

# STRATEGIKA

Conflicts Of The Past As Lessons For The Present

ISSUE 72

JUNE 2021



## CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY PROPAGANDA

IN THIS ISSUE

MILES MAOCHUN YU • GORDON G. CHANG • CHRISTOPHER R. O'DEA

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Victor Davis Hanson, Chair  
Bruce Thornton  
David Berkey

## CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS

Peter Berkowitz  
Josiah Bunting III  
Angelo M. Codevilla  
Admiral James O. Ellis Jr.  
Niall Ferguson  
Chris Gibson  
Josef Joffe  
Edward N. Luttwak  
Peter R. Mansoor  
Walter Russell Mead  
Mark Moyar  
Williamson Murray  
Ralph Peters  
Andrew Roberts  
Admiral Gary Roughead  
Kori Schake  
Kiron K. Skinner  
Barry Strauss  
Bing West  
Miles Maochun Yu

# CONTENTS

June 2021 • Issue 72

## BACKGROUND ESSAY

**Beijing's Woke Propaganda War in America**  
by Miles Maochun Yu

## FEATURED COMMENTARY

**China's Propaganda: Ludicrous, Malicious,  
Extremely Effective**  
by Gordon G. Chang

**A Day of Joy for the State within a State**  
by Christopher R. O'Dea

## RELATED COMMENTARY

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Discussion Questions



## ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.



# Beijing's Woke Propaganda War in America

By Miles Maochun Yu

Propaganda is older than the medieval printing press, and every communications innovation increases the propagandists' reach. Westerners most often think of propaganda coming from its two ardent twentieth-century practitioners: the German Nazis and the Soviet communists. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, laid out plainly the role of propaganda in a totalitarian regime: "It is the absolute right of the State to supervise the formation of public opinion . . . not every piece of news should be published, but instead those who control news policies must make every piece of news serve a certain purpose."

Today's totalitarians hold the same view. Like the Nazis and the Soviets, twenty-first-century communists in Beijing also place a premium on propaganda as the most crucial regime support mechanism. And in comparison to their predecessors' propaganda, the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have been greatly enabled by advanced technologies, becoming much more systemic, sophisticated, and dangerously effective. In today's China, the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee commands enormous authority and resources, employing tens of millions of communist "propaganda workers" at all levels of the communist state, with an unlimited budget.

Closely following the guidelines on propaganda laid out in classic Marxist-Leninist writings, the CCP has conducted a century-long propaganda campaign against two targets: its own people, and the world's democracies. For communists, propaganda is not a morally reprehensible act characterized by false representation of truth. Rather, propaganda is a virtue, a necessarily positive and crucial practice of governance.

The CCP's domestic propaganda campaign against its own people is blunt and direct. It is achieved through absolute monopoly and total control of all news and information platforms, complete censorship, and coerced and systemic indoctrination. Outside information is kept out behind a Great Firewall.

The Party's foreign propaganda is more sophisticated, and chillingly effective. Leveraging Western elites' weakness and gullibility, plus the vulnerability of open societies, the CCP's massive overseas propaganda campaigns can be delineated into four general categories: disinformation, elite capture, coerced self-censorship, and brainwashing.

First, the CCP's disinformation campaign in the U.S. has been massive. And the propagandists determined to undermine America's confidence are aided and abetted by our country's growing self-denunciation, from opinion-setting editorial boards to opinion-forming classrooms that see only vice in the world's oldest democracy, but ignore the systemic goodness at its core.



Image credit: Poster Collection, CC 159, Hoover Institution Archives.

The scale of this effort is hard to fathom. In 2020 alone, Twitter—a social media platform banned inside China, along with all other Western social media apps—was forced to shut down close to 200,000 accounts linked to the CCP’s state-sponsored disinformation campaign. One since-removed tweet, from the Chinese embassy in Washington, described Xinjiang as a place of “emancipated women” who are no longer “baby-making machines,” a nauseating euphemism for genocide.

While the CCP conducts wholesale racist genocide against its ethnic and religious minorities, Beijing denounces America’s so-called “systemic racism” using those same tools. The government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC)’s spokesperson, Hua Chunying, on more than one occasion led her anti-American Twitter tweets with “I can’t breathe” in the aftermath of the tragic death of George Floyd. Tens of millions of Chinese citizens, especially ethnic Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Kazakhs in the regime’s massive indoctrination and labor camp systems, are unavailable to comment, on Twitter or any other platform.

