

## FOREWORD

Under Chairman Xi Jinping, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has resolved to strengthen its grip on power, take center stage in the world, and make good on Xi's pledge to lead the development of new rules and a new international order sympathetic to China's interests. The CCP is strengthening an internal system that stifles human freedom and extends its authoritarian control while exporting that model and undermining the rules-based international order. That is why it is vital for Americans and citizens of other democracies to read and discuss this important study. *Global Engagement: Rethinking Risk in the Research Enterprise* reveals how the CCP has orchestrated a sophisticated campaign of espionage and subterfuge to gain a differential military advantage, dominate the emerging global economy, and perfect its surveillance police state. But authors Jeffrey Stoff and Glenn Tiffert make clear in Chapter 1 that China's theft and application of cutting-edge technologies in pursuit of its ambitions is a problem that demands more than discussion. Americans and citizens of other free societies must put an end to what, at this point, has become willful ignorance concerning the scope of the threat. It is past time to undertake due diligence and risk assessments, end partnerships with institutions that act as fronts for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) or the Ministry of State Security (MSS), and prevent research institutions from aiding the CCP's aggression and repression of the Chinese people.

This study has arrived just in time. The CCP's campaign is intensifying as international awareness of the dangers that Xi Jinping's China

poses to freedom and prosperity is increasing. The party's aggressive actions during the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis foisted on the world in part due to a deliberate cover-up of the initial outbreak in Wuhan, have forced a reassessment among even the most hopeful proponents of China's transformation into a "responsible stakeholder" in the international order. China's heavy-handed "Wolf Warrior diplomacy," which uses disinformation to obscure its responsibility for the pandemic and portrays European and American responses to the crisis as indicative of the West's ineptitude, corruption, and incompetence, has generated a long overdue awakening to dangers associated with China's promotion of its authoritarian model as superior to democracy.<sup>1</sup>

China's effort to undermine democratic nations, however, is more than a war of words. In the spring and summer of 2020, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) used the COVID-19 pandemic as cover for aggression, from the South China Sea (where its navy and maritime militias stepped up attacks to advance specious territorial claims) to the East China Sea (where the PLA Navy increased incursions into Japanese territorial waters near the Senkaku Islands) and to China's Himalayan border with India (where the PLA violated the Line of Actual Control multiple times and in June 2020 bludgeoned twenty Indian soldiers to death).<sup>2</sup> Taiwan received special attention as the PLA conducted nighttime drills in the Taiwan Strait and its fighter and bomber aircraft conducted threatening overflights as the chief of the Joint Staff Department, Li Zuocheng, vowed to "resolutely smash any separatist plots or actions."<sup>3</sup> In July 2020, in a particularly callous rejection of international agree-

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1. See, for example, Thomas Wright, "Europe Changes Its Mind on China," *Brookings*, July 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/europe-changes-its-mind-on-china>.

2. Lindsey W. Ford and Julian Gewirtz, "China's Post-Coronavirus Aggression Is Reshaping Asia," *Foreign Policy*, June 18, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/18/china-india-aggression-asia-alliance>; Steven Lee Meyers, "China's Military Provokes Its Neighbors, but the Message Is for the United States," *New York Times*, June 29, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/international-home/china-military-india-taiwan.html>.

3. Anna Fifield, "China Vows to 'Smash' Any Taiwan Independence Move As Trump Weighs Sanctions," *Washington Post*, May 29, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost>

ments and rule of law, the CCP implemented a national security law in Hong Kong to end the “one country, two systems” agreement and extinguish freedom and rule of law there.<sup>4</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic Chinese aggression in cyberspace was as brazen as its actions in the physical world. In the midst of the crisis, the PLA and the Ministry of State Security attacked hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, and medical research facilities developing COVID-19 therapies and vaccines.<sup>5</sup> Winning the race for a vaccine would reinforce the Wolf Warrior narrative that China’s authoritarian system is superior to Western democratic systems. Australia was targeted with massive cyberattacks after calling for a World Health Organization investigation into the origins of the pandemic. The attacks demonstrated that the CCP was willing to perpetuate suffering abroad to ensure that China emerged from the crisis in a position of relative advantage economically and psychologically.<sup>6</sup>

