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THE LONG ARM OF CHINA: EXPORTING AUTHORITARIANISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

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THE LONG ARM OF CHINA: EXPORTING AUTHORITARIANISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE
COMMISSION ON CHINA,
Washington, DC.

The hearing was convened, pursuant to notice, at 10:55 a.m., in Room 301, Russell Senate Office Building, Senator Marco Rubio, Chairman, presiding.

Also present: Representative Christopher Smith, Senator Angus King, and Senator Steve Daines.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, A U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA; CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Chairman RUBIO. Good morning. This is a hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The title of this hearing is "The Long Arm of China: Exporting Authoritarianism with Chinese Characteristics."

I apologize to the witnesses. It has been a pretty busy day this morning, and it is not even 11:00 yet.

We are going to have one panel testifying today. The panel will feature Shanthi Kalathil, the Director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED); Dr. Glenn Tiffert, an expert in modern Chinese legal history and a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution; and Dr. Sophie Richardson, Director of China Research at Human Rights Watch.

I thank all of you for being here.

Before we move to the topic at hand, I want to take a moment to recognize Ms. Deidre Jackson on the Commission's staff. After 38 years of government work, including nearly 16 years at the Commission, this is her final hearing before retiring—hopefully to Florida.

[Laughter.]

Chairman RUBIO. It will be at the end of this year.

[Applause.]

Chairman RUBIO. We are very grateful to her for her faithful service and for her important contribution to this work.

The focus of this hearing today is timely. This is an issue that merits greater attention from U.S. policymakers and that involves the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party, through its govern-

ment, to conduct influence operations, which exist in free societies around the globe, and they are intended to censor critical discussion of China's history and human rights record and to intimidate critics of its repressive policies.

Attempts by the Chinese Communist Party and the government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence and control discussion of sensitive topics are pervasive, and they pose serious challenges to the United States and our like-minded allies.

The Commission convened a hearing looking at China's "long arm" in May of 2016, and the focus at that time was on individual stories from dissidents and rights defenders, journalists, family members of critics of the regime who shared alarming accounts of the intimidation, harassment, pressure and fear they felt as a result of their work. This was especially true for those who had family still living in China. This issue persists.

Just recently, Chinese authorities reportedly detained over 30 relatives of the U.S.-based Uyghur human rights activist Rebiya Kadeer, a frequent witness before this Commission. We will no doubt hear similar accounts when Dr. Richardson explores some of what Human Rights Watch documented in its recent report on China's interference at United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Beyond that, we hope today to take a step back from individual accounts regarding China's "long arm," and examine the broader issue of the Chinese Communist Party's influence around the world. What animates their efforts? What is their ultimate aim? What sectors or institutions are most vulnerable to this? And what can we do about it?

Given the scope of this issue, we will only begin to scratch the surface here today. When examining these foreign influence operations, it is important we understand the Communist Party infrastructure that exists in support of this endeavor.

The United Front Work Department is one of the Party agencies in charge of influence operations at home and abroad. The Chinese President elevated this entity's status in 2014, calling their work the "magic weapon" for the "Chinese people's great rejuvenation." The UFWD is charged with promoting a positive view of China abroad and exporting the purported benefits of this authoritarian model.

United Front officials and their agents, often operating under diplomatic cover as members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, develop relationships with politicians at the state, local and Federal level, and other high-profile or up-and-coming foreign and overseas Chinese individuals to—in the words of Wilson Center Global Fellow Anne-Marie Brady—"influence, subvert, and if necessary, bypass the policies of their governments and promote the interests of the CCP globally."

A key element in this long-arm effort has focused on information technology and internet governance or sovereignty, asserting national control of the internet and social media platforms not only in recent domestic cyber legislation and development plans, but also at international gatherings.

So we look forward to Ms. Kalathil's testimony, which will further explore this important dimension of the Chinese government's efforts.

China has developed tools to surveil social media and mobile phone texting platforms and to disrupt overseas websites that contain content the government finds politically sensitive. Earlier this year it was reported that real-time censorship of instant messaging platforms is now taking place. Private group chats are censored without users' knowledge.

As it relates to China's long arm, the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, a human rights and information technology research center, reported in mid-January of this year on Chinese government censors' work to prevent Tibetans inside and outside of China from discussing the Dalai Lama's major religious teachings in India in January 2017.

