

Afterword

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What makes this report timely and important is China's increasingly forward and aggressive posture on the global stage. Once largely a form of economic competition, China's recent turn to military and political rivalry with the United States has changed the whole equation of the bilateral relationship. If the United States is to fare well in this increasingly adversarial competition, Americans must have a far better sense than they now do about both the nature of the system and values that underlay the People's Republic of China and the challenges Beijing's ambitious agenda of multi-faceted outreach is beginning to pose for our country—especially our media, universities, think tanks, and other civil society institutions that make our society so unique, vibrant, and strong.

However, at the same time that we fortify ourselves against harmful outside interference, we must also be mindful to do no harm. In particular, we must guard against having this report used unfairly to cast aspersions on Chinese, whether Chinese American immigrants who have become (or are becoming) United States citizens, Chinese students, Chinese businesspeople, or other kinds of Chinese visitors, whose contributions to America's progress over the past century have been enormous.

Just because the Chinese Communist Party presumes that all ethnic Chinese (wherever they may reside) still owe some measure of loyalty “to the Chinese motherland,” *zuguo* (祖国), does not mean that they are collectively in possession of compromised loyalty to their adopted home or place of study. Our Working Group's findings do suggest that the leadership of the PRC has stepped up a new and well funded campaign of influence seeking in the United States. However, this should not be viewed as an invitation to a McCarthy era-like reaction against Chinese in America. Rather, it is a summons to greater awareness of the challenges our country faces and greater vigilance in defending our institutions.

In helping to convene this Working Group on Chinese influence seeking in the United States (and elsewhere in the world), the intention of the Task Force on US-China relations has been to limit the growing PRC challenge to American institutions and values, which is being played according to rules that are increasingly lacking in reciprocity. Developing strategies to counteract and protect our society when influence seeking becomes interference is the charge of this report, and perhaps the most effective defense is to strengthen our own democratic values and institutions. But at the same time we would be naïve not to want to become more familiar with the full dimensions of Beijing's overseas ambitions, the state organs, and the resources now dedicated to “overseas propaganda,”

waixuan (外宣), and the less than transparent manner in which Chinese influence seeking is often carried out.

We reiterate: it is absolutely crucial that whatever measures are taken to counteract harmful forms of Chinese influence seeking not end up demonizing any group of Americans, or even visitors to America, in ways that are unfair or reckless.