CCP leaders took aggressive action on the Chinese mainland as well as abroad.<sup>7</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for expanding their surveillance regime. A “health code” assigned to individuals through the use of surveillance and artificial intelligence technologies augmented

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.com/world/asia\_pacific/china-vows-to-resolutely-smash-any-taiwan-independence-moves/2020/05/29/ae9c1af0-a158-11ea-be06-af5514ee0385\_story.html.

4. Alice Su and Rachel Cheung, “The New Hong Kong: Disappearing Books, Illegal Words and Arrests over Blank White Paper,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2020, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2020-07-10/this-is-a-cultural-purge-with-new-security-law-even-blank-paper-is-subversive-in-hong-kong>.
5. David E. Sanger and Nicole Perlroth, “U.S. to Accuse China of Trying to Hack Vaccine Data, as Virus Redirects Cyberattacks,” *New York Times*, May 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/10/us/politics/coronavirus-china-cyber-hacking.html>.
6. Alex Marquardt, Kylie Atwood and Zachary Cohen, “U.S. Officially Warns China Is Launching Cyberattacks to Steal Coronavirus Research,” *CNN*, May 13, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/13/politics/us-china-hacking-coronavirus-warning/index.html>.
7. Lily Kuo, “‘The New Normal’: China’s Excessive Coronavirus Public Monitoring Could Be Here to Stay,” *Guardian*, March 8, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/09/the-new-normal-chinas-excessive-coronavirus-public-monitoring-could-be-here-to-stay>.

other forms of social control such as the social credit score. The social credit score is designed to co-opt the population into conformity and coerce recalcitrant individuals who believe that they should have a say in how they are governed. The brilliance of the social credit score is that it mobilizes a person's social networks against her or him. If, for example, a Chinese citizen protests against the government in a way deemed threatening, the protestor's score will fall, and purchases of train tickets, apartment rentals, loans, and other services will be denied. The Party will also drop the scores of family and friends to mobilize social networks against protestors. The social credit score uses cutting-edge technology to co-opt and coerce people into reinforcing the state's draconian system of population control.<sup>8</sup>

China's minorities bear the brunt of this technology-enabled repression as the CCP continues a campaign of cultural genocide against its mostly-Muslim ethnic Uyghur population.<sup>9</sup> Artificial-intelligence technologies access an "Integrated Joint Operations Platform" that contains biomedical data gathered during mandatory physicals and other data to generate lists of "suspicious people," who are then rounded up and sent to concentration camps. More than a million people have been interned. Prisoners are subjected to systematic brainwashing and forced labor. Many males are sterilized, and many females are forced to have abortions or have contraceptive devices implanted into their bodies. In certain regions, the combination of these actions resulted in a reduction of the Uyghur birth rate by sixty percent.<sup>10</sup>

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8. H. R. McMaster, *Battlegrounds: The Fight to Defend the Free World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020), 119.

9. Bernhard Zand, "The Equivalent of Cultural Genocide," *Der Spiegel*, November 11, 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/chinese-oppression-of-the-uighurs-like-cultural-genocide-a-1298171.html>.