The Chinese government is also clearly targeting academia. The Party deems historical analysis and interpretation that do not hew to the Party's ideological and official story as dangerous and threatening to its legitimacy.

Recent reports of the censorship of international scholarly journals illustrate the Chinese government's direct requests to censor international academic content, something which Professor Tiffert will address.

Related to this is the proliferation of Confucius Institutes, and with them insidious curbs on academic freedom. These are a major concern, an area which CECC cochairman, our cochairman here, Congressman Smith, has been sounding the alarm on for some time.

Chinese foreign investment and development, which is slated to reach record levels with the Belt and Road Initiative, is accompanied by a robust political agenda aimed in part at shaping new global norms on development, trade and even human rights.

There is much more that has been publicly reported in just the last few months, and even more that will likely never be known. The academic whose scholarly paper provides background on the banned Chinese Democratic Party or other politically sensitive issues refused a visa to conduct research in China, or the Hollywood studio that has to shelve film scripts with a storyline involving China's abuse of the Tibetan people, the Washington think tank that puts out policy papers critical of legislative initiatives that would negatively impact the Chinese government, all the while never revealing their financial ties with senior Chinese officials, or the American internet company willing to censor content globally in order to obtain access to the Chinese market.

There are endless scenarios. Some, I think, have happened, some are happening, and some will continue to happen. And it relates directly to Chinese foreign influence operations in both their scope and in their reach.

There is an important growing body of research on this topic.

So without objection, we will keep the hearing record open for 48 hours to submit some additional relevant materials in that regard, including the executive summary of an important report by the National Endowment for Democracy, "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence," which outlines in part China's influence operations in young democracies including two of them in our own hemisphere in Latin America.

[The executive summary/introduction to the report appears in the appendix.]

Chairman RUBIO. Each year, the Commission releases an Annual Report which painstakingly documents human rights and rule of law developments in China. China's Great Firewall, rights violations in ethnic minority regions, harassment of rights defenders and lawyers, suppression of free speech, onerous restrictions on civil society, these are the shameful markings of an authoritarian, one-party state.

But to the extent that the same authoritarian impulses animate the Chinese government's efforts abroad, it directly threatens our most deeply held values and our national interests.

Chinese leaders are engaged in the long game and it is something that policymakers in the United States, and with our like-minded allies, must take seriously.

Congressman Smith is not here in attendance. He is in the middle of a hearing in the House but will be with us shortly.

I also welcome Senator King. Do you wish to say anything for the record at the opening? If not, then we are going to welcome our witnesses.

I guess we will begin with you, Ms. Kalathil, and just work down the row. I thank you, and I apologize again for our late start. But as I said, it is 11:00 and it feels like it is 5:00.

[Laughter.]

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you for being here, all of you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Rubio appears in the appendix.]

STATEMENT OF SHANTHI KALATHIL, DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC STUDIES, NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

Ms. KALATHIL. Great. Thank you, Chairman Rubio and Senator King.

It is a great opportunity to speak to this important topic alongside such expert colleagues.

Today I will address China's outwardly directed efforts to shape expression and communication globally and the negative implications this poses for democracies.

Consider, to begin with, a metaphor sometimes invoked to explain China's domestic approach to the internet, that of the walled garden. The garden is not devoid of color. Indeed, certain flowers are cultivated and allowed to bloom profusely, while those plants deemed weeds are yanked out by the root. In this way is the space pruned to fit the preferences of the master gardener.

While metaphors are always imperfect, this one does convey important ideas about how the CCP approaches China's information, media and technology sector. These ideas also have relevance for its international approach. I will just briefly touch on three key aspects here.

First, the technology. The so-called "Great Firewall" is dependent on an increasingly advanced system of not just censorship but comprehensive surveillance. It is estimated that there are 170 million CCTV cameras in place, many now enhanced with facial recogni-

tion technology, and 400 million new cameras planned in the next three years.

The Wall Street Journal reported last week on people detained for stray comments made on private chats on the WeChat messaging platform. Government authorities can now identify citizens on the street through facial recognition, monitor all online behavior, and identify potential or even future dissenters and troublemakers.

Second, it is not only about the technology. Beijing relies on individuals, corporations and institutions for not just censorship and self-censorship but the proactive shaping of norms, narratives and attitudes.

