



ACADEMIC SECURITY AND COUNTER EXPLOITATION PROGRAM

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THE NEW ERA OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE MUST SHIFT FOCUS TO THE GRAY ZONE

Christopher P. Costa | *The Hill* | February 23, 2023

Strategic competition in the current global context is a post-counterterrorism-era paradigm shift that demands more aggressive offensive U.S. counterintelligence activities. Rethinking counterintelligence and counterterrorism for great power competition is both necessary and urgent. In other words, though terrorism is still a significant U.S. national security priority, large-scale counterterrorism wars are a phenomenon of the decade's past. The essential first priority for achieving a competitive advantage in this new era of strategic competition is understanding the nature of competition in the gray zone. Gray zone activities play out in a sort of shadowy netherworld that falls below the threshold of a shooting war. They are amorphous campaigns for influence that combine non-military means and surrogates to destabilize and circumvent the strengths of a target state. These malign activities can include assassinations, kidnappings and disinformation operations, alongside traditional espionage activities, but with far more aggressive use of proxies: Think of Russia's "little green men" overseas. But here in the U.S., the threats manifest in more sophisticated ways, like when U.S. private investigators are hired, unwittingly, by intelligence officers of hostile states.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA INITIATIVE'S SHADOW LOOMS LARGE FOR US SCIENTISTS

Natasha Gilbert | *Nature* | February 24, 2023

One year after the US government ended its controversial China Initiative, scientists of Chinese heritage say that they are still being targeted unfairly and fear for their safety. The initiative — which was aimed at safeguarding US laboratories and businesses from espionage — created the perception of bias against researchers of Chinese descent, said assistant attorney-general Matthew Olsen when shutting it down in February 2022, although he denied that the programme had actually used racial profiling. While it was active, more than 150 people were criminally charged for actions such as failing to disclose funding or partnerships with institutions in China, according to an analysis by MIT Technology Review. Nearly 90% of them were of Chinese heritage. Many of the charges brought by the US Department of Justice (DoJ) after the initiative's launch in 2018 were eventually dropped or dismissed, and some prosecutions ended in acquittal. The climate of fear and anxiety hasn't gone away — researchers are just being pressured in a new way, says Jenny Lee, a social scientist at the University of Arizona in Tucson who studies research collaborations and geopolitics.

Read the full article [here](#).



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FEDERAL PANEL SAYS AGENCIES NEED TO FOCUS ON HARMONIZING CYBER REGULATIONS

Tim Starks and Vanessa Montalbano | The Washington Post | February 22, 2023

The Defense Department says it secured a previously exposed server that leaked sensitive military emails, and gaming giant Activision falls victim to a phishing scheme. First: The Biden administration needs to take numerous steps to deconflict and organize the proliferation of cybersecurity regulations, according to a report that a presidential advisory committee approved Tuesday. That includes things like creating an office within the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to harmonize cybersecurity rules across the federal government, or directing a trio of federal agencies to coordinate with foreign governments to develop consensus cybersecurity standards. The recommendations arrive as the U.S. cyber scene awaits publication of the Biden administration's national cybersecurity strategy, the White House pushes for mandates on numerous industries, and CISA writes a rule to require critical infrastructure owners and operators to report major cyber incidents to the agency.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINESE MONEY IS FLOODING INTO AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION — WITH LITTLE TRANSPARENCY

Betsy DeVos | New York Post | February 3, 2023

China, like many of our global adversaries, is attempting nothing short of espionage via America's colleges and universities — buying its way into influencing teaching, stealing our intellectual property and manipulating US foreign policy. This issue came further into focus when it was revealed the University of Pennsylvania received millions of dollars in secretive Chinese and foreign donations — even as the university's Biden Center for Foreign Policy was home to scores of mishandled classified documents. Since President Biden's inauguration, Penn has received more than \$50 million in foreign funding, including more than \$14 million in anonymous gifts from China and Hong Kong. That's on top of the more than \$60 million Penn received since the Biden Center launched in 2017. Concurrently, the Biden Center became home to what some have called a "national-security-council-in-waiting." Biden's secretary of state, Antony Blinken, was the center's director from 2017 to 2019.

