



I. CURRENT ISSUES

Conquest Without War

The Threat of Chinese Political Influence Operations

by John Lenczowski PhD

Communist China represents a mortal threat to our nation. It is a threat that is designed to disarm intellectually and psychologically, corrupt, and ultimately own America's political and foreign policy decisionmakers. The Chinese Communists have a long-term strategy to replace the United States as the Global Superpower. They call it the Hundred Year Marathon – a race that started with the Communist takeover in 1949 and that is designed to conclude in 2049.¹

This strategy involves the development of military power, economic power, and the power of propaganda and strategic influence of many kinds. This strategy represents what the Chinese Communists consider to be a Cold War against the United States and our allies.

It depends on the historic Chinese use of deception as the most prized strategy for thousands of years, while simultaneously conducting many of the elements of the strategy in plain sight. Some of the basic principles of deception can be found in Sun Tzu's classic, *The Art of War*. For example:

“Warfare is the Way of deception. Thus, although you are capable, display incapability to them. When committed to employing your forces, feign inactivity. When [your objective] is nearby, make it appear as if it is distant; When far away, create the illusion of being nearby. Display profits to entice them. Create

disorder [in their forces] and take them. If they are substantial, prepare for them; if they are strong, avoid them. If they are angry, perturb them; be deferential to foster their arrogance. If they are rested, force them to exert themselves. If they are united, cause them to be separated. Attack when they are unprepared. Go forth where they will not expect it.”²

In this vein, Deng Xiaoping counseled that China must “hide our capabilities and bide our time.”

A central principle of the CCP's strategy has been to seek the psychological disarmament of its adversaries, which is the precursor to physical disarmament. For years, the principal strategic deception theme has been to persuade us that the Communist Party does not seek world domination, that its totalitarian DNA has changed, that it has changed from being a regime whose legacy is the murder of more of its own people than any other regime in the history of mankind – in short, that they are no longer Communists with Chinese characteristics. Having been wildly successful with this tactic, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), under the leadership of Xi Jinping, has been confident enough in its accretion of power that it has begun to display it threateningly in order to realize many of its strategic goals. This display notwithstanding, countless American leaders in every sector of our society continue to labor under the illusion that China has fundamentally changed.

Beijing's strategy is a uniquely Chinese Communist strategy. It is similar to Soviet strategy during the Cold War insofar as it relies on a doctrine of protracted conflict, which involves making incremental advances at the expense of China's adversaries and neighbors, all the while avoiding a decisive encounter with their main enemy, the United States. However, unlike Soviet strategy, Beijing's policy has involved an unprecedented effort to buy, co-opt, corrupt, and ultimately own American leaders so that they are effectively neutralized.

China's strategy involves taking actions according to the Chinese doctrine of *Shi*, which can roughly be interpreted to mean the balance of forces, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the protagonists in any conflict. They advance when it is feasible. They stay put or retreat when advance would be counterproductive. They seek to erode the power and maneuvering room of their adversaries until there is no more room for maneuver.³

1. See Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, (New York, Henry Holt, 2015).

2. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translation by Ralph D. Sawyer, (New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1994), p. 168.

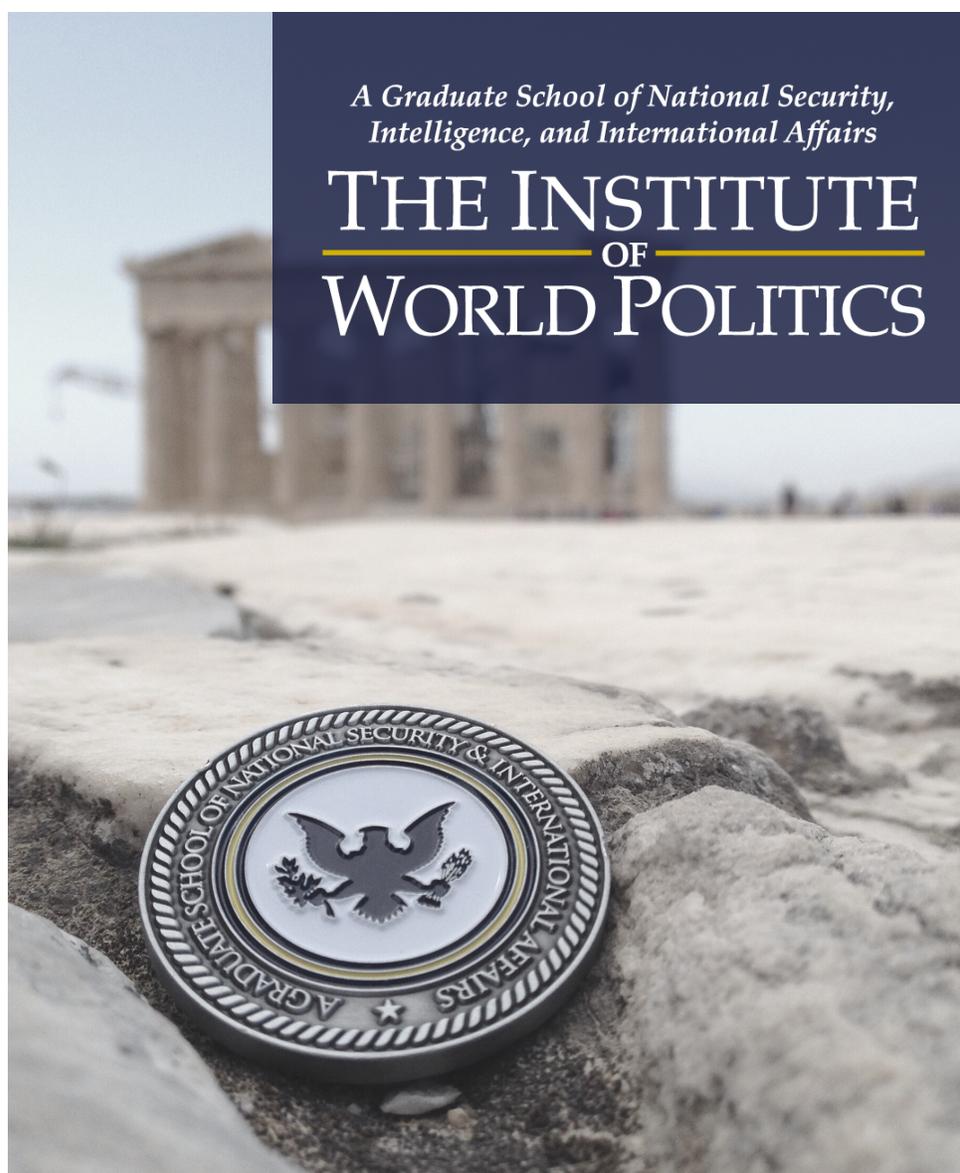
3. For an excellent discussion of *Shi*, see Pillsbury, *The Hundred Year Marathon*, pp. 42-50. On pp. 34 ff., Pillsbury also reviews the nine