Underpinning all of this activity is the third aspect, Beijing's core economic bargain, which consists of preferential treatment and implicit prosperity for those who respect Beijing's so-called "red lines," and punishment for those who do not. And while Chinese internet and technology companies have sometimes a not straightforward relationship with the Party, they certainly understand this bargain.

This combination of aspects results in a system that curtails freedom, suppresses dissent, and manages public opinion, reliant not on any individual element but on a principle of redundancy built into every layer.

Why is this domestic approach relevant to our topic today? Because it is becoming evident that the CCP, under Xi Jinping, is intent on encompassing the rest of the world within its walled garden.

This isn't to say that China seeks to control every facet of communication or that it wants to impose its exact model of authoritarian governance everywhere. But it is increasingly true that Beijing's technology ambitions, combined with its attempts to determine on a global scale the parameters of acceptable speech and opinion with respect to China, pose clear threats to freedom of expression and democratic discourse outside its borders.

So how does the Chinese government apply its gardening techniques internationally? First, while it cannot control the infrastructure and technology of the global internet, Chinese companies are actively building out key telecommunications infrastructure in developing countries, raising questions about security and dissemination of censorship capabilities.

And if China succeeds in dominating the emerging global market for data-enabled objects—also known as the Internet of Things—its approach to embedded surveillance may become the norm in places with weak individual privacy protections.

Meanwhile, the same Chinese tech giants mentioned in that Wall Street Journal story are taking stakes in the firms that provide key global apps and services. Just last Friday, it was reported that WeChat's parent company, Tencent, and Spotify had taken minority stakes in each other. This follows earlier Tencent acquisitions of minority stakes in Snap, the parent company of Snapchat, and Tesla.

Artificial intelligence companies such as iFlyTek pioneer the surveillance aims of the government through the use of big data and

weak Chinese privacy standards, while also entering into deals with industry leaders such as Volkswagen and others.

It is reasonable to ask whether Chinese firms with global ambitions plan to follow the same explicit and/or unspoken Party dictates with respect to data-gathering, surveillance, and policing of "sensitive" communication abroad as they do at home.

These technological advances also dovetail with Beijing's efforts to shape the internet and other future technologies through key internet governance bodies and discussions, as Chairman Rubio mentioned. The Chinese government's initially derided World Internet Conference in Wuzhen succeeded this year in attracting high-level Silicon Valley participation, including Apple CEO Tim Cook. Importantly, it established the optic that the world's leading technology firms have blessed China's approach to the internet.

I will briefly touch on some of these other aspects, the second of which is that it is never only about the technology. The Chinese government has spent tens of billions of dollars to shape norms, narratives and attitudes in other countries, relying on the cultivation of relationships with individuals, educational and cultural institutions, and centers of policy influence.

This is detailed in our new report on sharp power.

Finally, underlying all of this is China's carrot-and-stick contract with the rest of the world. The global walled garden approach would not be possible were governments, universities, publishers, Hollywood, technology and other companies not roped into this implicit and sometimes explicit bargain.

Therefore, it is both timely and necessary for democratic governments and civil society to be proactive in asserting why norms such as transparency, accountability, and pluralism are critical to their interests.

I will reserve the rest of my suggestions on that front for the Q and A.

Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kalathil appears in the appendix.]

Chairman RUBIO. Dr. Tiffert, are you prepared? I think you are going to go next because he is closer to his PowerPoint. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF GLENN TIFFERT, Ph.D., VISITING FELLOW, HOOVER INSTITUTION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Mr. TIFFERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Commission.

I am very pleased to be invited to speak at today's hearing. I have long followed the Commission and the work that it does.

In recent years, technology has supercharged the dark art of agitprop—that combination of political agitation and propaganda Russian revolutionaries gave to the world more than a century ago.

While attention now centers on how its devotees have exploited social media to sow mistrust, intimidate, provoke and polarize, for China such chicanery is but one facet of a much more ambitious program.

The Chinese Communist Party is leveraging its economic muscle and the technologies of the information age to pursue a distinctively Leninist path to soft power. It depicts public opinion as a battlefield upon which a highly disciplined political struggle must be waged and won.

Inspired by Mao's call to use the past to serve the present and to make foreigners serve China, the CCP is furthermore quietly exporting its domestic censorship regime abroad, enlisting observers everywhere, often without their knowledge or consent in an alarming effort to sanitize the historical record and globalize its own competing narratives.

