-kind creations rather than as stereotypes or lumps of flesh.

The first step in that transformation starts with us. And it's a win-win all the way around.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man."



Unwind



Instead of traditional Valentine's Day gifts that soon fade from memory like roses or chocolates, we've compiled suggestions that will show your love for many years to come.

PHOTO BY KOBUS LOUW/GETTY IMAGES

Gifts They'll Love All Year Long 98

SET IN FABLED BEVERLY HILLS, this estate is a great choice for those who want to be near Los Angeles, but buffered from its hectic pace. **92**

EUROPE'S LARGEST METROPOLIS on the Mediterranean, Barcelona is a magical place chock full of amazing restaurants, historic sites, and marvelous residents. **94**

AS WE RING IN THE NEW YEAR, here are suggestions to become more organized and efficient to help improve all areas of life and work. **102**

INSIDE

Beautiful Beverly Hills

By Phil Butler



A luxurious estate in the heart of Southern California

Manicured gardens with statuary and covered seating areas surround the Roman-style pool.

SET BEHIND GATES TO ENSURE THE owner's privacy while also establishing a tranquil atmosphere, this grand manor is located a short distance from the hustle of Los Angeles in the extremely desirable, world-famous neighborhood of Beverly Hills, California.

A tour of the very spacious 13,300-square-foot, eight-bedroom, nine-bath residence reveals that painstaking attention was paid to every detail of its construction and design. While it's very well-suited for entertaining, the residence also is exceptionally capable of catering to all the needs of a large family.

At the main entrance's double-height foyer, a unique stained-glass dome illuminates an imperial-style staircase. The spacious main living room features 14-foot ceilings and a massive fireplace. The adjacent family room's bar is complemented by a fireplace that creates a convivial atmosphere. A formal dining room that can easily accommodate groups of 16 is served by a restaurant-quality kitchen that's equipped to create lavish meals for large groups or intimate family dinners.

The owners and guests also have the option

of more casual dining in a smaller, octagonal-shaped dining room.

The lavish master suite features dual marble baths, a sitting room, a fireplace, and a most generous amount of closet space. The home's other notable elements include laundry facilities on each level, an elevator, a game room, a wine closet, a full gym, and two bedrooms for the staff, as well as a two-car garage to house the owner's vehicles.

The home enjoys a relaxing setting on just more than a half-acre of manicured gardens dotted with statuary and frescoes, as well as a Roman-style pool and poolside dining area shaded from the California sun and the elements by overhead balconies.

The property is conveniently located in the heart of Beverly Hills, just a short drive from Rodeo Drive, the University of California—Los Angeles Medical Center, the Los Angeles Country Club, Franklin Canyon and other parks, and the area's many other dining, recreation, and entertainment options. ■

Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.



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AGENT

JADE MILLS ESTATES
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(Above) The entry foyer features a spectacular chandelier, gleaming marble flooring, and a sweeping staircase leading to the upper level. **(Top Right)** The home's country club-quality bar opens onto the pool area, allowing guests to take a dip and enjoy the fresh air. **(Right)** The exceptionally airy master bedroom features intricate ceiling and crown molding, with a sitting area complete with a fireplace to chase away the chill.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JADE MILLS ESTATES

Barcelona Winter

Winter is the time for festive markets, cozy taverns, and illuminated cathedrals

By Kevin Revolinski



La Rambla is a Barcelona boulevard famous for its architectural delights, flower stalls, and human statues.

WE ARRIVED IN BARCELONA, Spain, by train, and a short taxi ride carried us into the heart of the city. Our hotel, Seventy Barcelona, made a great base of operations by putting us nearly equidistant from the oldest parts of the city, the famous Sagrada Família cathedral, and the hilltop Park Güell overlooking it all—a 20- to 30-minute walk to about anywhere. Forget the high season, I say; we came in December and it was perfect.

Meandering the Markets

We hit the pavement in search of tapas and stop where flaming patio heaters along the sidewalk drew us to a table. Sated, we strolled another several blocks to the end of the boulevard: Catalunya Plaza, Barcelona’s central square surrounded by stately edifices of early 20th-century neoclassical buildings. But it’s there that the Gothic Quarter begins, sending us back in time down ever-narrowing, labyrinthine streets.