Today’s technologies have emboldened propagandists further. With Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, the CCP spreads false information that the PRC is an ordinary democracy with guaranteed individual freedoms. The most breathtaking example in this regard is the recent episode of top Chinese diplomats lecturing their American counterparts, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, in a meeting in March in Alaska. In a long, uninterrupted disinformation diatribe, they expounded the advantages of “the Chinese democracy” over American democracy.

Second, elite capture, often euphemistically referred to as the United Front Work, has been a seasoned practice of the CCP in conducting propaganda in the United States.

On July 13, 1990, the vice-consul of Culture, Propaganda, and Exchange in the PRC’s San Francisco Consulate General, who defected to the U.S. in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre, told a Berkeley, California audience about how easy it was for the CCP propagandists like himself to capture American intellectual and social elites to function as the CCP’s proxies in the U.S.:

The tactic Chinese propagandists use is not really very complicated. It is simple. It is always to work on your ego, on your business interests, on your curiosity, and especially with the Chinese students (in the U.S.), on your patriotism.

The former CCP propagandist further tellingly disclosed that:

In the early 1970s when Nixon visited China, his visit was followed by a swarm of China experts from Hong Kong and the West. Surprisingly, these people were the easiest targets of all because they were self-important. They thought they knew everything about China.

Indeed, since Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, the American elite’s ego, business interests, and curiosity about Chinese culture have supplied fertile ground and ample opportunities for the CCP to create a permanent class of the CCP propaganda proxies in the United States.

But elite capture goes further. Former senior government officials, including cabinet-level figures, routinely defend the CCP’s murderous acts, including the Tiananmen Massacre and other egregious human-rights violations. Some of these former officials have even become registered agents for the Beijing regime and its CCP-controlled business interests in the U.S. Many of our leading universities and their talented professors often are co-opted by the CCP to voice Beijing’s views in the U.S., masqueraded as research and objective surveys.

Not every captured elite is a hapless useful idiot. Yet, a significant portion of America’s intellectual and political elites share the responsibility for perpetrating key CCP propaganda agendas, including misleading the American public to minimize the degree to which the PRC is still a country ruled by a Marxist-Leninist communist party.

The manipulation of language is a prime example of this endeavor. Few people in the United States refer to the Chinese supreme leader by his real title, and the only one that matters: general secretary of the Chinese

Communist Party, who is without an exception a die-hard communist ideologue in command of a ruthless Leninist Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Instead, most Americans have almost universally, and falsely, rebranded him as “president” of China, a much more democratic-sounding but meaningless honorific.

The CCP uses such doublespeak to sell the American people a false ethos of modern China as a justly aggrieved nation, with its 1.4 billion diligent, party-loving people, being led by enlightened leaders working toward a historic comeback after a “century of humiliation.” Too many of our own intellectual and political elites have helped perpetrate this falsehood, and too often they hold a paternalistic view of the Chinese people as a monolithic block burdened by its 5,000 years of history.

The real history of the last century is very different from the Party’s lies. The fact is, ever since the 1919 May 4th Movement, the real guiding ethos of modern China has been one of striving toward universal values such as democracy and constitutional rule, and fighting against tyranny and dictatorship; and the CCP does not represent the 1.4 billion Chinese people—if it did, it would allow them to vote and stop gagging them.

Third, beyond disinformation and elite capture, the CCP’s propaganda is effective in the U.S. because of our key cultural institutions’ systemic self-censorship out of fear of the CCP.

Hollywood and the National Basketball Association are the most obvious examples. Maverick’s jacket in the upcoming *Top Gun* sequel will be missing a patch with the flag of Taiwan. The villains in the *Red Dawn* sequel were to be Chinese military officers, but the insignias were swapped with the North Korean flag—it doesn’t matter much to the bottom line if Pyongyang bans a studio’s film. The Houston Rockets—a basketball team close to Chinese citizens’ hearts because of Yao Ming—also got into hot water when the general manager retweeted in support of Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. He was forced to apologize, and few figures from the NBA have spoken up since.

The fourth, and most severe, form of communist propaganda today is brainwashing.

The CCP-controlled Confucius Institutes and the affiliated Confucius Classrooms have penetrated hundreds of college campuses and K–12 school classrooms in the United States. Rather than being centers for the competition of ideas focused on the teaching of Chinese language and culture, they have introduced to American youths the principle and practice of unanimity of opinions and self-censorship on topics considered ideologically incorrect by a communist dictatorship thousands of miles away, such as the Tiananmen Massacre, the Dalai Lama, and Falun Gong. They potentially make learning environments on free soil the same as on CCP-controlled territories.