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CHINESE ESPIONAGE AND ITS USES FOR STRATEGIC INFLUENCE

China's cold war strategy involves implementation of what they call "the three warfares" – public opinion (or media) warfare, psychological warfare, and legal warfare. This analysis will on what is a de facto amalgam of these warfares that takes the form of what we may call "strategic influence operations." These are designed to shape the opinion of our leaders in federal, state, and local governments, businesses, media, academia, cultural institutions, and others who are in a position to shape attitudes and policy in ways that serve the CCP's interests. Beijing integrates these influence operations with its other instruments of statecraft, including espionage, technology theft, military strategy, and more.

There are several major components to this strategy. First, the CCP has thousands of subsidiaries and front organizations around the world promoting its Party line, distorting accurate perceptions of Chinese strategic intentions, and helping the regime gain access to political decision makers, and finally influencing them. There are at least 600 such organizations in the U.S. alone. They are led, for the most part, by the United Front Work Department.⁴ This Department is a massive organization dedicated to propaganda, active measures, and other influence operations. In 2015, Xi Jinping expanded its already substantial staff by 40,000 new cadres.⁵

Communist Chinese businesses play a major role. And so do Chinese media, military organizations, academic and research institutions, and many more. Every one of these institutions is required by Chinese law to be accountable and obedient to the CCP and its intelligence services. The obligations of Chinese citizens and businesses to the Party and its intelligence services are spelled out in China's 2017 intelligence law.⁶

Among Beijing's major objectives is to collect intelligence and acquire American advanced technology. To this end, it has succeeded in persuading American universities, national laboratories, and corporations to give their personnel unprecedented access to our intellectual property.

They have been so successful that we actually allow them to spy on us. For decades, we gave them sensitive information. The process began with several Administrations giving covert assistance to China in order to strengthen it in the balance of power diplomacy against the USSR. These Administrations, including that of President Reagan, handed over major technological know-how to eight Chinese national research centers focusing on genetic engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, automation, biotechnology, lasers, supercomputers, and space technology. They conducted almost one hundred scientific exchange programs with China. As Michael Pillsbury has concluded: the Chinese made major progress in ten thousand projects, "all heavily dependent on Western assistance."⁷

This avalanche of assistance led to giving Chinese scientists and graduate students access to most of our most sensitive research facilities. So, we have permitted Chinese scientists to make 5,000 visits per year to our national laboratories, where a visit constitutes a stay of two weeks to two years! The Obama Administration gave out 10-year visas to 2 million Chinese. Chinese visitors can come and go as they please. How can we be surprised about Chinese military and commercial advances when we are giving them truckloads of our most sensitive intellectual property?

Then, we have let Chinese immigrants work in some of our most sensitive defense contracting companies. A number of them have become American citizens. But some of them travel back home to China every year and are easily able to share sensitive information with the Chinese intelligence services. A specific example is how 162 researchers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory doing nuclear scientific research returned to China over more than three decades to assist the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with its nuclear and other advanced weapons programs.⁸

elements of overall Chinese strategy derived from *The Stratagems of the Warring States*, a classic manual of Chinese statecraft.

4. "'3 Warfares' Doctrine Underpins CCP's Sprawling Campaign to Infiltrate the West: Report," *Epoch Times*, 29 September 2021.

5. Gerry Groot, "The Expansion of the United Front Under Xi Jinping," in Gloria Davies, Jeremy Goldkorn and Luigi Tomba, eds., *China Story Yearbook 2015*, (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 2016) See also the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission's report: *China's Overseas United Front Work - Background and Implications for US_final_o.pdf* (uscc.gov).

6. See: Murray Scott Tanner, *Beijing's New National Intelligence Law: From Defense to Offense* - [Lawfare](http://lawfareblog.com) (lawfareblog.com).

7. Pillsbury, *The Hundred Year Marathon*, p. 78 and p. 103. See also: Robert Spalding, *Stealth War*, (Portfolio/Penguin, 2019).

8. Bill Gertz, "Study finds former U.S. nuclear scientists assisted China," *Washington Times*, September 26, 2022.

Another example has been reported by the Department of Defense: U.S. companies receiving federal research funding to conduct research in defense technologies permit themselves to be recruited by Chinese organizations involved in military research, and China becomes the beneficiary of the technology transfer. In the particular case of research funded under the Small Business Innovation Research and the Small Business Technology Transfer programs, a Pentagon audit concluded that, in “nearly all cases,” China benefited from this research more than the U.S.⁹

Incredible amounts of our nation’s most valuable intellectual property have been stolen. This includes not only the military technologies that give us the strategic edge in war, but industrial secrets that have given our economy the competitive edge in the global marketplace.

The theft of all this intellectual property has put all kinds of American companies out of business with the massive job losses that entails.

All this doesn’t even take into consideration the massive amount of cyber espionage that has taken place over the last couple of decades. This includes not just technology secrets but also the collection of data such as those contained in the 21 million Office of Personnel Management files of the background checks of all U.S. government personnel who have had security clearances for the past quarter century, the medical records of 78 million of our citizens from the Anthem medical insurance company, the personal data on 150 million Americans from the credit bureau, Equifax, and the DNA data of millions of Americans collected through Chinese-owned ancestry companies.¹⁰ The Chinese intelligence presence in the U.S. is so vast that our counterintelligence services are absolutely overwhelmed.

The Chinese have used all sorts of commercial operations to buy and steal our technology. Some of it is quite open. One method is by buying American companies. Once they own them, they have their technology. Another way is to finance American start-up companies. Yet another way is by pressuring American companies to set up their research and development facilities in China – as the price they must pay to establish a factory in China which is designed to use

cheap Chinese labor to manufacture products for sale back here in America.

The Chinese are amazingly aggressive in their efforts to get our technology. Unfortunately, too many Americans cooperate with them.