Along its edge is La Rambla, the city’s most famous promenade. Known for its flower vendors, theaters, and cafés, it stretches three-quarters of a mile from the square to the port. In early December, its open-air restaurants are half full, hosts standing in wait as we passed, hoping to entice us to sit for some seafood.

We slipped deeper into the Gothic Quarter and passed between a couple of broken half arches, remnants of a Roman aqueduct. Nearby was the Barcelona Cathedral, constructed from the 13th century to the 15th century, with an eye-catching facade added in the late 19th century. The pedestrian street past the cathedral was lined with festive booths—a Christmas market, sporting crafts and decorations, yule logs, and treats.

A few of the vendors offered turrón, a nougat of honey, egg whites, and toasted nuts, typically almond but sometimes hazelnut, a traditional sweet for family gatherings, especially at Christmas. Crumbled pieces were on plates for sampling. But a stone’s throw from the steps of the cathedral, we found Torrons Vicens, a family producer founded in 1775 which now has shops throughout Spain. We popped in to try some and left with several boxes and some of their gourmet chocolate.

We wandered into La Boqueria Market and, other than a few other cellphone photographers, the patrons there were locals picking up food for home. A 15-minute wandering took us back past the cathedral to the wavy-roofed Santa Caterina Market, which was also only modestly

Now a lucrative industry, **252 million** bottles of cava were produced in 2021.



Sagrada Família is less than two miles from the Gothic Quarter.

Tapas are small dishes of appetizers or snacks.



Turrón, a Spanish sweet made of toasted almonds and nougat, has been revered on the Iberian Peninsula for over a thousand years.



CLOCKWISE FROM L: STOCKBRUNET/SHUTTERSTOCK; THE EPOCH TIMES; EPINE/SHUTTERSTOCK; NITTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



People enjoy seafood at a tapas bar inside La Boqueria public market in the Ciudad Vieja district of Barcelona.

busy—which was great, as we didn’t have the pressure of a dozen others waiting at our heels as we composed a veritable sampler of things that looked good at a deli counter.

Toast of the Town

The next day, we took a bus up to Park Güell for the panoramic view, then walked back downhill toward the hotel. We found a tiny random square, not in any guidebook, and stopped at a tavern offering toasted sandwiches. But first, we ordered a round of drinks. France has Champagne, and Italy has prosecco, but Catalonia pops bottles of cava. While we had intended to follow conventional wisdom to find a good cava bar, we ended up falling in love with another regional sipper: vermouth.

Served over ice and garnished with a slice of orange and an olive, vermouth is popular in Spain. But in Catalonia, something is different about it; the botanical notes are more pronounced, perhaps. As the server took our food order, I inquired. It’s the house vermouth, he

told me, a vermut negre—not red, but “black”—made from the regional Macabeo grapes, one of the varieties used in cava. The server pointed back at a barrel behind the bar. Some places make their own mix and age it in a barrel. And I wanted to try every one of them. But it wasn’t bottled, so I may never have that one again.

Glowing Creations

Evening fell early as our footsteps echoed along the shadowy cobblestone lanes, the smallest being only wide enough for pedestrians. We stumbled upon Emprems de Catalunya, a boutique shop populated by traditional handicrafts from Catalonia. Like a cultural museum, the collection was curated to bring in truly local creations from towns and villages, artisan work that demands preservation.

We saved the Sagrada Família for the last day. A city pass fast-tracked us inside and, despite all the things to see in the enormous place, we spent a long meditative moment simply seated in the nave beneath towering tree-like columns, awestruck by the morning sun lighting up the stained glass windows and infusing the space with color. A perfect moment in an unrushed Barcelona experience.

And this is what I love the most about being here: the relaxed, convivial spaces. Snugs in a side street, warm light spilling onto the paving stones, patrons lingering. A bottle of vermouth or cava. And tapas, of course, a parade of little items like a meandering conversation that leaves you sated and buzzing. ■

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan.

If You Go

Stay: We stayed at Seventy Barcelona Hotel, a modern gem with a lobby library, spa/sauna, and sleek, modern room designs.