The effects of this brainwashing are shown in the American Left’s adoption of the CCP’s key concepts and nomenclature. The Black Panthers got its initial ideological grounding and many of its political slogans from *Chairman Mao’s Quotations*, given to them for free in Oakland, California, by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. Today’s common use of the word “progressive” by the radical Left traces its intellectual origin straight to the Marxist-Leninist “dialectical” categorization of people into reactionaries and progressives. It is not from the modern legacy of the American Progressive Movement represented by William Jennings Bryan, Theodore Roosevelt, Robert M. La Follette, and Henry A. Wallace.

Beijing’s newfound power in the twenty-first century and the new technologies at its disposal make the problem of communist propaganda in our time urgent. But the most brutal and disturbing brainwashing campaign in modern history took place in the early 1940s in the CCP enclave of Yen-an in North China, and was known as the Yen-an Rectification. The primary method of Mao’s brainwashing in Yen-an was “consciousness raising,” which has become since the 1960s the main strategy of the American Left, especially the radical American feminist movement.

The true meaning of “consciousness raising” was perhaps best described in the 1978 book *In Search of History* by Theodore White, the wartime China correspondent of *Time* magazine. He wrote about his 1941

interview with one of Mao's right-hand men, a senior CCP military commander, and detailed how Mao's "consciousness raising" percolated into American political life:

The men who came in from the field, he said . . . had to have their minds washed out, had to be remolded in ideology . . . a full year was necessary to "remold the brain" before they could go on to study military matters, or economics, or law, or administration. His interpreter and I searched for a word better than "brain remolding" and finally the interpreter came up with the phrase "raising the level of consciousness." This was the first time I heard that phrase, which, over the years, moved out of China and on to the streets and fashions of America in the 1960s.

Such has been the tale of much of the history of the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda. Theodore White is dead, but the CCP is not. America is ever more vulnerable to the CCP's propaganda today than ever before.



**MILES MAOCHUN YU** is the Robert Alexander Mercer Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He served in the Trump administration as the principal China policy and planning adviser to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Concurrently he is a professor of East Asia and military history at the United States Naval Academy (USNA). His books include *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (Yale University Press, 1997) and *The Dragon's War: Allied Operations and the Fate of China, 1937–1947* (Naval Institute Press, 2006). He is the author of many scholarly articles on China and military and intelligence history, and of newspaper columns. His numerous awards include the USNA's top researcher award, U.S. Navy Special Action Award, and U.S. Navy Meritorious Service Award. He received a doctorate in history from the University of California–Berkeley, a master's degree from Swarthmore College, and a bachelor's degree from Nankai University.

# China's Propaganda: Ludicrous, Malicious, Extremely Effective

By Gordon G. Chang

"So let me say here that, in front of the Chinese side, the United States does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China from a position of strength," said China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, at the now-famous showdown in Anchorage in the middle of March.

Yang's words, part of a long tirade, were immediately amplified by Chinese state and Communist Party media. His comment was carried for weeks, first by reporting and then by analyses. Foreign commentators picked up the story line that the Americans in Alaska were taken by surprise, thereby giving credence to Beijing's narrative of Chinese strength. It appears that Yang's initial rant and its coverage were planned well in advance. Blinken and Sullivan, in short, were ambushed.

Is Chinese propaganda effective in enhancing Beijing's strategic objectives? The answer, evident from this tactically brilliant and seamless operation, is "yes."

"China controls the most expansive, heavily resourced, and sophisticated propaganda capabilities available to any regime in history," Kerry Gershaneck, author of the recently released *Political Warfare: Strategies for Combating China's Plan to 'Win Without Fighting'*, told *Strategika*. "This massive propaganda juggernaut has reaped tremendous benefits for China's Communist rulers in pursuit of their strategic objectives. Through its state-run propaganda organs, United Front organizations, and foreign enablers, Beijing has been able to effectively shape perceptions globally, if not perfectly at least well enough for its purposes."

In this case, Yang's assertive comment, flaunting China's rise, served Beijing's most important foreign policy objective: maintenance of Communist Party rule at home. The comment was relayed to the Chinese people, with especially inflammatory commentary. Fei-Ling Wang of Georgia Tech points out in comments to me that China's huge and well-funded propaganda effort has worked well in promoting the Party's leadership.