American lawyers organize conferences in places like Silicon Valley to teach the Chinese how to acquire U.S. technology by circumventing American export controls.¹¹

Another example of China’s strategy is to control the global information superhighway. That means controlling all the routers and other infrastructural elements of the World Wide Web. They have come to control almost the entire global system by selling the world the infrastructure of the superhighway at subsidized prices that are cheaper than any company in the world can offer and still make a profit. In the case of 5G networks, this means not just connectivity with communications portals such as computers and cell phones, but also machines, appliances, industrial controls, and the myriad of other applications in the “internet of things.”¹²

Just one of China’s telecommunications companies, Huawei, which has intimate ties with the CCP and Chinese intelligence, has a presence in 170 countries and regions of the world.¹³ China came close to controlling every part of the global infrastructure except in Australia and the United States until the U.S. campaign to discourage the adoption of Chinese equipment caused pushback from the UK and countries within the EU. Huawei and one of China’s other super telecommunications companies, ZTE, alone control 41 percent of the global 5G infrastructure.¹⁴ And Huawei has even succeeded in penetrating parts of our market – particularly in rural areas.

This infrastructural hegemony – especially over 5G -- has implications much more serious than one might suppose. As former Air Force brigadier general and National Security Council strategist Robert Spalding has noted: “Anything connected to an unsecured 5G network will be a potential weapon that can be used to gain geopolitical influence and control. If China were to control a 5G network, it would be able to weaponize the technology with entire cities – or

9. Stephen Dinan, “Chinese researchers exploit federal grants: Pentagon finds double-dealing,” *Washington Times*, September 29, 2022.

10. “22 Million Affected by OPM Hack, Officials Say” - *ABC News* ([go .com](https://www.abcnews.com)); “Two From China Are Charged in 2014 Anthem Data Breach” - *The New York Times* ([nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)); “Chinese Hackers Charged in Equifax Breach” — FBI; “China is collecting the world’s DNA and the reason is sinister”, Gordon Chang | Fox News.

11. Interview with U.S. counterintelligence official working in Silicon Valley, 2020.

12. LIVE Q&A: “Inside Communist China’s Plan to Control the Global Internet”—China Reporter Cathy He - YouTube.

13. Chelsea Liu, et al., *Miles Ahead: China, Huawei, and 5G* | Business-Feed (cornell.edu).

14. *Ibid.*

entire countries – serve by that network and hold that city or state at its mercy.”¹⁵

How has all this happened? It is because many Americans have been persuaded that doing business with China, and cooperating with it in scientific research is harmless, while others have been effectively neutralized into silence through Beijing’s influence operations.

Most American have not heard about all this. Why? There are many good reasons.

INFLUENCE OVER MEDIA

The first is the media. Just like the media during the Cold War, our media do not tell us the full truth about Chinese strategic developments that are harmful to our nation’s security.

If you are an American reporter in China, as a practical matter, you censor yourself so as not to offend the regime. If you report about the Four Taboo subjects – China’s military buildup, its espionage, its overt or covert influence activities, or its human rights violations – you will make the Chinese Communist Party authorities mad at you, and you will face consequences.

If your “offense” is a mild one, they will restrict your access to Chinese officials who might be sources for your stories. If your offense is graver, you may be expelled from the country. Your newspaper or TV station will then put pressure on you or your successor not to write anything that could jeopardize their bureau in Beijing.

Then, look at a several of the most influential newspapers in the land: for example, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. These two and other major papers have accepted millions of dollars every year from Beijing’s Communist propaganda ministry to publish a periodic “China Watch” supplement. This propaganda makes China out to be a perfectly benevolent, normal state that is full of cultural, technological, and other innovations. It is designed to diminish concerns that China might be a strategic threat.¹⁶

The real problem with the millions spent on this propaganda is the effect it has on what is not reported. And they are not reporting Chinese military developments, Chinese espionage, and the pervasiveness of Chinese propaganda and influence operations. These newspapers are so influential that most TV stations

follow their lead in what they report and what they ignore. It appears that both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have stopped publishing “China Watch,” but the years of their doing so have done incalculable damage to our national security.

Meanwhile, alternative media, talk radio, blog posts, YouTube, and others don’t have reporters in China and few concentrate on collecting information about Chinese strategic activities.

In addition to corruption money, China influences American journalists by offering them all-expense paid trips to China, replete with interesting visits to Chinese “Tourlandia” and luxurious dinners. One of the CCP’s major influence groups, the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation – CUSEF – recently hosted 120 journalists from 50 media outlets for such tours with an eye to neutralizing critical attitudes and winning favorable coverage. The media organs represented have included: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Associated Press*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Boston Herald*, the *Boston Globe*, *Time* magazine, *Reuters*, *Barrons*, *Politico*, *ABC*, *NBC*, *The Economist*, *NPR*, *CNN*, *Slate*, the *Huffington Post*, and a number of major regional media outlets.¹⁷

China has also managed to infiltrate huge numbers of its citizens into the high-tech companies of Silicon Valley. They are not just involved in technology theft: they have also been reported as serving as “fact checkers” for the social media and search engine companies. Some of them participate in censorship of political messages that are offensive to Beijing and its sympathizers in the U.S.

Meanwhile, China ensures that its propaganda reaches those journalists could be described as “self-loathing Americans” who repeat CCP talking points out of ideological sympathy.¹⁸

On a parallel track, the CCP has set up major media operations in the United States – Chinese Central Television, and the operation of several radio stations in various regions.¹⁹ Through its official China Radio International, China has controlled the contents of as many as 13 radio stations in the United States.²⁰

17. “Chinese Communists Subsidized Trips For Western Journalists for Over 25 Years,” *The Epoch Times*, 12 October 2021, and *The National Pulse*, 4 August 2021, <https://thenationalpulse.com/2021/08/04/exc-ccp-journalism-exchange-program-to-enhance-understanding/>

18. ‘Concerning relationships’ between Western media outlets and Chinese Communists says Natalie Winters - YouTube; see also: CPAC 2021: Natalie Winters on “How Journalists & Politicians Are Willing to Sell Out America to China” - YouTube.

19. Seth D. Kaplan, “How China’s Propaganda Influences the West,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 2022.

20. Mike Gonzalez, “Chinese Censorship: Coming to a Radio Near You,” *Forbes*, Nov. 5, 2015). See also: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/china-radio/>.

15. Robert Spalding, *Stealth War*, (Portfolio/Penguin, 2019, p. 115).

16. “How China Bought the Democrat Establishment,” *Washington Times*, 14 July 2021, and *Daily Caller*.

