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China has already infiltrated America’s institutions

BY MIKE ROGERS, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR - 03/02/21 2:30 PM ET
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through harmless-sounding front organizations, the CCP is aggressively limiting free speech on American college campuses, co-opting and corrupting American politicians and businesses, stealing invaluable American research and development, and undermining the very foundations of our democratic republic.

Ensuring prosperity and sovereignty in the next century demands that we recognize and confront the CCP's propaganda, influence and subversion wherever it is found, and it is found nearly everywhere one looks. This is not mere hyperbole or speculation; it is very real, and it is happening right now.

In 2020, FBI Director [Christopher Wray warned](#), “We’ve now reached the point where the FBI is opening a new China-related counterintelligence case about every 10 hours.” Think about that — a new case every 10 hours. That’s nearly 17 a week, 17 complex counterintelligence cases resulting from China’s activities in the United States.

Let’s look at what’s happening on college campuses. China is spreading its propaganda through the innocuous-sounding [Confucius Institutes](#), academic front organizations that, according to a bipartisan [report](#) from the Senate’s Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, are completely controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. Active on [more than 100](#) college campuses, these “institutes” are outposts of propaganda for the CCP. In exchange for resources and academic programs such as language education, Confucius Institutes exert incredible pressure and leverage over universities, threatening to pull their funding to ensure that some topics like Taiwan, Tibet, Falun Gong and the Uyghurs are off-limits.

The CCP is stealing invaluable intellectual property through its “Thousand Talents Program,” co-opting researchers and scientists with the promise of financial gain for the benefit of the People’s Liberation Army and state-owned or state-linked businesses. In June 2020, Charles Lieber, chair of Harvard’s Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, was [indicted](#) for his involvement in this program which, through the Wuhan Institute of Technology, provided him a \$50,000 monthly stipend, more than \$150,000 in living expenses, and more than \$1.5 million to establish a laboratory back in China — all of which he failed to disclose.

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Rep. Swalwell is not alone. A driver for Sen. [Dianne Feinstein](#) (D-Calif.) is [believed](#) to have worked for China's Ministry of State Security for 20 years. In that trusted position, he would have been privy to countless phone conversations, in-car discussions and other forms of "chatter," all of which would be a goldmine for Chinese intelligence.

Beijing is working aggressively, and with some success, to co-opt American intelligence officers. In August 2017, CIA officer Alexander Yuk Ching Ma, 67, was [arrested](#) along with a relative (also a CIA officer) for conspiring to send classified information to the People's Republic of China. In 2004 an FBI counterintelligence agent pleaded guilty for concealing a 20-year relationship with a suspected Chinese double agent — a woman he initially recruited.

What the Chinese Communist Party is doing goes well beyond cultural outreach and diplomatic engagement. It is a holistic campaign of malign influence designed to disarm our democracy's protective antibodies and weaken our republic. It is about corrupting people and institutions to ensure that they self-censor, avoid sensitive topics and promote Beijing's talking points. It is about threatening American businesses with boycotts, as [happened with the NBA](#), to ensure that the companies don't support Taiwan or Hong Kong, and certainly don't discuss the imprisonment of millions of Uyghurs. It is about classic intelligence operations that seek to undermine American intelligence and security operations overseas. It is about peddling Chinese propaganda masked as legitimate journalism, such as [the China Daily inserts](#) you may have seen in your local papers.

Our future economic security and national security depend on confronting the Chinese Communist Party's campaign of influence wherever it is found. If we fail to do so today, we will cede our sovereignty and our future, and that of our children, to Beijing — and that's something that isn't worth any price.

[Mike Rogers](#) is a former member of Congress who served as chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. He is now the David Abshire Chair at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress and is a senior fellow with the Intelligence Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University. Follow him [@RepMikeRogers](#).

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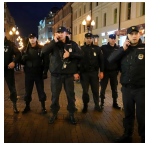
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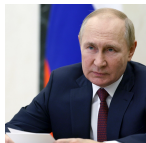
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