Yang's comment also served to intimidate foreigners. As Cleo Paskal of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies said to this publication, "Berating the U.S. delegation in Alaska served the propaganda purpose of showing smaller countries 'look at what we are willing to do to the U.S. so imagine what we will do to you.'" Paskal says Beijing has been "increasingly shifting to a 'fear us' message."

That message is usually presented these days in a U.S.-is-in-irreversible-decline packaging, implying, without subtlety, that countries can no longer rely on Washington for help.

The messaging works not only because of repetition but also because it feeds into existing perceptions of China's—and America's—different trajectories.



Image credit: Poster Collection, CC 199, Hoover Institution Archives.



Chinese propaganda, of course, does not work as well when it tries to establish a narrative that seems false, but the propaganda does what China's regime needs it to do. Take the matter of the origin of COVID-19. Beijing has been suggested—maliciously, without factual foundation—that the disease originated in the U.S. Army's Fort Detrick, in Frederick, Maryland.

On February 23 of last year, *People's Daily*, the Communist Party's self-described "mouthpiece" and therefore the most authoritative publication in China, suggested the U.S. military spread the disease to Wuhan. The Fort Detrick narrative appeared on WeChat, a popular Chinese social media platform, on March 9, and from there the story spread fast inside China.

"When did patient zero begin in the US?" asked Zhao Lijian, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, in a now-infamous March 12 tweet. "It might be U.S. army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan." That and his 10 other tweets on March 12 and 13 were cited 99,000 times in at least 54 languages in the following six weeks, according to an Atlantic Council-Associated Press investigation. Criticisms of Zhao's messages further spread the theory. The wide dissemination of the narrative created what the *New York Post* correctly called a "self-feeding cycle."

China since then has, through social media and other means, given new life to the Fort Detrick theory. For instance, on March 31 of this year, after the World Health Organization mission to Wuhan released its report on the origin of the disease, foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying again raised the Fort Detrick theory, something she also talked about previously this year. China's propaganda line may be ludicrous, but Beijing through social media and other means knows how to keep a story going.

As they say, quantity has its own quality. Gershaneck, now at Taiwan's National Chengchi University, refers to "the sheer mass of the daily bombardment of Communist Party messaging through Chinese state-owned and co-opted foreign media."

"Upright Voice Needed Globally Against Western Public Opinion Hegemony," a *Global Times* headline from this April tells us. There is, in fact, no longer any Western "hegemony" in public opinion, if there ever was.

China's giant—and effective—propaganda effort has seen to that. As Gershaneck points out, "The democracies have abdicated the Information Battlefield to China for roughly three decades and are only recently beginning to recognize the egregious price they are paying for this failure."



**GORDON G. CHANG** is the author of *The Coming Collapse of China*, *Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World*, and the recently released *The Great U.S.-China Tech War* and *Losing South Korea*. Chang lived and worked in China and Hong Kong for almost two

decades. He is a columnist at *Newsweek* and *The Hill*. Chang has given briefings at the National Intelligence Council, the CIA, the State Department, U.S. Strategic Command, and the Pentagon. Chang frequently appears on CNN, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, Bloomberg, CNBC, MSNBC, and PBS. He is a regular co-host and guest on The John Batchelor Show. He served two terms as trustee of Cornell University.



# A Day of Joy for the State within a State

By Christopher R. O'Dea

Among the container ships waiting for a berth at the port of Long Beach during the ocean-carrier traffic jam early this year were vessels of COSCO Shipping. The Chinese state-owned shipping company sails under the guidance of Captain Panda, a jolly stuffed-bear skipper decked out in crisp blue and gold nautical officer's garb befitting the leader of one of the most powerful organizations of the Middle Kingdom.

But container shipping is not all fun and games. The vessels lined up off the West Coast of the United States carry boatloads—literally—of goods to resupply American consumers wearied by the yearlong lockdown that followed an earlier delivery from China that proved far deadlier even as its origin remains unconfirmed. A serious outfit dedicated to delivering value, the COSCO customer service approach that will get those goods into the U.S. e-commerce pipeline is on full display at shipping conferences, where company exhibit tables test the logistical acumen of potential customers with carefully crafted questions such as how many Captain Panda gift boxes can fit in one 40-foot shipping container?