Its timing is impeccable. Economic and technological disruptions to our information ecosystem are eroding our capacity to detect, much less combat, this information war.

Motivated by thrift and efficiency, many universities, in particular, are shedding old volumes and outsourcing growing parts of their collections to online providers, trusting these providers to provide full replacement value and to guarantee the integrity of their products. Much can go wrong with that bargain, particularly since many of these providers are market-driven ventures subject to commercial pressures. They may adhere to different values, priorities, and standards of stewardship than traditional libraries and may be accountable to different constituencies.

Furthermore, things can go spectacularly wrong when they confront the demands of a mercurial censorship regime and the authoritarian government behind it, as with the PRC.

The providers who control those servers can silently alter our knowledge base without ever leaving their back offices, making one nondestructive edit after another, each propagating nearly instantaneously around the world.

For censors, the possibilities are mouthwatering. Digital databases offer them dynamic fine-grained mastery over memory and identity. And in the case of China, they are capitalizing on this to engineer a pliable version of the past that can be tuned algorithmically to always serve the Party's present.

As George Orwell once wrote, "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past." Consider, for instance, the dominant academic law journals published in the Mao-era PRC, which document the emergence of China's post-1949 legal system and the often savage debates that seized it. The online editions of these journals have been redacted in ways that distort the historical record but are largely invisible to the end user. The consequences are unsettling. The more faithful foreign scholars are to this adulterated source base and the sanitized reality it projects, the more they may be unwittingly serving China by promoting the agendas of the censors.

Now what does this look like? I offer to you the first slide, an example of the table of contents from a leading Chinese law journal from the 1950s. On the left is the original scan of the original paper edition issued in the 1950s. To the right is the actual table of contents presented online.

Now I've put red arrows to indicate the articles that are simply invisible. They're gone. They're missing from the online edition. This represents 30 of the journal's 72 pages, including the first 9

lead articles. They've vanished, been erased from the historical record.

Using information technology, the Chinese government and its censors are sculpting this historical record in highly targeted ways, trimming away the inconvenient bits to produce exactly the shape they want.

The stakes today are real. Consider, for example, Yang Zhaolong, one of the most brilliant legal minds of his generation. In the early Mao era, Yang and quite a few like him forcefully promoted a raft of concepts connected to the rule of law. But they paid a terrible price for making those arguments. Yang himself was branded a counterrevolutionary and spent 12 years in prison.

This presents very awkward background history for a regime that has, since, not only written the rule of law into its constitution, but also presents its policy of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics as a culmination of an originalist vision.

And in these graphs I present to you the red lines indicate the historical record that has been erased from every issue of these journals over a period of several years. They have essentially eliminated the footprint of these individuals and the arguments they made in support of the rule of law historically in China.

Now it's worth noting that the computational techniques I employed to analyze this censorship are doubled-edged weapons. They can be repurposed to automate and enhance the work of the censors.

Simply by manipulating any of the parameters in my dataset, a censor can fabricate bespoke versions of the historical record, each exquisitely tuned to the requirements of the present. It's a very short hop, indeed, from the technologies that already dynamically filter our newsfeeds to the nightmare of Orwell's memory hole.

This is an old-fashioned version of how they used to do that. This is a photo of the procession of Mao's funeral. One includes the Gang of Four. And then shortly after their arrest, the photo was reissued with the Gang of Four erased.

To be clear, the censorship is directed foremost at controlling China's sense of itself. It is tendentiously distorting memory and identity. It is prejudicing China's possible futures and violating the trust of the people who use these sources.

But insofar as we foreign observers are increasingly reliant on these censored sources and online providers, it's also enlisting us in the campaign to promote the Party's agenda. This is disinformation on a grand scale turbocharged by emerging technologies. And I expect that we will see much more of it around the world in coming years.

Thank you very much.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tiffert appears in the appendix.]

Chairman RUBIO. Dr. Richardson.

STATEMENT OF SOPHIE RICHARDSON, Ph.D., CHINA DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Ms. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Chairman Rubio and Senator King. Many thanks for the timely hearing and for your principled and persistent leadership on human rights issues in China. We also

want to thank you for your strong statement on International Human Rights Day and another excellent report.