Beijing's social media infiltration has grown precipitously in recent years. Just one example, the creation and insertion of 3,000 short videos on YouTube as part of a single campaign to cover up the genocide of the Uighur population.²¹

The cyber security firm FireEye reports that Chinese propaganda is being disseminated on some 30 social media platforms and 40 other websites and online forums worldwide. They involve thousands of messages, images, and videos promoting the CCP party line and various of its disinformation themes.²²

One way to get prominent opinion leaders to promote China's propaganda is to reward them handsomely. So, for example, China has awarded a \$1 million prize to a virologist on the Lancet journal's corona virus origins investigation committee for spouting Beijing's propaganda line about the origins of the corona virus.²³

Chinese entities also control and influence the content of the popular news aggregation app: News Break. News Break is the English language version of Yidian Zixun, one of China's top three apps for personalized news dissemination, a mouthpiece for the CCP, and the major publishing platform of China's Internet Information Office, which controls the information on China's internet. News Break is thus the effort to internationalize China's censored internet content. It claims to reach 45 million Americans.²⁴

It should not go without notice that the popular video-conferencing apps, Zoom, had a Chinese executive that led an effort in coordination with Beijing's intelligence services and internet police to terminate video calls and the accounts of American users who discussed the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. Fortunately, the FBI uncovered a months-long campaign to censor speech offensive to the CCP. That campaign included a classic active measure: fabricating "evidence" that these video calls were designed to promote child abuse, terrorism, pornography, and racism.²⁵

Another initiative Beijing has taken to control information flows is its cooperative agreement with Russia to work together to establish new rules to

control cyberspace. This initiative principally involves working to topple the non-profit group, ICANN, that governs the global domain name system and replace it and any other relevant international organizations by controlling the UN subsidiary, the International Telecommunications Union.²⁶

INFLUENCE OVER ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Another problem, also involving self-censorship, is how many of our nation's China experts fail to analyze what are, in fact, the same taboo subjects that our media correspondents do not report. If scholars write about these things, they will be denied a visa to visit China and will not be able to do "field work" there and return to America and impress everyone with their knowledge derived from a visit to China.

Our academic world is being influenced in another way: China set up over 100 Confucius Institutes at major American universities. These are ostensibly centers specializing in teaching Chinese language and culture. In fact, they are propaganda centers designed to influence American faculty members and students and monitor and suppress criticism of China that may be active on a given campus.²⁷

These centers are subject to Chinese Communist speech codes and thus require self-censorship. They are all controlled not by Americans but by Chinese agents. These Confucius Institutes are completely incompatible with academic freedom, and given their propaganda purposes, they should all be shut down. Fortunately, increased consciousness of these institutes has resulted in the closure of 40 of them. However, most of those that have ostensibly closed have been reconstituted and renamed. Similarly, their sponsoring organization in China, Hanban, has been renamed the "Ministry of Education Center for Language Exchange and Cooperation."²⁸ Meanwhile, there are only 20 American cultural centers in China and they are subject to Chinese control.

Many of our universities are addicted to Chinese students. Until the pandemic erupted, we regularly hosted over 350,000 Chinese students annually in our academic institutions and, in contrast to American students, most of them pay full tuition. Our universi-

21. "Exporting Propaganda," Editorial, *Washington Post*, 28 June 2021.

22. "Pro-PRC Influence Campaign Expands to Dozens of Social Media Platforms, Websites, and Forums in at Least Seven Languages, Attempted to Physically Mobilize Protesters in the U.S.," FireEye, Threat Research Blog, 8 September 2021.

23. "Lancet COVID Origins Investigator Wins \$1 million Chinese Prize for Claiming Virus Developed Naturally," *The National Pulse*, 20 October 2021.

24. "News Break App Founded, Controlled, and Backed by Chinese Entities," *Epoch Times*, 5 June 2021.

25. "Prosecutors Accuse Zoom Executive of Cooperation with Chinese Government," *Washington Post*, 18 December 2020.

26. "Russia and China Become Internet Allies," David Ignatius, *Washington Post*, 21 July 2021.

27. *Outsourced to China* by Rachele Peterson | Report | NAS.

28. Rachele Peterson, "China is Rebranding its Confucius Institutes," RealClear Education, July 22, 2020.

ties don't want to lose this vital income, and so they permit many of those students to have access to our most important scientific and technology centers; they permit the existence of those Confucius Institutes; and they present to the American people an image of China that it is a normal, peaceful country that has no intentions inimical to our national security.²⁹

Since 2013, China has given close to \$1 billion in donations to our universities.³⁰ A \$250 million gift to a major university cannot but have an influential if not corrupting effect. This is just part of the larger problem of foreign sovereign funding of our universities – funding designed to promote the donor countries' interests.

The CCP has especially targeted students in prominent universities and their international relations programs for influence. This work is done under the direction of the UFD, and organizations under its purview, such as the Chinese Students and Scholars Associations (CSSAs) of which there are at least 142 CCP-funded chapters in the U.S., and the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation (CUSEF).³¹

The CSSAs are organizations of Chinese students studying in the U.S. They are given both intelligence collection taskings and propaganda responsibilities. They are usually mobilized to conduct pro-Beijing demonstrations of various kinds and to crowd out dissident demonstrations.

For years, CUSEF has sponsored all-expense paid trips for students from Columbia University's SIPA, Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins SAIS, Harvard's Kennedy School, the University of Chicago, and the Graduate School of Journalism at UC Berkeley. Students at some of the nation's most prominent law schools have also been brought on these propaganda trips. Law students are a particularly good target, insofar as they go on to occupy leadership positions in various institutions, but are less likely than students of international affairs to have studied propaganda, disinformation, and strategic influence operations.

CUSEF has made special efforts to influence Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). It has established relations with many of these colleges, using Confucius Institutes and all-expense paid

trips to China. In recent years, it hosted at least 750 students from these schools. A Washington lobbying firm, Wilson Global Communications has represented CUSEF and assisted it in establishing these relationships.³²

Similar influence has been targeted against the nation's prominent think tanks. It has been credibly reported that organizations like the Brookings Institution, the East-West Center, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Atlantic Council, the East-West Center, the Carter Center, and the Center for American Progress have established relationships with CUSEF involving joint projects. In most cases, institutions have taken Communist Chinese funds.³³

The CCP has also wooed a large number of American academic Sinologists by offering them all-expense paid trips to China. Other academic experts have been given huge consulting fees and research grants to supply their scientific and technological expertise to China. Much of this is done through the Thousand Talents program. The lucrative arrangements these experts have with China ensures that none of them will say things critical of the regime.

