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CHINA TASK FORCE REPORT

U.S. House of Representatives | September 30, 2020

The China Task Force (CTF) conducted an expansive survey of U.S. interests relating to the People's Republic of China, to clarify the scale and urgency of the threat of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) global malign behavior and develop a specific and actionable response plan. A summary of its recommendations can be found in Appendix I. The CTF conducted briefings with current and former administration officials on both sides of the aisle, business executives, Ambassadors, and various outside experts. In total, the CTF met with more than 130 leaders in over 60 engagements to gather information, learn about their perspectives and ask questions. The 15 Members of the China Task Force represented 11 committees in the U.S. House of Representatives. Their diverse experience ensured the China Task Force could best address this multi-faceted challenge. The Members were assigned to six pillars to address the various aspects of the China Challenge: Ideological Competition, Supply Chain Security, National Security, Technology, Economics & Energy, and Competitiveness. Staff from the committees and personal offices supported the Members by providing policy expertise in addition to facilitating briefings and conducting research. While the full CTF held over a dozen of briefings, the bulk of the engagements were handled at the pillar level.

The full report is attached.

WHITE HOUSE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR URGES NEED FOR RESEARCH SECURITY

Marissa Shapiro | Vanderbilt University News | September 25, 2020

In a regional webinar today, Kelvin Droegemeier, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, urged researchers to be aware of the pervasive threat by some foreign governments to the United States. The talk, "Enhancing the Security and Integrity of America's Research Enterprise," hosted by the University of Tennessee System and Vanderbilt University, was supported by the National Science Foundation. Researchers from institutions in Tennessee, Louisiana, Kentucky and Arkansas participated in the 75-minute event. "This is an amazing time in American science and technology," Droegemeier said to the hundreds of researchers attending virtually. "We must protect our values and mitigate the risks." With United States research values ranging from openness and transparency to freedom of inquiry and merit-based competition, Droegemeier said inappropriate behaviors either by some researchers or foreign governments jeopardize the integrity of such values.

Read the full article [here](#).



WERE THEY LOST STUDENTS OR INEPT SPIES FOR CHINA?

Eric Fish | Foreign Policy | September 28, 2020

Toward the end of their winter break in January, a pair of 24-year-old roommates from China studying at the University of Michigan—on a road trip that included Disney World, museums, and national parks—pulled up to a guard station in their blue Hyundai rental car. The guard post was the entrance to a half-mile bridge leading to Dredgers Key, an island belonging to the Naval Air Station Key West. Half an hour later, they were in police custody. Within hours, they were being interrogated by the FBI, and five months later, in the face of charges that could have yielded more than six years' imprisonment, Wang Yuhao and Zhang Jielun took a plea deal. They now sit in a Florida federal penitentiary, waiting to be deported back to China after their release. After their arrest, media reports painted them as spies. To some, they embody a theory of Chinese espionage where multiple small bits of sensitive information are collected by everyone from students to tourists. But the men's lawyers argue they are the victims of an innocent misunderstanding of a type that's becoming more common as U.S. authorities' suspicion of Chinese nationals grows.

Read the full article [here](#).

CYBERSECURITY CONVERGENCE: DIGITAL HUMAN AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Derek S. Reveron and John E. Savage | Foreign Policy Research Institute | September 28, 2020

Over the past decade, people everywhere have become as dependent on the virtual world for their daily activities as they are dependent on the physical world for human activities. Global fiber optic networks have enabled communication in an unprecedented manner, connecting people in unique ways, propelling global supply chains, and giving consumers access to a variety of data from around the world. The online world is threatened by interstate rivals that engage in influence operations, economic espionage, and intelligence gathering and criminal groups that steal identities, ransom data, and grow their enterprises. Insiders facilitate intrusions wittingly and unwittingly raising the importance of corporations' roles in cybersecurity. This convergence between the virtual and physical worlds with the government and the corporate upends the entire frame of reference for national security, which is tilted toward physical attack and strict jurisdictional lines.

Read the full article [here](#).