In January 2017, Chinese President Xi Jinping gave a keynote speech at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Although world leaders regularly give addresses there, few other occasions have seen the UN impose restrictions such as those instituted on this occasion.

Before Xi's arrival, UN officials closed parking lots and meeting rooms, and sent home early many of the offices, approximately 3,000 staff. The UN also barred nongovernmental organizations from attending the speech.

Just a few months later, in April, security officials at the UN headquarters, New York City, ejected from the premises Dolkun Isa, an ethnic Uyghur rights activist originally from China. Isa, who was accredited as an NGO participant, was attending a forum on indigenous issues when UN security confronted him and ordered him out of the building. No explanation was provided and Human Rights Watch queries to the UN spokesperson's office elicited no substantive information about the incident.

The UN plays a crucial role in holding governments to their international human rights obligations and helping to protect human rights. And as a result, the UN's handling of these situations points to larger concerns about the treatment and protection of human rights activists critical of China as they seek to participate in UN efforts, and about China's attempts to thwart UN scrutiny of its own human rights record.

Those mechanisms are intended to protect the rights of all, and they are now among the only means of redress for independent activists from the mainland. Taken individually, many of China's actions against NGOs might be viewed as an annoyance or an irritant. But taken together, they amount to what appears to be a systematic attempt to subvert the ability of the UN human rights system to confront abuses in China and beyond.

As a UN member state and party to several human rights treaties, China engages with the UN human rights system. It is a member of the Human Rights Council, participates in reviews of its treaty compliance and universal periodic review process, and allows some, but not all, UN independent human rights experts to visit China.

But even as it engages with those institutions, China has worked consistently and often aggressively to silence criticism of its human rights record before UN bodies, and has taken actions aimed at weakening some of the central mechanisms available there, which in turn poses a longer-term challenge to the integrity of the UN human rights system as a whole.

In a September 2017 report, we detailed how Chinese officials have harassed activists, primarily those from China, by photographing and filming them on UN premises in violation of UN rules, and by restricting their travel to Geneva.

Members of this commission need no reminding about the case of Cao Shunli.

China has also used its membership on the UN's Economic and Social Council's NGO Committee to block NGOs critical of China

from being granted UN accreditation, and it has sought to blacklist accredited activists.

Behind the scenes, Chinese diplomats, in violation of UN rules, have contacted UN staff and experts on treaty bodies and special procedures, including behavior that has, at times, amounted to harassment and intimidation.

China has also repeatedly sought to block or weaken UN resolutions on civil society, human rights defenders, and peaceful protests, including when they do not directly concern policy and practice in China.

It has pushed back against efforts to strengthen some of the key mechanisms, notably, country-specific resolutions on grave situations like North Korea and Syria, and efforts to strengthen treaty-body reviews.

During UN peacekeeping budget consultations earlier this year, China sought to slash funding for UN human rights officers who play a vital role in monitoring alleged human rights abuses in some of the world's most dangerous places.

Since our report was released, Chinese officials in two separate UN sessions called out UN experts for raising individual cases from China, suggesting that doing so was a violation of their mandates.

In September, China tied Saudi Arabia for the most mentions in an important UN report on reprisals by governments against activists who engage with UN human rights mechanisms.

Recent Chinese efforts to spearhead UN initiatives such as presidential statements and resolutions at the Human Rights Council foreshadow a more active prominent role for China and give rise to concern about ways it will exercise its power.

As a powerful P5 member of the UN Security Council, China has a particular weight on the Human Rights Council. It has played an influential role together with other members of self-proclaimed like-minded groups, many of whom have poor human rights records.

China is not alone in its obstructionist tactics, but it should not become a powerful role model for others that hope to hobble UN human rights bodies.

Many of China's actions are directly at cross purposes with UN efforts to improve its human rights system. And while UN officials have at times pushed back against improper Chinese pressure or steadfastly ignored it, in other instances they have capitulated or soft pedaled their concerns, presumably to avoid confrontation with China.

Unless the UN and concerned governments can halt China's encroachments, the UN's ability to help protect rights around the globe is at risk, not only in Geneva.

We have several recommendations for you, but I just want to highlight three very quickly.

The first is that China's next review under the universal periodic review process is in 2018. We urge that the commission consider a letter to the Chinese Ambassador here spelling out the ways in which independent Chinese civil society should be able to participate in that process.