A new instrument that the CCP has used to discourage criticism of its policies has been a lawsuit levied against a scholar based at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, who violated one of the Four Taboos by highlighting human rights violations in China.³⁴

The relationships that Communist China has established with U.S. institutions – many of which are lubricated by Chinese money – have induced cooperation with Chinese censorship. An example is Cambridge University Press' removal of 300 offensive articles from the online version of its scholarly journal, *China Quarterly*, at the request of the Chinese. Fortunately, in response to a worldwide outcry against the move, the Press reversed its decision.³⁵

29. "Overseas Chinese Students and Scholars in China's Drive for Innovation" | U.S.-China | Economic and Security Review Commission ([uscc.gov](https://www.uscc.gov)).

30. "Harvard Leads U.S. Colleges That Received \$1 Billion From China" - Bloomberg.

31. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, "China's Overseas United Front Work Background and Implications for the United States," 24 August 2018. <https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-overseas-united-front-work-background-and-implications-united-states>.

32. These efforts have coincided with major outreach to Afro-American legislators, particularly the Congressional Black Caucus – also facilitated by Wilson Global Communications. An anecdotal indicator of the effectiveness of these efforts was the praise given at a Confucius Institute by UN Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield for China's Belt and Road Initiative and China's cultural influence efforts in Africa, and her criticism of the Trump Administration's investment strategy in Africa as contributing to U.S.-Chinese strategic competition that she said is harmful to Africans.

33. *China's Overseas United Front Work - Background and Implications for US*, final_0.pdf ([uscc.gov](https://www.uscc.gov)), p. 15.

34. "U.S.-Based Academic Faces Chinese Lawsuit for Exposing Abuses in Xinjiang," *Washington Post*, 10 March 2021.

35. "Academic Censorship in China: The Case of *The China Quarterly*" | *PS: Political Science & Politics* | Cambridge Core.

But, in another example, at the request of Chinese researchers – surely at the direction of CCP propaganda authorities – the National Institutes of Health deleted the data of the earliest genomic sequences of the corona virus in China from the National Library of Medicine’s database on such sequences. This was part of the ongoing coverup and active measures campaign to direct global attention away from the Chinese origins of the pandemic.³⁶

That campaign, let us remember, involved charges that the U.S. military produced the virus, that it was spread by U.S. athletes, and, most recently, that it came from U.S. harvested Maine lobsters.³⁷

This cooperation with Beijing is typical of researchers like Peter Daszak of the EcoHealth Alliance, who, having worked with the Wuhan Institute of Virology and attended Chinese sponsored conferences, reliably repeats Chinese talking points.³⁸

UFWD COOPTATION OF OVERSEAS CHINESE

The United Front Work Department and its fronts have been consistently active influencing Chinese Americans, their organizations, and their media. As Gordon Chang has observed: at the CCP’s recent United Front Work Conference, Xi Jinping “openly called on us to become a subversive force, to help him destroy the country we now call home....he hoped to unite—in other words, mobilize—ethnic Chinese everywhere to support the CCP, to effectively make every Chinese individual a CCP agent.”³⁹

The CCP fronts emphasize “flesh and blood” ties to the mother country. United Front officials have met regularly with “Hometown Associations” – groups of Chinese immigrants whom the CCP seeks to co-opt to Beijing’s cause.

These fronts exploit ethnic identity politics and have sought to magnify anti-Chinese ethnic prejudice and to mobilize defensive reactions to it.

In New York City, a Chinese expatriate propagandist associated with CCP front organizations has managed to join a small committee advising the NY

Police Department and the local District Attorney’s office on what constitutes a hate crime.⁴⁰

Communist Chinese fronts have also worked with a pro-CCP organization, the Chinese Progressive Association, in San Francisco to mobilize support for the Black Lives Matter organization.⁴¹ And Chinese propaganda has supported this movement from afar.⁴²

Chinese intelligence uses rewards and threats to Chinese students to become informers against Chinese nationals who dissent from Beijing’s Party line.

Chinese fronts have also mobilized and directed thousands of Chinese students to conduct counter-protests against, and drown out, anti-CCP demonstrators with American citizenship in San Francisco.

They also target exiled groups such as Uighurs, Tibetans, and Falun Gong practitioners with threats to their relatives in China if the exiles speak out against CCP policies.

Threats have also been leveled against U.S. media organizations that oppose regime policies.⁴³

The UFWD sponsors “peaceful reunification associations” such as the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Unification which has 30 chapters in the U.S. These are among the most important vehicles for maintaining links and influence over Chinese Americans. They not only address the Taiwan issue, but serve as propaganda conduits, as sponsors of cultural events, and as instruments to recruit Chinese Americans to serve the CCP’s interests, to quash any emergent anti-CCP organizing, and to foment racial divisions.⁴⁴

Another task of the UFWD through its subsidiary, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, is to encourage both Chinese citizens living in the U.S. as well as Chinese Americans – especially those under its influence – to participate actively in American politics in ways that support Beijing’s interests.⁴⁵

Part of the Overseas Chinese policy of the CCP is to track Chinese nationals who dissent from CCP

36. “Doubts about China’s Transparency Pile Up,” editorial, *Washington Post*, 25 June 2021.

37. “Pandemic Disinformation Games,” Jed Babbin, *Washington Times*, April 2020.

38. *Epoch TV*, Natalie Winters

39. Gordon Chang, “China Is Weaponizing Chinese Worldwide to Support the CCP,” Gatestone Institute.

40. “Hate Crimes Task Force Includes Chinese Regime Propagandist...,” *The National Pulse*, 30 September 2021.

41. Mike Gonzalez, “Yes, a Pro-China Group in America Supports a Black Lives Matter Founder,” | The Heritage Foundation; and “This BLM Co-Founder and Pro-Communist China Group Are Partnering Up. Here’s Why.” | The Heritage Foundation.

42. Ho-fung Hung, “Don’t Be Fooled by China’s Support of the Black Lives Matter Movement” (*foreignpolicy.com*); See also Chang Che, “The forgotten alliance between Black activists and China” - *The Washington Post*.

43. “Beijing Responsible for ‘Largest Transnational Crackdown in the World’ to Muzzle Diaspora, Report Finds,” *Epoch Times*, 27 September 2021.

44. See “China Built an Army of Influence Agents in the U.S.,” *Daily Beast*, 18 July 2018.

45. *Ibid*.

policies and to silence their criticism so that their testimony does not spread to Americans.