BREAKING THE CHINESE SPACE ADDICTION

Richard Weitz | The Hill | September 25, 2020

Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) recently proposed two amendments to the NASA appropriations bill to vet agency contractors for ties to the People's Republic of China. The amendments, which the Senate Commerce Committee adopted, mandate a Government Accountability Office review of potential commercial ties of NASA contractors to China and oblige the agency's leadership to take such PRC business connections into account when awarding new contracts. Over the last five years, the United States has substantially reduced its reliance on Russian space technologies, companies and supplies. Now we need comparable progress regarding China. Protecting our space supply chain from Beijing's harmful influence requires decreasing NASA's direct and indirect connections with China. Besides restricting space-related purchases from the PRC, Congress should discourage NASA contractor ties to PRC entities as soon as practical. China continues to expand its defense partnership with Russia, but it is also a national security threat in its own right.

Read the full article [here](#).



FBI DIRECTOR WARNS THAT CHINESE HACKERS ARE STILL TARGETING US COVID-19 RESEARCH

Maggie Miller | The Hill | September 24, 2020

FBI Director Christopher Wray on Thursday said Chinese hackers are continuing to target U.S. companies involved in COVID-19 research and described China as the nation's "greatest counterintelligence threat." "We are seeing very aggressive activity by the Chinese, and in some cases by others, to target our COVID-related research, whether it's vaccines, treatments, testing technology, etc.," Wray testified to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee during a hearing on threats to the U.S. "Sometimes, without being too descriptive in an open setting, we can almost track a news report from some company or research institution that is announcing or revealing some progress ... and then almost within days we will see cyber targeting that ties back to Chinese actors focusing on those institutions," Wray said.

Read the full article [here](#).

AS DECOUPLING GROWS, THE WEST RISKS LOSING INSIGHT INTO CHINA

Jimmy Zhang | Foreign Policy | September 23, 2020

As a college student studying Mandarin in the 1960s, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Shirk once described China as "remote as the moon" and "more mysterious and isolated ... than North Korea." In 1971, Shirk had the chance to visit China for the first time, as part of a delegation of several American Ph.D. students based in Hong Kong, in advance of President Richard Nixon's meeting with Mao Zedong. When Shirk entered the State Department, her personal exposure to Chinese society likely gave her a better grasp of the decision-making paradigms embraced by key Chinese political and military leaders. The world has changed significantly since 1971, and relations between the United States and China are at their lowest point in decades. In a July speech to American executives, U.S. Attorney General William Barr accused companies like Apple and Disney of "kowtowing" to China. Barr also implied that decoupling may be the only solution to protecting U.S. interests in light of an increasingly aggressive China.

Read the full article [here](#).

AS U.S. REVOKES CHINESE STUDENTS' VISAS, CONCERNS RISE ABOUT LOSS OF RESEARCH TALENT

Emily Feng | KCRW | September 23, 2020

Aaron, a Beijing native, spent the last seven years in the United States, first as a high school student and now as a rising college senior in sociology — until he received an email from the U.S. State Department earlier this month. "I opened it and it basically just said, because of some new information that we recently received, your visa has been revoked," Aaron remembers. He reached out to two lawyers with the help of his American university, who gave him grim news: "You're probably not going to get your visa ever again." NPR is not using Aaron's full name because he fears he may face discrimination and further suspicion in the U.S. Aaron was one of more than a thousand Chinese students and researchers who lost their visas Sept. 9 because the State Department said they were "high risk" — meaning they were alleged to have hidden their ties to China's military when applying for student visas.

Read the full article [here](#).



MO BROOKS DIRECTLY ASKS TROY UNIVERSITY, ALABAMA A&M TO CLOSE THEIR CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES

Sean Ross | Yellow Hammer News | September 25, 2020

Congressman Mo Brooks (AL-05) on Thursday sent a letter to the respective leaders of Alabama A&M University and Troy University urging them to shutter the Confucius Institute on each campus. The letter was sent to Alabama A&M's president, Dr. Andrew Hugine, and the Chancellor of Troy, Dr. Jack Hawkins, asking a list of 15 questions about the operation of the two Confucius Institutes. The letter requested responses from Hugine and Hawkins by October 17. Brooks' letter said, "Confucius Institutes hurt the integrity of our higher education system, threaten national security, and unnecessarily risk taxpayer funded research at your schools." The letter copied Governor Kay Ivey, Lt. Governor Will Ainsworth, Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh (R-Anniston) and Speaker of the House Mac McCutcheon (R-Monrovia). Brooks had recently called on Alabama leaders to step in and shut down the Confucius Institutes in the state.

Read the full article [here](#).