Getting Around: Compare the various city pass options that cater to travelers of varying interests—be it a skip-the-line option at Sagrada Família, a hop-on-hop-off bus, or a list of museum entries.

Take Note: Only a few items on our visit required timeliness and advance tickets: Casa Batlló, Sagrada Família, and the Barcelona Cathedral.



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: GIANNIS PAPANIKOS/SHUTTERSTOCK, SHUTTERSTOCK, ANDRII LUTSYV/SHUTTERSTOCK



Park Güell is an impressive public park that sports buildings, sculptures, and tile work by Antoni Gaudí.



How to Be a Great Tenant

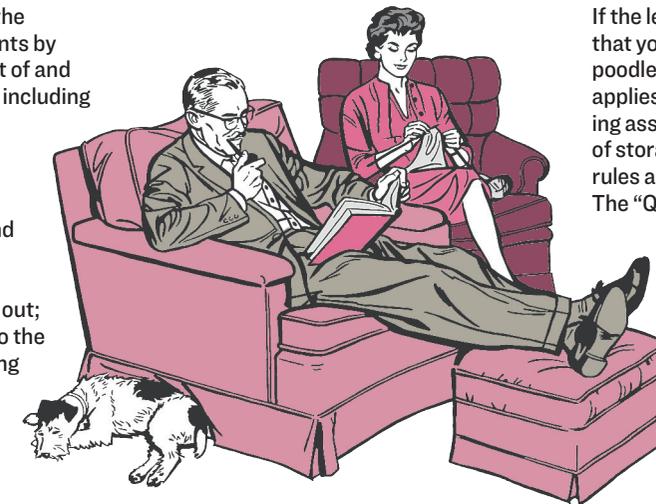
Tips to make the tenant-landlord relationship pleasant and longstanding

It’s easy to discount the need for interacting with the landlord beyond paying the rent on time every month, but by being proactive and pleasant, tenants can make the stay much better and be treated like family.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Neatness Counts

Show consideration to the landlord and other tenants by keeping the area in front of and around your area clean, including parking areas. Clean up after pets, especially if they stray over to a neighbor’s area to leave an unwelcome “gift,” and anywhere else where it could be a nuisance. Be careful taking the trash out; make sure it all goes into the dumpster without spilling out, and close the lid afterward to contain odors within.



4 Read the Fine Print

If the lease says “no pets,” don’t assume that your cute ferret or well-behaved toy poodle will be the exception. This also applies to adhering to policies regarding assigned parking spaces, the use of storage areas, guest policies, and rules about hosting large gatherings. The “Quiet Enjoyment” clause of the lease agreement means you can be held responsible for violating noise ordinances or other behavior that irritates or offends the other tenants. You are also responsible for your belongings, so consider obtaining renter’s insurance.

2 Be Upfront

At some point, things break, so let the landlord or property manager know as soon as possible. If it was your fault, offer to pay for required repairs or replacement; if it simply wore out and the condition was documented when you moved in, you shouldn’t be liable for replacement. If you realize there will be a problem making a rent payment on time, discuss it with the landlord or property manager as soon as possible rather than surprising them.

3 Use Your Charm

There’s nothing to be gained except a bad reputation by nitpicking every tiny issue, or being antagonistic toward other tenants, even if they’re at fault. If you need a repair or situation addressed, send a polite, respectful email to the management team, with a follow-up call to make sure it was received, and allow for a few days to see the result. If an automatic renewal isn’t provided for in the lease documents, landlords may be inclined to replace high-maintenance, frequently complaining tenants.

5 Act Like an Owner

Taking pride in your home or office is a great way to make your stay pleasant. Keep in mind that this doesn’t mean making changes to the exterior without prior approval from the actual owner. Instead, consider making yourself at home by adding personal touches such as a festive doormat. Inside, hang art, using methods that can be readily reversed when you move out. If you see discarded minor trash such as a soda can, take it to the refuse area.

CSA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



Valentine's Day Gift Guide

Gifts From the Heart *By Bill Lindsey*

Chocolates and flowers are traditional Valentine's Day gifts, but flowers quickly fade while candy stays on the thighs forever. This collection of practical, thoughtful gifts can be used all year long, and will generate smiles every time they are used, making them a great way to say "I love you."