10. Lindsay Maizland, "China's Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang," Council on Foreign Relations (backgrounder), June 30, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-repression-uighurs-xinjiang>; Amie Ferris-Rotman, "Abortions, IUDs, and Sexual Humiliation: Muslim Women Who Fled China for Kazakhstan Recount Ordeals," *Washington Post*, October 5, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/abortions-iuds-and-sexual-humiliation-muslim-women](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/abortions-iuds-and-sexual-humiliation-muslim-women)

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The CCP's exploitation of American research institutions is foundational to its repression of its people, promotion of its authoritarian model, and coercion of its neighbors. The CCP uses censorship, espionage, theft of intellectual property, and surveillance of and intimidation on US academic campuses to advance sophisticated strategies such as Made in China 2025 and military-civil fusion. The former is designed to fuel China's economic growth with a vast amount of transferred technology and eventual domination of key sectors of the emerging global economy. The latter pursues dual-use technologies that would give China military as well as economic advantage. These strategies are successful in part because the CCP co-opts individuals, companies, research institutions, and academic institutions to act as witting or unwitting agents or to turn a blind eye to their activities. Co-option takes the form of foreign investment, donations, thinly veiled bribes, and other benefits, such as access to China's heavily monitored academic facilities. What is expected in return is for individuals and organizations to ignore egregious behavior such as the coercion of Chinese students and for the Chinese diaspora community to extract technology and conform to Chinese Communist orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup> Much of the espionage occurs under the veneer of academic research and partnerships with institutions such as China's "Seven Sons of National Defense" universities, which act as fronts for and extensions of the People's Liberation Army and the Ministry of State Security.

The egregious nature of the CCP's actions and the negligence of the US government, research institutions, and academia are likely to leave readers outraged. But it is most important that the combination of surprise, disgust, and anger that this study elicits be put to good purpose. The revelations in this study should inspire an end to the complacency,

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-who-fled-china-for-kazakhstan-recount-ordeals/2019/10/04/551c2658-cfd2-11e9-a620-0a91656d7db6\_story.html; *Associated Press*, "China Cuts Uighur Births with IUDs, Abortion, Sterilization," *Associated Press*, June 28, 2020, <https://apnews.com/269b3de1af34e17c1941a514f78d764c>.

11. McMaster, *Battlegrounds*, 110–11, 115–21.

avarice, and short-sightedness that have allowed the CCP to pursue its programs with near impunity. They should also lead to actions designed to curtail those programs and restore the integrity of sensitive research. Fortunately, in Chapter 2 authors Kevin Gamache and Glenn Tiffert have provided a framework for those actions in what they have labeled a global engagement risk assessment and management program. The basic steps proposed for addressing the problem set—know your partners, know your funders, take contracts seriously, train, iterate, and adapt—have relevance beyond research institutions. For example, international companies susceptible to CCP industrial espionage and vulnerable to the coercive power of the party might implement an analogous program.

Readers might also keep in mind a warning and a qualification. Growing appreciation for the CCP's systematic campaign of espionage coincides with an economic recession and growing populist sentiment that threaten to amplify anti-immigrant and protectionist impulses. Simultaneously, racial divisions laid bare by the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer in May 2020 have combined with other sources of popular discontent to sap confidence in America's democratic institutions as well as its free-market economic system. Those conditions have generated twin dangers that Americans will either overreact to the threat described in these pages by treating Chinese people prejudicially or underreact by indulging in the conceit that deliberate actions of China's authoritarian regime are equivalent to the shortcomings of US institutions. Thankfully, the recommendations in this study are designed to reduce the risk associated with the CCP's exploitation of research activities while also avoiding excesses motivated by either jingoistic verve based in bigotry or careless passivity based in moral equivalency. The authors of this study are advocates of academic freedom and international cooperation. If leaders of research institutions adopt the proposed program, it will be a first step in restricting behavior that threatens to cheapen and debilitate both.

A Chinese proverb tells the story of chancellor Li Yifu, a great flatterer of the early Tang dynasty whose smile concealed his duplicitous intentions. Eventually Emperor Gaozong discovered his duplicity and banished him. Li's smile seems analogous to the veneer of academic col-

laboration that masks the CCP's sustained campaign of espionage. The CCP's "flattery" is delivered in the forms of sponsored research, philanthropic gifts, stipends, and joint appointments to Chinese universities. It is past time to expand collaboration with genuine partners while banishing agents who are advancing the interests of the CCP at the expense of not only Americans and citizens of other democracies, but also the Chinese people.

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