In addition to tracking and monitoring Chinese students at American universities, one effort, called Fox Hunt, attempted to stalk, kidnap, and deport to China several Chinese dissidents.⁴⁶

INFLUENCING THE MILITARY

The CCP has also had consistent efforts to influence the U.S. armed forces. These consist of efforts to encourage “mirror-imaging” among American military leaders: inducing them to believe that the Chinese armed forces are just like ours – a national defense force as opposed to the reality of what they are, namely, a force dedicated to the defense of the Communist Party.

A principal organization dedicated to these efforts is the Liaison Department of the People’s Liberation Army’s former General Political Department. It is dedicated to coordinating the activities of a number of front organizations—including “friendship” and “cultural” associations.

Meanwhile, the China Association for International Friendly Contact (CAIFC), a front organization for the former General Political Department, is also responsible for propaganda and strategic influence campaigns. An example is its Sanya Initiative, an effort to promote relations between retired officers of the PLA and the U.S. armed forces.

INFLUENCING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Then there is the problem which may be the biggest one of all. This is the neutralization of large parts of the American business community. Many American companies have been inspired to do business with China. Some do so because they can manufacture products there at lower cost than they could do within the U.S. Others do so because they vainly hope to sell large numbers of products to the Chinese.⁴⁷

The price for setting up a factory in China is not just the requirement that the U.S. company move its research and development facilities to China. It is that

American business leaders are told that they should lobby their elected representatives for legislation and regulations that serve the “mutual interests” of Chinese and American businesses. This effectively has turned many American businesses into lobbyists for Beijing. And that doesn’t even count the role of fancy law and lobbying firms that China pays to influence U.S. policy.

There is another price, and it is a grave one. Some companies have such an interest in protecting their business relations with China that they will do things that harm our national security interests. A few years ago, two American defense contracting corporations helped the Chinese correct the major errors they were suffering in making ballistic missile launches.⁴⁸

One American CEO with major Chinese business interests who was also a major benefactor of a prominent American think tank, did not like the clinical analysis that was being done by one of its experts on the Chinese military. He thought that this analyst’s work would alarm Americans, that tensions with China would increase, and that his company’s business interests would be jeopardized. He arranged to have the analyst fired and given hush money. And when that analyst moved to another think tank, he was fired from it as well, for the same reasons.

This kind of corruption is not restricted to scholars. An unseemly number of former cabinet members, including former Secretaries of State, Defense, and even intelligence agency chiefs, have been either directly or indirectly on Beijing’s payroll. The standard pattern is that, after their government service, they join a consulting firm that is in the business of opening doors in China to American corporations. The net effect of such business is the neutralization of these elder statesmen as cautionary voices about the threat from China.

One of these former officials was directly on the payroll of a notorious front company of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army. That former cabinet secretary was also serving on the board of a prominent think tank where one of our longtime professors used to work. When our professor complained publicly about how such former officials do not disclose their China business interests when testifying before Congress or arguing in the public square about U.S. policy toward China, that former Secretary of State arranged to have our professor fired from that think tank.

46. “U.S. Accuses China of Illegal Hunt of Dissidents,” *Washington Times*, 23 July 2021.

47. “CCP Strategy Is to ‘Buy Off’ US Elites With Lucrative Deals in China’s Markets,” Peter Schweizer (*theepochtimes.com*); For a more detailed account, see Peter Schweizer, *Red Handed: How American Elites Get Rich Helping China Win*, (New York: Harper, 2022).

48. “Panel Faults Space Aid to China,” *Washington Post*, December 31, 1998. See also: “Loral Settles Charge that It Gave China Data,” *Washington Times*, January 10, 2002.

Two of these former officials have been on the Board of Directors of a Chinese company involved in gambling and suspected international money laundering.⁴⁹ There are many other examples. The one thing in common with all of these officials is that for years they have downplayed any concerns about the rising strategic threat from Communist China.

American trade promotion groups have also played a major role in selling access to top Chinese officials and facilitating access by Chinese businesses to American political leaders.⁵⁰ And prominent business leaders with longtime experience in trade with China have organized a new organization to advocate for even more trade, in the interest of helping improve U.S.-China relations. They are doing this in spite of: the recent prominent exposure of China's egregious human rights violations (characterized by both the Trump and Biden Administrations as "genocide"); Beijing's coverup of the origins of the COVID-19 virus and its deliberate release of the virus worldwide after it had closed down internal travel in the China; and the public warnings by FBI Director Christopher Wray and MI5 Director Ken McCallum to business leaders about the Chinese threats of intellectual property and technology theft, cyber espionage, and the planting of spies in research and development units.⁵¹

INFLUENCING POLITICIANS

Chinese money has played a corrupting role in other ways. China has given donations to American political candidates. For example, former President Clinton received a million-dollar contribution to his primary election campaign from an Indonesian-based front company of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.⁵² Many of these campaign contributions are covert and illegal.⁵³

China also invested significantly in Facebook ads to influence various recent electoral contests. They were not as extensive as Russian ads. But Beijing has been learning and it has been experimenting with

the creation of false identities where Chinese hackers pose as American liberals and conservatives and post propaganda designed to influence electoral choices.⁵⁴

FBI Director Christopher Wray reported that China interfered in a recent Congressional election in New York to prevent the election of a candidate who was a critic of the regime and a Tiananmen Square demonstrator.⁵⁵

China invests in targeted Congressional districts in order to influence those districts' Congressional Representatives. E.g., A joint venture company in the district of a prominent Congressman faced some trouble. The Congressman, in the interests of serving his constituents, went to bat for the company and in the process ended up assisting Communist Chinese strategic interests inadvertently.

According to a report by the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, Beijing's organizations establish relations with local officials such as mayors and state legislators with an eye to creating dependencies that can produce influence in Washington. Then, they cultivate them over the long term with an eye to influencing them when they become governors, Senators, and Congressmen. Such is the reach of Chinese influence operations that, according to former Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, "We've seen them at PTA meetings."⁵⁶

China has conducted intensive lobbying campaigns to influence legislation even at the state level. An example is the 2009 lobbying effort to defeat a pro-Tibet resolution in the California state legislature.⁵⁷

China uses commercial carrots and sticks to persuade elected officials at all levels to conduct policies that serve the CCP's interests. Among these are Chinese investments in a given locality that can yield jobs and tax revenues. Local politicians find it hard to reject such opportunities.

So, as an example of the intelligence analysis designed to serve this end, a Chinese think tank working with the UFWD – a "D&C Think" – drew up a report on the governors of all 50 states. It categorized them according to whether they are friendly, unfriendly, or without a known or firm position vis-à-vis the PRC.⁵⁸

49. "FBI Visits Office of Saipan Casino Run by Trump Protege" - Bloomberg.