FOR HIM

FOR HER

Brad's Secret

1. LE DOMAINE SKINCARE CREAM

\$236

To make sure your guy ages gracefully, give him the anti-aging cream Brad Pitt uses. The Perrin family, best known for their organic wines, blended this cream from grape seeds, botanicals, and other healthy ingredients to preserve and protect the skin. To add a unique touch, the bottles and caps are made from recycled glass and wine barrels.

Le-Domaine.com

Wind It Up

2. WORBITA WATCH WINDER

\$695

The best way to keep his beloved automatic-movement watches in optimum working condition is to keep them properly wound. The unique design utilizes a round cylinder to securely hold the timepiece while it's rotated, housed under a clear acrylic dust cover. Battery power allows it to be placed in a safe or on a shelf without the need for an unsightly power cord.

TimeScapeUSA.com

Checkmate!

3. BEY-BERK CARBON FIBER CHESS SET

\$291

Fans of the strategy game of chess will be reminded of your love every time they use this unique set. Crafted of high-tech carbon fiber, it's a nice accent even when not in use, and features two integrated drawers to store the wooden playing pieces between games.

NeimanMarcus.com

Say 'No' to Wrinkles

4. LEATHEROLOGY TIE CASE

\$145

There's not much worse for him than arriving for an out-of-town business meeting and discovering his ties are crumpled and wrinkled. This handcrafted case keeps ties organized while traveling, to ensure they arrive in perfect condition. These cases are made of full-grain leather and have a pocket for tie clasps and collar stays.

Leatherology.com

A Tie for Lovebirds

5. FERRAGAMO HEART PRINT TIE

\$210

While many holiday ties are rarely worn other than one day each year, this is a tie he'll enjoy wearing all year long. Made in Italy of 100 percent silk, the discreet yet intricate design (look closely to see the lovebirds in the hearts) makes it appropriate for office or evening affairs.