DOD ADDRESSES CYBERSECURITY THREATS FROM ADVERSARIES

Peter Suci | ClearanceJobs | September 24, 2020

The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) announced that critical infrastructure in the public and private sector were being targeted in cyber attacks, due largely to the ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic. Cybersecurity researchers have said that the current events have created a new set of opportunities for cybercriminals, and the total number of attacks has grown by as much as 300% this year. "We have definitely noticed a sharp increase in abuse and cyberattacks during the pandemic period," said Vincentas Grinius, CEO at network infrastructure solutions provider Heficed. "However, it is also clear that this new trend is not going away any time soon," Grinius said in an email to ClearanceJobs. "The current events have created a new set of opportunities for cybercriminals." This latest warning follows a National Security Agency (NSA) and Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) joint advisory from July that recommended immediate actions be taken to reduce exposure across all operational technologies and control systems.

Read the full article [here](#).

THE UNITED FRONT SYSTEM IN CHINA AND HOW IT HELPS THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY IN ITS QUEST FOR GLOBAL DOMINANCE

K Bhattacharjee | OpIndia | September 27, 2020

The threat posed by China has become evident with the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic. While the West has dithered to check the rise of the authoritarian state, it can no longer afford to do so as China threatens to challenge western supremacy. Recently, a lot of attention has been paid to the extensive efforts China has made to interfere in the internal matters of other countries. In this regard, the apparatus that facilitates such interference, the United Front system, has largely escaped attention. Here, we shall focus on the United Front system and the mechanism of its functioning. We shall rely primarily on a report prepared by Alex Joske, an analyst working with the International Cyber Policy Centre of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute that was published in June 2020. The report titled 'The party speaks for you' provides in-depth information on the United Front system.

Read the full article [here](#).



'YOU'RE NOT WANTED': TRUMP'S PROPOSED COLLEGE STUDENT VISA CHANGES WORRY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – AGAIN

Lindsay Schnell | USA Today | September 26, 2020

Leon Lewis-Nicol can still hear the gunshots. If he closes his eyes, he can picture the burning buildings. As a child in Freetown, Sierra Leone, a nation in West Africa devastated by civil war, Lewis-Nicol often imagined a better, safer life. His family fled the fighting, then returned to Sierra Leone before moving to Ghana, about 900 miles away, when he was 15. Friends who traveled around the world spoke of an even safer place, with clean streets and unlimited opportunities: the USA. Lewis-Nicol knew he had to go. The 24-year-old is here, studying to receive his master's degree in jazz performance from the University of Illinois. He's been in the States four years – he earned his undergrad at Millikin University, a small, private school in Decatur, Illinois – set to graduate in 2022. He wonders whether other West African natives will have the same chance.

Read the full article [here](#).

U.S. SETS EXPORT CONTROLS ON CHINA'S TOP CHIP MAKER

Dan Strumpf | The Wall Street Journal | September 28, 2020

The Commerce Department has told U.S. computer-chip companies that they must obtain licenses before exporting certain technology to China's largest manufacturer of semiconductors, a blow to China's efforts to compete in advanced technology. The department laid out the requirement in a letter to the computer-chip industry Friday. The letter, a copy of which was reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, says exports to Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. or its subsidiaries risk being used for Chinese military activities.

Read the full article [here](#).

KEEP OUR TECHNOLOGY OUT OF THE HANDS OF OUR ADVERSARIES – AND CHINA IS AN ADVERSARY

Julio Rivera | Newsmax | September 24, 2020

It didn't get much attention, coming as it did as the nation was dealing with COVID restrictions and often riotous protests, but U.S.-Chinese relations hit a decades-long low point on July 24. That's the day the U.S. got fed up with Chinese spying and intellectual property theft and closed the Chinese consulate in Houston, where much of the espionage was being supervised. The move culminated a decade and a half in which the Chinese have become increasingly interested in stealing industrial and trade secrets from U.S. firms – or demanding them as a condition of doing business in China. The Center for Strategic and International Studies says there are 138 incidents of Chinese-linked espionage in the U.S. since 2000 – almost three-fourths of them in the last eight years. The FBI says it has more than 2,000 active counterintelligence cases focused on Chinese economic espionage, and Director Christopher Wray says he opens a new one every 10 minutes.

Read the full article [here](#).

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