50. "Biden's Ex-Im Bank Nominee Advises Chinese Communists on Access to U.S. Government," *National Pulse*, 15 September 2021.

51. Gordon Corera, "China: MI5 and FBI heads warn of 'immense' threat," BBC News; and Peter Hoekstra, "Beijing's American political mercenaries," *Washington Times*, August 4, 2022.

52. The notorious "Chinagate" scandal is well recorded in Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, *Year of the Rat*, (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1998).

53. See, for example, "Republican Donor Cindy Yang Linked to Chinese Influence Machine," *Foreign Policy*, 12 March 2019.

54. Ryan Lovelace, "Meta: China posed as conservatives, liberals to bash lawmakers," *Washington Times*, September 28, 2022.

55. Gordon Corera, "China: MI5 and FBI heads warn of 'immense' threat," - BBC News.

56. Bill Gertz, "Report: China stepping up influence operations," *Washington Times*, July 8, 2022.

57. "China and California: The Anatomy of a PRC Subnational Lobbying Campaign" – The Diplomat.

58. Axios, 19 February 2020.

Another vehicle is Beijing's use of U.S. public relations and lobbying firms to represent Chinese business interests in the U.S. One of those businesses is Hikivision, which makes surveillance cameras that can collect data for Chinese intelligence. Hikivision hired one of those PR firms, Mercury Public Affairs, which has been able to offer jobs to a stream of former politicians and political appointees – mostly from the Obama Administration.⁵⁹

This is a classic model of corruption in the Washington swamp. A Middle Eastern friend of mine calls this phenomenon “American delayed corruption.” With the promise of a lucrative job in a company representing foreign interests, those politicians and appointees ensure that they will do nothing to go against the interests of their future client while they are in office.⁶⁰

This is the tip of an iceberg: I cannot emphasize enough the scandal of the extraordinary number for former senior officials – cabinet members, ambassadors to China, and senior military officers – who have taken to representing Chinese businesses and, in the process, Chinese strategic interests.

As the *Washington Times* has reported, former Montana Senator and Ambassador to China, Max Baucus, has advocated Beijing's line in the debate about the origins of the corona virus.⁶¹

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's Stonebridge Group has China as its biggest client and promotes Chinese business interests. Her firm then supplied several of its employees as senior officials currently serving in the Biden Administration.⁶² Similarly, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen conducts a similar practice in opening doors in China.⁶³

Beijing is not unaware of the influence former members of Congress have upon their own former colleagues still in office. Those who do legal lobbying for China register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). China has spent more on foreign agent registrants than any other country with seven new former lawmakers representing China's interests in Washington in the last four years alone.⁶⁴

Then there is the role of major American corporations who depend on China for major portions of their

business. These include such companies as Microsoft, Apple, Bloomberg, and many others. These companies operate political action committees that are heavily involved in contributing to politicians whose positions on China just happen to be consistent with Beijing's interests. The CEOs of some of these companies have regularly attended and spoken at conferences sponsored by China. One of these, attended by Mark Zuckerberg and Tim Cook was designed to promote CCP disinformation about the corona virus.⁶⁵

Wall Street firms play a large part in influencing Washington policymakers. As the Associate Dean of Renmin University, Di Dongsheng, explained to a Chinese audience in November 2020,

“We had people up there inside America's core circle of power, we had our old friends.”

He continued:

“...during the last three to four decades, we used the core circle inside America's real power. As I said, Wall Street had a very profound influence over America's domestic and foreign affairs since the 1970s.... But most importantly, after 2016, Wall Street couldn't control Trump.... During the U.S.-China trade war, they tried to help. My friends in U.S. told me that they tried to help, but they couldn't. Now with Biden winning the election, the traditional elites, political elites, the establishment, they have a very close relationship with Wall Street. You all heard that Trump said Biden's son has securities companies all over the world. But who helped Biden's son build his global companies?”⁶⁶

So, here is another clue: The CCP helps the families of senior officials get rich, and this has a corrupting effect on those officials.⁶⁷

INFLUENCE OVER HOLLYWOOD

China is also gaining huge influence over Hollywood and potentially over our national culture. The Chinese have been making major moves to acquire controlling interests in major U.S. movie production studios. They also own the entire AMC movie theater chain. This represents a potentially dangerous concen-

59. See: Drew Harwell, “China surveillance firm Hikivision hires former lawmakers Moffett, Vitter and Boxer as lobbyists,” - *The Washington Post*.

60. “How China Bought the Democrat Establishment,” *Washington Times*, 17 July 2021.

61. *Ibid* and *Washington Free Beacon*.

62. See: China | Albright Stonebridge Group.

63. See: China | The Cohen Group.

64. Ryan Lovelace, Governments abroad hire ex-lawmakers as lobbyists,” *Washington Times*, June 30, 2022).

65. *Epoch TV*.

66. Speech transcript, *Washington Times*, 6 December 2020.

67. For several prominent examples of this phenomenon, see Peter Schweizer, *Red Handed*.

tration of power over both production and distribution of movies.

Add to this the fact that China permits only 34 movies to be shown in theaters in China every year. So, in the interest of entering the huge China market – the largest movie market in the world, Hollywood producers tailor their films so as not to offend Beijing and even to promote positive portrayals of Chinese heroic figures and China itself.

Chinese influence over our movies is so great that it was able to compel one studio to change the entire theme of its movie. The film was a modern remake of *Red Dawn*, a Cold War-era movie about a Soviet invasion of the United States, only this one was to be about a Chinese invasion of America. Chinese influence got the studio to transform the invaders into North Koreans.

In 1997, Hollywood released three movies that offended the CCP: two that portrayed China's invasion of Tibet and a third that showed China's judicial system in an unflattering light. In retaliation, all the directors and main actors were put on a blacklist, which is honored by production studios here in America so as not to offend China.

Meanwhile the studios and parent companies that produced the offending movies were denied access to the China market for five years.

In the wake of that event, all American movies are now subjected to review and censorship by the CCP's propaganda department. The censorship is capricious and can change precipitously. In response, Hollywood avoids the problem by accentuating its own self-censorship.^{68, 69}

OTHER INFLUENCE VEHICLES

No account would be complete without reference to at least a few miscellaneous influence vehicles.

Some involve traditional public diplomacy. For example, the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) promotes people-to-people friendship and cooperation.