Ferragamo.com

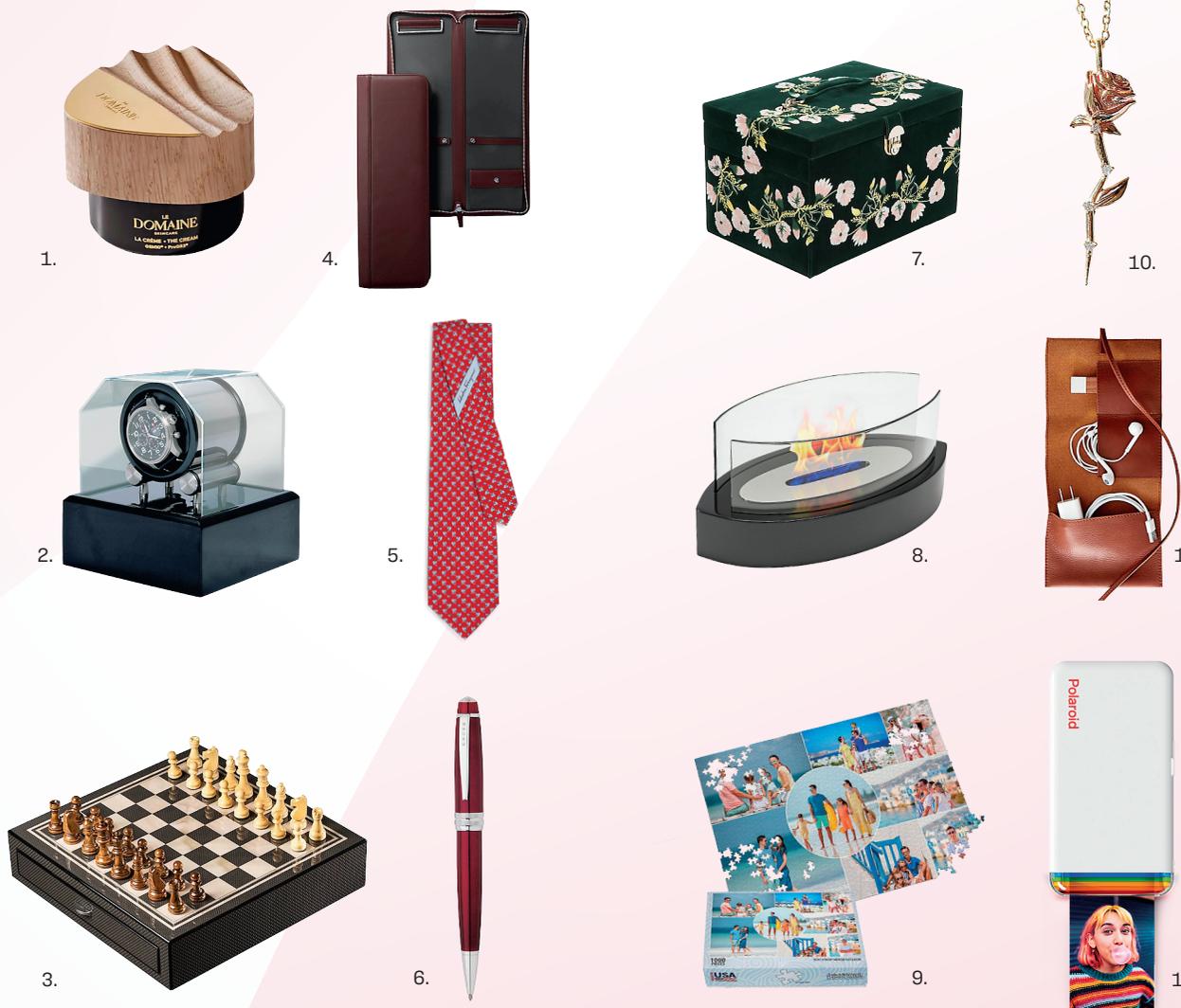
Put It in Writing

6. CROSS BAILEY BALLPOINT PEN

\$42

He will think lovingly of you whenever he uses this classic, elegant Cross pen. Crafted of brass with a red lacquer overlay that means it won't be easily misplaced, the chrome accents give it a look that makes it the perfect choice for the boardroom or his journal.

PenBoutique.com



Versatile Elegance

7. ZOE LARGE JEWELRY BOX

\$649

Her jewelry deserves a case as glamorous as the precious items stored within. This embroidered box has an impressive 20 compartments for individual pieces, plus 18 ring rolls, 12 necklaces areas, five bracelet compartments, six compartments for small items, and a removable case to hold items when she travels.

NeimanMarcus.com

Burning Love

8. VERANDA TABLETOP PORTABLE FIREPLACE

\$169.99

A romantic evening beside a mesmerizing fire has never been easier to arrange. Forget lugging logs—this uses clean-burning ethanol to eliminate soot, and can be used outdoors or, with proper ventilation, indoors, too. Arched safety glass provides flame protection and a clear view from any angle.

RegalFlame.com

Love Is a Puzzle

9. 1,000-PIECE COLLAGE PHOTO PUZZLE

\$69.99

She will fall in love with you all over again as she assembles this 1,000-piece puzzle made from her favorite photos of the two of you, or the entire family. Choose from a wide variety of templates, and then select up to 64 photos, along with text, to make it extra special.

MakeYourPuzzles.com

Everlasting Love

10. SOFIA ZAKIA CELESTIAL ROSE NECKLACE

\$625

Why give a bouquet of roses that will wither in a few days when she can have this 14-karat gold, diamond-accented rose pendant that will retain its beauty forever? Handcrafted, each delicate rose is suspended from either a 16-inch or 20-inch solid gold chain.

SofiaZakia.com

Wrap It Up

11. MARK & GRAHAM LEATHER CHARGER ROLL UP

\$49

Help keep her organized by giving her a clever, simple, and practical way to keep chargers and cords tucked away until needed. Crafted of soft, supple, full-grain leather in eight colors, each is unique and a very stylish way to ensure her phone or laptop never goes dark.

MarkAndGraham.com

Save Special Moments

12. POLAROID HI-PRINT STARTER SET

\$129.99

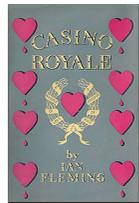
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RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature the first novel of an iconic fictional spy and a fascinating analysis of the world economy's most indispensable inventions.