Calculating that number is straightforward. Harder to quantify is what COSCO vessels really deliver: Captain Panda delivers Chinese power. COSCO vessels are the flagships of China's maritime power, the critical logistical link between Chinese manufacturing zones and the empire of commercial ports and container terminals that this state-owned company has built since launching a container-shipping service in 1978.

The COSCO containership fleet is a propaganda victory of historic magnitude for China. While the blue hulls of Chinese fishing fleets attract negative attention about China's territorial aggression in the South China Sea and the Pacific fishing grounds off the coast of South America, in stark contrast the blue hulls of COSCO container ships waiting in line to unload are seen as good news—a sign of the strength of American consumers, who must endure longer waits for the newest generation of connected treadmills and appliances for homes that are again being used for cooking during lockdowns.

The propaganda victory is that COSCO's fleet is viewed as just one among the generic container lines that keep goods flowing from China and Southeast Asia, yet it poses a far greater danger to U.S. security than Chinese fishing vessels that are now routinely singled out as instruments of CCP aggression. This has allowed COSCO to achieve a more serious objective: under the guise of merely carrying cargo and taking on the responsibility to operate ports around the world, COSCO and several allied firms have in effect captured a network of shore installations from which to project Chinese influence into local and national governments that now depend on China not only for consumer goods and sensitive materials such as pharmaceuticals, but on Chinese state-owned companies to operate the critical infrastructure that connects them to the globalized economy.

China's infrastructure holdings, secured by contracts with host governments, provide Chinese state-owned enterprises with a seat at the tables where political and economic decisions are made—which is the goal of propaganda efforts. It's the culmination of a decades-long campaign that illustrates the most sophisticated



Image credit: Poster Collection, CC 201A, Hoover Institution Archives.

use of propaganda techniques as described by Edward Bernays, the American innovator who transformed the principles of emotional manipulation codified by his uncle Sigmund Freud into the trade that we now call public relations. In his seminal 1947 essay, “The Engineering of Consent,” Bernays wrote that business and political leaders need to “recognize the significance of modern communications not only as a highly organized mechanical web but as a potent force.” The result of a communications campaign that is properly conceived and diligently executed, even over long time periods, will be that “the ideas conveyed by the words will become part and parcel of the people themselves.”

China spends billions on its propaganda ministry and an extensive apparatus of organizations to propagate the CCP’s values to foreign audiences through virtually every form of communication and direct interaction. But it is China’s global infrastructure build-out that operationalizes the CCP strategy to administer the world—because each infrastructure contract represents one more Western concession to Communist China: for example, a concession by debt-laden Greece that it lacked the public funds needed to pay for the modernization of its main port at the historic harbor of Piraeus, where the second-rate Spartan navy blockaded the supply chains of Athenians, forcing their surrender and the imposition of a puppet government to end the Peloponnesian War.

Governments exist to deliver a range of services to their citizens, and the delivery can often be outsourced to third parties, just as manufacturing jobs were outsourced to China and other countries where labor costs were far below what companies had to pay to workers in industrialized economies. Chinese propaganda telling the story of China as a responsible global leader, and offering an alternative to the American-led Western liberal order, is aimed at undermining the credibility of the Western governance system based on free markets and individual human rights—thereby making it easier for governments, companies, and citizens, to accept Chinese capital and ultimately Chinese administration of the delivery of services to citizens that had previously been handled by local or national governments.

Securing approval of the major public works that are the hallmark of China’s expansion is the frontier of political influence, the gray zone where China’s comparative advantage in infrastructure engineering comes into contact with the West’s perceived comparative advantage in liberal governance, where propaganda—public communication—can help advance China’s front line.

It might not be long before China rolls out new tools. A team led by researchers in Hong Kong has devised a new approach to building major public works based on the complex interactions among “stakeholders,” the citizens, regulators, activists, contractors, and public officials involved in large construction projects. The team studied how stakeholders had been managed on a major project to use new land-reclamation and dredging technology to build a 370-acre island adjacent to an unnamed city.

To better smooth the way for such projects, the team called for project sponsors to conduct what infrastructure engineers call “PCC”—public and community consultation—throughout the construction process rather than only in the early stages to win approval. In the context of China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and the expansion of ports, container terminals, and rail networks being undertaken by COSCO and its allies, the report is an invitation to conduct continuous propaganda—not merely advance communications lauding the theoretical benefits of Chinese investment, but ongoing advocacy and interaction with local stakeholders, treating them, in effect, as China’s new constituents. It’s a blueprint for engineering consent to the massive public works that only China is capable of building.