There is China's Sister Cities program that has 200 relationships with U.S. cities. These efforts are part of a bottom-up influence operation designed to cultivate local officials, school board members, and other civically active people who could rise through the ranks to higher offices. But then there are more insidious vehicles that are truly subversive.

68. *Epoch Times*, 12 October 2021.

69. See also: "How Hollywood Sold Out to China," Shirley Li, *The Atlantic*, 10 September 2021.

China has been involved in narcotics warfare for many years. It used narcotics as a weapon during the Korean War so successfully that Soviet Communist Party boss, Nikita Khrushchev ordered that the USSR establish such a program, which was dubbed "Friendship of the Peoples." In recent years, Beijing has exported enormous quantities of fentanyl, which has become its own epidemic in America.

The Chinese platform, TikTok, promotes drug use among American teenagers. It also exposes young teens to pornography and guides them into ever more extreme varieties of it.⁷⁰ TikTok is a vehicle for pro-Chinese Communist propaganda and presents the added danger of collecting the personal data of millions of Americans – data that are shared with Chinese intelligence.⁷¹ It also appears to be interfering in domestic U.S. political and cultural debates by censoring conservative voices.⁷²

Meanwhile, the top security official at Twitter, Pieter Zatkoff, who has emerged publicly as a whistleblower, has charged that the company ignored his warnings about the infiltration of Chinese (and Indian) agents of influence. As he put it in Senate testimony, such agents not only want technology, but also information about what it might censor or how it might accede to government requests. He noted that the FBI had alerted him to the presence of at least one agent from China's intelligence service, the Ministry of State Security (MSS).⁷³

China has also targeted American youth by marketing millions of video games that contain messages to influence young minds. The video game industry is more lucrative than the entire film industry and the professional sports industry combined. Beijing's systematic propaganda and cultural warfare in this medium is just beginning.⁷⁴

As the ancient Roman historian, Livy, explained, the surest way to defeat your enemy is to spread among his population the ideas of selfishness and hedonism. The CCP has absorbed this lesson and we have scant defenses against it.

70. "How TikTok Serves Up Sex and Drug Videos to Minors," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 September 2021.

71. "TikTok bosses say Americans should trust them. Don't." *Washington Post*, July 8, 2022.

72. Valerie Richardson, "TikTok censors pro-life content without explanation to Americans: Chinese bans of conservatives' accounts appear random," *Washington Times*, August 17, 2022.

73. Ryan Lovelace, "Whistleblower: Spies from China, India compromised Twitter," *Washington Times*, September 14, 2022.

74. "How China Plans to Target America's Youth," *Epoch Times*, 3 September 2021.

CONSEQUENCES

The consequences of all these efforts have been a thirty-year reverie by our foreign policy establishment concerning the meaning of the rise of Communist China – a misjudgment that former National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien characterized as the worst national security failure since the 1930s.

We have brought ourselves actively to aid that rise, to assist China in the development of 10,000 different technologies, to permit their spies to run rampant throughout our country, to steal our intellectual property, to put our companies out of business, and to gain ever greater military power at our and our allies’ expense. China has literally come to own way too many Americans – including those upon whose judgment about national security our citizens depend.

While China has been building up its military power and its economic and political influence, our own military posture has declined dramatically. Much of our Army’s equipment has been worn out and not replaced. We signed arms control agreements with Russia and deprived ourselves of important deterrent forces – all as if China’s military forces didn’t exist. Then, while we tolerated Russia’s violations of these agreements, we ignored China’s acquisition of some of these very weapons.

We have let China take the lead in developing space weapons, and arguably the weaponization of artificial intelligence. Our navy has been shrinking while China has built a navy that exceeds ours in numbers of ships and continues to outpace us.

When General Mark Milley warned that China’s development of hypersonic missiles was close to a “Sputnik moment” for America, where was the chorus of “amens” from our elder statesmen?

So what must we do about all this?

The first thing is that our leaders must tell the truth. The truth is the most powerful weapon in a democracy – because when the people hear it, they and their elected representatives are more likely to make the right decisions.

The truth does two important things to strengthen our national security. First, it builds a pro-defense consensus, without which no coherent and effective measures may be taken.

Second, it sends a great signal of strength to our enemies. It lets them know that we are no longer censoring ourselves, that we have the moral courage to face reality. This lets our enemies know that we have the will to defend ourselves. This is a signal of moral

strength that greatly enhances the credibility of our deterrent posture.

Next, we must collect information and intelligence about Chinese propaganda, disinformation, subversion, and influence operations, both overt and covert. Lies and influence operations thrive in darkness. This is why so many of them are conducted covertly. Once we have analyzed these operations, figured out the themes, and target audiences, and the patterns of distribution, we must expose all of them so that they do not succeed.

We must vastly increase our counterintelligence resources, especially well-trained personnel who are capable of countering not only espionage, but the covert activities that Chinese intelligence operatives are conducting.

We must limit the number of visas we give to all Chinese visitors who are beholden to the CCP and its intelligence services, and limit admission of Chinese students to science, technology, and engineering programs at our universities – especially when they already possess the equivalent advanced degree which they propose to pursue here (so that they can more easily identify the original research being conducted by their American professors).

Diplomatically, we must begin a common sense policy of reciprocity. This means:

- that we should not give Chinese propagandists posing as journalists any more visas than Beijing gives to our journalists. expelling Chinese propagandists whenever Beijing’s goons harass our journalists.
- reciprocity in how we treat Chinese non-governmental organizations.
- reciprocity in travel. If Americans are restricted from traveling in China, Chinese should be restricted from traveling in America.
- Then, we must stop various specific forms of influence operations. We must shut down all the Confucius Institutes and their rebranded versions that are corrupting our universities. We must protect our scholars who study China from cyber sabotage, and other sanctions such as restrictions on their travel to China. If our scholars are denied entry to China, Chinese experts should be denied access to America.
- We must do what we can to stop Chinese influence over Hollywood, the video gaming industry, and other aspects of our popular culture.
- We must maximize the use of the Foreign Agents Registration Act to restrict influence operations of all kinds. It would also behoove us to study

laws against foreign influence that have been adopted in other democratic nations.⁷⁵

- We must do what is possible to decouple our commercial relations with Communist China until it stops conducting cold war policies against us.

Lenin once said that the capitalists will sell the rope with which the communists will hang them. Is this to be America's legacy? Or do we represent something higher in the affairs of mankind?

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75. See: Anders Corr, Dean Baxendale, Chadwick Hagan, and Stephanie Wild, "Foreign Influence Laws" - White paper - Google Docs.