FICTION

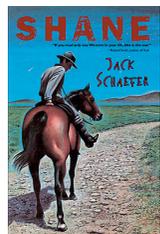


'CASINO ROYALE'
By Ian Fleming

James Bond's Grand Entrance

Ian Fleming was a British intelligence officer during World War II and transferred his experiences, although obviously embellished, to pen and paper. "Casino Royale" launched the most iconic fictional spy in literary history and is arguably his best Bond book.

THOMAS & MERCER REPRINT EDITION, 2012, 188 PAGES



'SHANE'
By Jack Schaefer

A Classic Western Hero

Among the novels set in the Old West, "Shane" is considered a classic. The stoic Shane drifts into the lives of the Starrett family, works as a hired hand on their homestead, and eventually must revert to his violent past to help his employer and other homesteaders take

a stand against the rancher set on driving them away. The novel is also the coming-of-age story of 11-year-old Bob Starrett, the narrator who idolizes Shane and then gradually begins to understand him. A great read for teens and adults.

CLARION BOOKS, 2014
176 PAGES

ECONOMICS



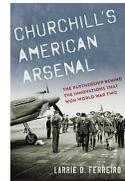
'FIFTY INVENTIONS THAT SHAPED THE MODERN ECONOMY'
By Tim Harford

What Makes the World Work

Today's economy has many moving parts, and often people are unaware these parts exist. This book examines some of the most important factors in today's global economy. It contains 50 five-page essays about items Harford feels are the most indispensable to the modern economy. Some, such as the plow, are ancient; others, such as the iPhone, are from the 21st century. All are important. This book reveals some inventions that might be unknown to most readers. It's a delightful, insightful read.

RIVERHEAD BOOKS, 2017
336 PAGES

HISTORY



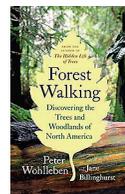
'CHURCHILL'S AMERICAN ARSENAL'
By Larrie D. Ferreiro

Victory Through Partnered Research

During World War II, the United States and Great Britain forged a unique collaborative association, working together on virtually every important war-winning technology—with inventions primarily by the British but built by Americans. It led Winston Churchill to speak of a special relationship between the nations. A rare book, it shows an unexpected side to World War II's industrial history and how it still affects technology growth.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2022, 432 PAGES

SCIENCE



'FOREST WALKING'
By Peter Wohlleben and Jane Billingham

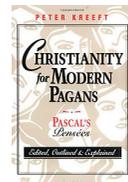
Explore the Wonders of the Woods

German forester and author of the best-sell-

ing book "The Hidden Life of Trees" Wohlleben offers new paths into further forest discoveries. Awaken all your senses as you explore behind the bark of trees and beneath the layers of fine twigs on the ground. Learn more about what a walk in the woods can do for body and spirit.

GREYSTONE BOOKS LTD, 2022, 240 PAGES

CLASSICS



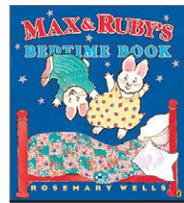
'CHRISTIANITY FOR MODERN PAGANS'
By Peter Kreeft

Pascal's 'Pensées'

After his death, mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal left behind what we call his "Pensées," observations and fragments of his thinking, many of them profound. Kreeft takes 203 of the original 993 pensées and gives us a "festooning of Pascal, like decorating a Christmas tree." Pascal's wisdom and insight illuminate the mind—he was a master of the epigram—and the witty commentary of Kreeft, a theologian, philosopher, and professor, makes this book a delight. A splendid introduction to one of the West's great thinkers.

IGNATIUS PRESS, 1993
341 PAGES

FOR KIDS

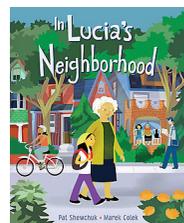


'MAX AND RUBY'S BEDTIME BOOK'
By Rosemary Wells

Reading the Littles to Sleep

Grandma tells three bedtime stories to these beloved rabbit siblings, Max and Ruby. The book's gentle tone, the large format, and Wells's sweet pastel pictures will have the children calling for this story time and again. This book is for ages 2–5.