Read the full article [here](#).

HOW TRANSPARENCY DRIVES ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Preston Cooper | Forbes | November 15, 2019

Last year, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos repealed the Gainful Employment (GE) rule, an Obama-era regulation that targeted mainly for-profit colleges where graduates owed high debts relative to their earnings. While this was a decent goal, the rule applied to so few academic programs that it protected only 16% of college students. Hence, DeVos aims to replace the rule with more detailed student outcomes data on all programs (an initiative still in the works). The catch is that under DeVos' replacement, poorly-performing colleges will not face any penalties. This sparked a debate in higher-education policy circles about whether transparency is enough to hold colleges accountable for student outcomes, or whether regulators also need to impose penalties on poor-quality schools. Though the Gainful Employment rule threatened educational programs with a loss of eligibility for federal student aid if they didn't meet certain benchmarks, such accountability also required the collection and release of mountains of new data: a major step forward for transparency as well.

Read the full article [here](#).



NAVIGATING THE GRAY ZONES OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Tommy Shih | *Issues in Science and Technology* | Winter 2023

The past two decades have seen rapid global growth in investments in research and development with a concomitant volume of publications. Much of this growth is associated with countries, such as Brazil, Russia, Iran, India, and especially China, that have not historically been considered global leaders in investing in science. China in particular has become a significant part of the global science enterprise. Since 2016, China has been the largest producer of scientific publications in the world, and in 2020 produced nearly 23% of the world total. Moreover, papers from China overall are cited at a higher rate than the average rate for the world total, indicating rising quality. Accompanying this globally distributed growth, international scientific collaboration is also on the rise. Between 2009 and 2018, for example, the growth in scientific articles in major European research nations was almost entirely due to international coauthored papers, including with countries whose scientific enterprises are growing swiftly. In the last five years, researchers have collaborated internationally to sequence and monitor SARS-CoV2, develop and deliver vaccines, preserve habitat, mitigate climate change, and more.

Read the full article [here](#).

HOW TO ADDRESS UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF INTERNATIONALISATION

Wagdy Sawahel | *University World News* | February 24, 2023

Internationalisation of higher education practices should strive to follow a levelling-up agenda that avoids an erosion of cultural values, human capital flight, and inequities from hegemonic relationships, while supporting innovation, equitable collaborations, and decolonisation, argue independent scholars Shahrzad Kamyab and Rosalind Latiner Raby, a senior lecturer at the US-based California State University, Northridge. Both are co-editors of the book, *Unintended Consequences of Internationalization in Higher Education: Comparative international perspectives on the impacts of policy and practice*, published on 8 February. The book is based on an analysis of positive and negative unintended consequences in higher education internationalisation in 18 states and regions worldwide. These include Canada, Costa Rica, India, Iran, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Zimbabwe and Hong Kong.

Read the full article [here](#).

CHINA'S SPYMASTERS CAN GET MORE FROM TIKTOK THAN FROM BALLOONS

Tobin Harshaw | *Bloomberg* | February 25, 2023

The Great Spy Balloon Panic of 2023 may have deflated, but the episode did raise significant questions about America's preparedness for the next era of superpower rivalry. Bloomberg Opinion's Niall Ferguson, for example, argued that the Chinese flying object exposed the US "domain awareness gap" and aging military industrial base. Admiral James Stavridis questioned the cost-benefit ratio of using Sidewinder missiles (costing over \$400,000 each) to bring down what might turn out to be weather balloons or scientific experiments. The best-selling horror novelist Whitley Strieber warned of the "remarkable, complex and secretive presence" of extraterrestrials. (Then again, Strieber says he was abducted by aliens on Boxing Day in 1985.) As the hysteria abates, let's pay attention to the big threat: the global web of Chinese intelligence operations that have largely flown beneath the radar of public awareness. This week I tracked down Alex Joske, an Australian risk analyst and expert on Beijing's adept influencers — not the TikTok kind.