In the context of U.S. support to UN Secretary Guterres's Reform Plan, we urge the UN to adopt the recommendations about China

articulated in our report. But we also urge that Guterres himself call out China when it violates UN rules and urge Guterres to ensure that the UN is calling out China for its human rights violations.

There are 24 different UN agencies in the mainland. Very few of them are willing to speak about human rights at all.

Last, but not least, I think there is ample scope for this commission, for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to conduct vigorous research and public discussions into Chinese influence in the U.S., whether that is about the integrity of electoral systems, whether it is about academic freedom, whether it is about domestic media practices. I think all of these issues require further scrutiny.

Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you all for being here.

Let me turn to Senator King. You were here early—if you have some questions.

Senator KING. I am assuming we can sort of go back and forth.

Chairman RUBIO. Yes. It's not very crowded right now.

Senator KING. I'm not sure who to address this to. I have a technical question.

We all know that the Chinese censor the internet. How do they do it physically? Do they own the pipes? How does that censorship occur? Are they the owners of the distribution system?

Dr. Tiffert.

Mr. TIFFERT. There are a handful of gateways that sit between the lines that enter China and the domestic Chinese internet. It is through those gateways that enter the country in various places, interconnects where they have very large server farms that are performing real-time analysis of the data going back and forth, filtering it, checking by protocols, by content. They lead the world in this.

Senator KING. But they are also censoring their own people.

Mr. TIFFERT. They are. That's right. And they do that at the level——

Senator KING. Through the control of the pipes?

Mr. TIFFERT. Yes. They do that at the level of the individual ISPs, the providers domestically who will filter data. And they also do that through the firms that deliver services who are required to adhere and enforce Party policy.

For example, news sites, entertainment sites are required to implement any Party directives that come down to erase coverage of a particular topic or not to cover it at all.

Senator KING. Well, I cannot help but note that tomorrow our FCC is about to make a disastrous decision to essentially turn the control of the internet over to the owners of the pipes. It seems to me that makes it easier to censor and to control because—and what if a Chinese company took a significant ownership share in one of our large telecommunication companies?

This decision that is being made tomorrow is terrible on a lot of levels. But it seems to me it makes it easier to censor the internet because you are getting the control away from the public, the FCC, the people—to the people who own the connections.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I will just add two quick points.

I agree entirely with what Professor Tiffert has just said. Whenever we have done research on this topic, we have also found that companies, both Chinese and foreign ones, have voluntarily censored topics that they thought were problematic before they had even actually been asked to do so by any Chinese government authority.

So we have long urged that companies should have to answer questions about whether they were actually asked to do these things, whether they were forced to comply with some real or perceived Chinese law, or whether they had done it voluntarily.

Flip it around, and if you look at some of the Chinese companies that are now conducting business overseas, for example, Alipay. It is now offering services in Japan, not yet here, I think.

But I think there are real questions to be asked about what happens when you click that "accept the terms of service" box because we know that Alipay and Alibaba aggregate data and hand it over to Chinese security forces. And if you are a person standing outside China, but you are using Alibaba services, does that mean that your information, too, is going back to the Ministry of Public Security?

Senator KING. It worries me that—one of the reasons it's so hard to censor our internet is it is so chaotic and decentralized. And by flipping that over, which we think is likely to happen tomorrow in one of the most wrongheaded decisions I have ever encountered, we are making it easier to have those kinds of controls.

Any evidence of Chinese direct intervention or intention to intervene directly in our electoral process, à la the Russians?

Everybody is shaking your heads. The record won't show head shakes.

[Laughter.]

Mr. TIFFERT. I am not sure that there is any evidence that demonstrates that yet. Though it is something that people should be paying attention to.

Senator KING. Aren't there some recent incidents in Australia of direct intervention in the electoral process?

Mr. TIFFERT. Yes. And there's great concern in New Zealand as well.

Senator KING. Is there any reason to think it could not happen here?

Mr. TIFFERT. It's certainly a possibility.

Chairman RUBIO. Could I interject?

This is an important point. So when you answer, no, I think what you are answering—and if I am wrong, please correct me. I don't want anybody to say that I am leading you in your answer because I want this to be—I want your views on this to be accurately reflected.

The question was, how does it compare to Russian interference? And I think the answer you've given is there is no evidence that they're posting stuff on Twitter or Facebook for purposes of dividing the American people against each other.