PUFFIN BOOKS, 2015,
48 PAGES



'IN LUCIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD'
By Pat Shewchuk

The Character of a Neighborhood

Lucia details her appreciation for her neighborhood and the different people, customs, and aesthetics inherent there. A delightful tour. Readers will find a new appreciation for their own neighborhood and any others they encounter.

KIDS CAN PRESS, 2013
32 PAGES



Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author. He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature the ultimate depiction of the Titanic's sinking and a heartfelt romance about two strangers exploring Vienna together.

NEW RELEASE



'Plane' (2023)

When the commercial plane he's flying is struck by lightning, crack pilot Brodie Torrance (Gerard Butler) manages to save the passengers by landing on an island. But they soon realize that the island is occupied by dangerous forces, and Torrance must team up with an unlikely ally in accused killer Louis Gaspare (Mike Colter).

This is a fast-paced flick that features a good amount of righteous brute force. Fortunately, it doesn't seem to take its far-fetched premise too seriously and manages to revel in its own campy charm.

ACTION | THRILLER

Release Date:
Jan. 13, 2023

Director:
Jean-François Richet

Starring:
Gerard Butler, Mike Colter, Yoson An

Running Time:
1 hour, 47 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE ULTIMATE TITANIC DISASTER FILM



'A Night to Remember' (1958)

Based on author Walter Lord's book of the same name, this gripping film tells the tragic tale of the supposedly

unsinkable RMS Titanic after it collides with an iceberg and lacks sufficient lifeboats to facilitate its passengers.

Barring a few technical flaws here and there,

this is the most definitive version of the infamous maritime mishap. It's a true disaster-movie classic.

DRAMA | HISTORY

Release Date:
Dec. 16, 1958

Director:
Roy Ward Baker

Starring:
Kenneth More, Ronald Allen, Robert Ayres

Running Time:
2 hours, 3 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
Apple TV, Criterion Channel, Amazon

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

INDIE PICK

'Before Sunrise' (1995)

American tourist Jesse (Ethan Hawke) is traveling by train to Vienna, where he plans to fly back to the United States. He meets French student Céline (Julie Delpy) and convinces her to get off the train and spend the day with him in Vienna. As an attraction develops between the two, they realize that they may never see each other again.

This film boldly diverges from many of the usual romances and features natural and



realistic dialogue that doesn't seem contrived. It's a charming depiction of a romance that develops organically.

DRAMA | ROMANCE

Release Date:
Jan. 27, 1995

Director:
Richard Linklater

Starring:
Ethan Hawke, Julie Delpy, Andrea Eckert

Running Time:
1 hour, 41 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
HBO Max, Redbox, Vudu

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A MESMERIZING TALE OF HONOR AND VENGEANCE

'Lone Wolf and Cub' (1973–1974)

This famous Japanese film series was originally based on a manga series. Ronin Ogami Itto (Tomisaburo Wakayama) wanders the lands of feudal Japan with his sole remaining relative, his very young son Daigoro (Akihiro Tomikawa), after having been betrayed by his own scheming clan.

In this entrancing saga, Wakayama shines as a grim yet principled figure bent on revenge. Everything—the set design and pacing, the direc-



tion and acting—is impeccable. A note: The film contains mature subject matter.

ACTION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA

Release Date:
1973–1974

Directors: Various

Starring:
Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Fumio Watanabe

Running Time:
Approximately 1 hour, 25 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
HBO Max, Vudu, Apple TV

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Get Things Done

Creating a comprehensive plan to complete tasks is the secret to being more efficient

By Bill Lindsey



A very effective way to become and stay efficient is to list all projects and organize them by their due dates.

BEING MORE PRODUCTIVE is a worthy goal, which makes it a common New Year's resolution. The reason that it often falls by the wayside is that there's no clear-cut path to achieve this goal—or is there?

Create a Schedule

One of the first and most important steps is to know what needs to be done; a major step in becoming more productive is being aware of what projects lie ahead, as well as how much effort or assistance they may require. In general, creating and maintaining a to-do list of any kind can help to maximize focus and organization. Ideally, any list would be organized in date order, with those projects due soonest listed at the top. For maximum efficiency, each task should also be briefly described, along with the assets needed to complete it and a list of everyone on the project.

This calls for using a calendar to identify tasks to be completed, along with the desired due dates. By knowing when a task must be completed, a look at a calendar reveals how much time is available to make it happen.