While large-scale infrastructure projects give China the most extensive links to local political influence in foreign countries—and present high-value targets for supporting propaganda campaigns—COSCO’s real skipper, Xu Lirong, who is chairman and Party Secretary at China COSCO Shipping Corp. Ltd., is alert to how even modest civic good works can advance larger goals. Last November, the Piraeus City Council voted to order COSCO to stop sending construction trucks through the city and require it to move heavy materials to the site by water, one of several efforts to delay the construction work COSCO had committed to in 2016 when it bought control of the port authority from the Greek state privatization fund. This April, Xu’s local deputy, Yu Zenggang, chairman of COSCO’s Piraeus Port Authority unit, announced the Chinese would build a 10-acre children’s

playground and a parking lot next to the cruise ship area of the port. Was the donation a propaganda move? If so, it seems to have worked. Although Mayor Ioannis Moralis said the donation “does not mean that we will not insist on seeking solutions to environmental and traffic issues,” the storm clouds are clearing. “Piraeus is changing to the best,” the mayor said. Echoing the “win-win” theme that’s become the hallmark of China’s global expansion, the mayor noted that cooperation between the municipality and the port authority—now Chinese-run—showed that “our city can obtain benefits for the citizens.” Hoping for “similar synergies” in the future, he called the announcement “a day of joy.”

In this instance, China’s campaign to build Piraeus into its primary base in the West appears to have achieved the goal that Bernays set for the practice of propaganda as public relations, and the “the ideas conveyed by the words” have indeed “become part and parcel of the people themselves.” If that’s the case, perhaps the only remaining question is one posed last December by Giannis Ragousis of the opposition Syriza party: “Is COSCO acting like a state within a state?”

## Poll: Which of the following statements best describes the effectiveness of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) propaganda efforts?

- ☐ Racism in China makes it impossible to be seen as a good international citizen.
- ☐ The CCP projects brilliant propaganda, but few nations privately take it seriously.
- ☐ CCP propaganda is aimed at making Western nations feel less ashamed of becoming a Chinese financial client.
- ☐ The CCP has deviously turned the Western woke movement back on its creators to expose their hypocrisies.
- ☐ CCP propaganda brilliantly allows it to pose as a victim as it victimizes most of the world.



**CHRISTOPHER R. O'DEA** is an adjunct fellow at the Hudson Institute. He is writing a book detailing how China has reverse-engineered the logic of conquest: instead of seizing critical economic infrastructure through military action, China has established a global maritime empire by acquiring multi-decade contracts to build and operate commercial seaports for countries on every continent. Mr. O'Dea has consulted with defense officials of a Five Eyes intelligence alliance member on the strategic implications of China's logistics infrastructure investments, and published extensively on the topic in *National Review*.

## Related Commentary

- Bruce Thornton, “China Owns Our Foreign Policy Chiefs,” *Frontpage Mag* (March 23, 2021). <https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/2021/03/china-owns-our-foreign-policy-chiefs-bruce-thornton/>
- Glenn Tiffert et al., “Telling China’s Story: The Chinese Communist Party’s Campaign to Shape Global Narratives,” Hoover Institution and Stanford Internet Observatory (July 21, 2020). <https://www.hoover.org/research/telling-chinas-story-chinese-communist-partys-campaign-shape-global-narratives>



## Discussion Questions

1. Compare, contrast, and rate the Cold War propaganda efforts of the former Soviet Union with those now employed by the contemporary Chinese.
2. Why does the Chinese government reject the Western embrace of loud and public self-criticism?
3. To what degree do 330,000 Chinese foreign students in American universities enhance the efforts of Chinese propagandists?
4. What percentage of the Chinese public believes its own government's propaganda?

IN THE NEXT ISSUE  
U.S. Defense of Taiwan



## Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

## Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

## Strategika

*Strategika* is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



The publisher has made this work available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial license 4.0.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>.

Efforts have been made to locate the original sources, determine the current rights holders, and, if needed, obtain reproduction permissions. On verification of any such claims to rights in the articles or images reproduced in this publication, any required corrections or clarifications will be made in subsequent printings/editions. The views expressed in this publication are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff, officers, or Board of Overseers of the Hoover Institution.

Copyright © 2021 by the Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford Junior University

Hoover Institution, Stanford University  
434 Galvez Mall  
Stanford, CA 94305-6003  
650-723-1754

Hoover Institution in Washington  
The Johnson Center  
1399 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-760-3200