Read the full article [here](#).



AMERICA ON EDGE: SETTLING FOR SECOND PLACE?

Norman R. Augustine and Neal Lane | Issues in Science and Technology | October 22, 2021

The United States is on edge in ways the nation has rarely experienced throughout its young history. The country's global leadership is being challenged in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world. Meanwhile, the nation's sustained complacency in dealing with long-festered domestic needs has weakened our institutions from within and placed in grave danger our leadership in the critical fields of science and technology—on which so much of our economy and security is based. America is at a tipping point, in short, and Americans are justifiably unsettled. The country has faced existential challenges in the past—moments in history that shook its foundation—but has risen to the occasion under strong leadership. Four overarching challenges we face today require comparable leadership and response: competing with China, coping with climate change, maintaining cybersecurity, and combating and preparing for pandemics. There are many causes of the nation's current dilemmas, and their solutions will require exceptionally wise policy actions across a broad spectrum. But, as in the past, advances in science and technology (S&T) and research and development (R&D), driven by accelerated and focused investments, will be critical to success.

Read the full article [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN ARMS REGULATIONS: CONSOLIDATION AND RESTRUCTURING OF PURPOSES AND DEFINITIONS-FINAL

Department of State | Federal Register | February 27, 2023

The Department of State published an interim final rule on March 23, 2022, effective September 6, 2022, amending the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) to better organize the purposes and definitions of the regulations. After reviewing the comments received in response to that interim final rule, the Department is now responding to public comments and finalizing the interim final rule, including making minor amendments. The Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC), U.S. Department of State, administers the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) (22 CFR parts 120-130). The regulations, codified as subchapter M of chapter I, title 22 of the Code of Federal Regulations ("the subchapter") implement those authorities of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) (22 U.S.C. 2751 et seq.) delegated to the Secretary of State pursuant to Executive Order 13637.

Read the full article [here](#).

AUSTRALIA AND THE US ARE CRACKING DOWN ON 'CHINESE SPIES' IN STEM, AND BEIJING IS TAKING ADVANTAGE

Wing Kuang | ABC News | February 9, 2023

Chinese American physicist Xiaoxing Xi is still haunted by the memory of an early morning in 2015, when a group of FBI officers surrounded his home in Pennsylvania. The agents pointed guns at his wife and two daughters and then handcuffed him. The former chair of Temple University's physics department was charged with leaking sensitive technology to the Chinese government. Prosecutors accused Professor Xi of secretly sharing the design of a pocket heater for a supercomputer with scientists in China. Overnight, Professor Xi's face was splashed across US media and he was branded a "Chinese spy". He faced up to 80 years in prison if found guilty. But just four months later, Professor Xi's case came to a dramatic turning point. Before the trial had even kicked off, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) dropped all charges against Professor Xi, with a document filed in court explaining that "additional information came to the attention of the government". According to Professor Xi's lawyer Peter Zeidenberg, the scientist had never shared secret technology with Chinese colleagues.

Read the full article [here](#).



CHINA IS A DETERMINED AND FORMIDABLE COMPETITOR WITH THE U.S. IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Science & Technology Action Committee | February 2, 2023

The U.S. is engaged in a fierce competition with China for world leadership in science, technology and innovation, which China may win unless Congress doubles funding for R&D and STEM education relative to GDP over the next five years. The impact to America would be devastating: fewer jobs, a weaker economy, more intrusive and unethical uses of technology and greater threats to national security. For the past two decades, China's strategy for competing with the United States economically and militarily has been to boost its STEM workforce and advanced manufacturing capabilities. Business leaders¹ agree there is an immediate and urgent need to build our technology workforce if we are to maintain our historic preeminence in science and technology.

Read the full article [here](#).

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