In addition to a calendar, some of the most productive people use a legal pad and a whiteboard to keep track of projects. The legal pad can be focused on immediate tasks and projects due in the short run, listing all necessary details related to each task due within the coming days or weeks.



Maintaining a calendar helps prevent missing critical project completion dates and allows you to allocate time to multiple projects.

Taking 'just a minute' to review emails can result in distractions that evolve into delays.

The whiteboard lists just the basics of all projects: a name and due date, such as "Annual Report; April 2." New tasks can be added to the whiteboard as they come up to avoid forgetting about them until they're about to come due.

Consider using the "triage method" employed by medical personnel: Organize projects in the order in which they're due and by how much time and effort is required, as well as by their overall importance. This helps maximize time management, as the more critical projects—such as reports prepared for the boss and his or her bosses—get full attention before others that can be easily completed. Completing a tough project first can make all the others seem a lot easier and boost morale between large projects.

Evaluate

Next, determine what's needed to accomplish the task. Some goals may not be possible within the available time, and attempting to make them happen on too short a timeline is either a recipe for disaster or, at best, a project

Carry a small notebook to keep track of daily and weekly tasks and to write down great ideas when you have them.



Distractions are the enemy of efficiency; if you don't have an office, consider noise-canceling headphones to create a zone of concentration.



Taking a break every so often boosts efficiency by letting you think of something not related to the project, so you return to it recharged and refreshed.



LEFT PAGE: PHOTO BY MOYO STUDIO/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM L: ANDREY POPOV/SHUTTERSTOCK, KORKENG/SHUTTERSTOCK, APOGAPO/SHUTTERSTOCK, PICS FIVE/SHUTTERSTOCK



Working with others can be a great way to complete complex projects, as long as everyone knows their duties and “must-be-done-by” dates.

not accomplished in the way desired. It's always better to reschedule than to submit substandard work.

Eliminate Distractions

Once the project is underway, identify and remove distractions. These come in many forms, such as chatty co-workers, a phone that won't stop ringing, an uncomfortable workplace with a lumpy chair, or an office that's either too hot or too cold. Reviewing your surroundings can pay big productivity dividends. Reducing clutter reduces attention-stealers; potential culprits include random stacks of paper, a cellphone, or even a tempting view outside.

Resist the urge to check emails and messages—they'll still be there after the goal is reached. Taking 'just a minute' to review emails can result in distractions that evolve into delays. Possible distraction-busters include using noise-canceling headphones, setting all phones to “do not disturb” or “mute,” or simply closing the office door. In an office environment, eating while continuing to work or skipping lunch in the breakroom or with co-workers can be helpful in keeping the momentum going.

However, sometimes the best way to boost productivity is by taking a short break. Going nonstop can be exhausting, so scheduling a walk to get fresh

coffee every few hours to literally and mentally step away from the project can often result in suddenly realizing how to resolve a nagging problem.

Recruit Help When Necessary

Working as a team can be very productive, as long as everyone on the team is focused and motivated, making it important that managers pay close attention to ensure projects keep moving forward smoothly and on time. The best managers encourage creativity, finding new and better ways to accomplish goals. The only problem is allowing brainstorming meetings to go on overly long, after which they become an impediment to productivity.

All of these practices can also be applied to personal lives. Tasks and projects ranging from taking down holiday decorations, paying monthly bills, painting the house, and doing the dishes can be organized and scheduled. Distractions should be identified and controlled, teams can be organized, and knowing when a project should be completed can all be taken into account to make things run smoothly instead of being a rushed, halfhearted affair. Getting it done the right way the first time, in only as much time as is truly needed, is the essence of being productive at home or at work. ■

E

LIFESTYLE
BE MORE EFFECTIVE
Work smarter, not harder

1

Write This Down

Make a list of upcoming projects, and rank them in order of due dates and complexity. Tackle the tough ones first.

2

Be Realistic

When determining the due date of a project or task, make sure to allow enough time to do it right; doing it quickly but not well isn't being productive.

3

Leave a Message

Distractions add to the time required to complete a task, so ignore emails, messages, and calls; you can read them and return calls later, after the project is complete.



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