On the other hand, Senator King asked about Australia. What we have seen around the world—and you will correct me if I am wrong—is an effort to identify and nurture office holders, think

tanks, opinion makers, journalists, academia, and encourage them both to enter in public service and even to rise.

We've seen open source reports, for example, of outreach to local and state elected officials, perhaps anticipating that one day they will hold federal office. Or we've seen reports of implied threats to cut off access to the Chinese market for companies based in certain states unless those states' authorities are cooperative or make statements friendly towards their cause.

So I would argue that is influence. I think it's different. I think it's softer, more subtle, more long term, but nevertheless, it reflects what we saw in Australia where a member of Parliament resigned after there were accusations made that not only had he tipped off a Chinese national of some alleged intelligence operation being conducted against him, but that he perhaps allegedly had received cash from a wealthy Chinese national, which he had used to pay off personal debts.

Again, no evidence that that has occurred in the United States. But that level of influence—trying to play in the politics and nurture a view and individuals who hold views friendly to the narrative they're trying to put out. That you have seen evidence of.

Mr. TIFFERT. Absolutely. And I think in one sense what distinguishes the Chinese efforts to wield influence in the United States is that they are spending a great deal more money to do that. They have commercial advantages, so they're able through, for example, Confucius Institutes, to promote a particular view of China and to close out discussion of certain topics on campus. They are able to donate money to particular causes.

Much of this is legal activity. They are able simply to wield influence because they can write checks. That is something that we didn't face as a country during the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Their pockets were not as deep.

China is not necessarily appealing to hearts and minds. It's appealing to wallets.

Ms. KALATHIL. I would also add that in our recent report on sharp power, we explicitly looked at Chinese influence in young democracies and vulnerable democracies and found that through a number of different avenues, including through investment in the media, including through massive investment in people-to-people exchanges, the Chinese government is really promoting a certain narrative. And that narrative, of course, then enables it to achieve its own interests in various ways.

So while it may be hard to point a finger at specific election-related issues or specific political meddling at the moment, there's no doubt that there are massive and extreme efforts to exert influence through a number of things that otherwise would have been seen as soft power, perhaps through a different lens.

But when you consider that the aim of buying up media outlets, particularly Chinese language media outlets, but not limited to that, is really to shape a narrative and to constrain discourse about China in particular, rather than to open the discourse and to enable many different critical perspectives. And that also is a very long-term and pernicious form of influence.

Senator KING. This is really a clash of values in terms of open communication, free speech, and those kinds of things. It seems to me that there is a continuum.

We have people-to-people programs. We bring students from other parts of the world here. We have various information about our country that has a—to use your term—a positive narrative. But at some point, the question is, where does puffery stop and—I don't know what the right word might be, but some kind of subversion begin?

Let me ask a question. I've had recent information—a large number of Chinese students in America, making great contributions to our schools. I've known many of them, in graduate schools, undergraduate schools. Is there any evidence that the Chinese government is recruiting some of those students as agents—either gathering intelligence or otherwise malign activities in our country?

Again, I see a lot of nods. You've got to speak up.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Yes, but I could take that and answer the last one a little bit.

We have been doing some research for a couple of years on threats to academic freedom from the Chinese government outside China. And a piece of that has involved looking at the realities for students and scholars who are originally from the mainland on campuses in the U.S., Australia, and elsewhere.

Certainly—it is not a new pathology that Chinese government officials want to know what those students and scholars are saying in classrooms. One does not have to have a perfect year-on-year dataset to say that it has gotten worse, but it's certainly a sufficiently real dynamic for people.

For example, we have a graduate student who told us about something that he discussed in a closed seminar at a university here. Two days later, his parents got visited by the Ministry of Public Security in China asking why their kid had brought up these touchy topics that were embarrassing to China in a classroom in the U.S. So I think that surveillance is real.

If I could just back up slightly to the previous question—I think there are a lot worse uses of resources than to try to replicate Professor Anne-Marie Brady's work with respect to the U.S. I think part of what's most extraordinary—this is the research that was done on New Zealand—about that paper is that it was all open source material, and nobody came out looking good.

And it really did, I think, Senator King, get to the issue that you are talking about. That it's fine to have relationships, but at what point does that cross the line into trying to achieve a certain kind of political outcome?

And I think that would not be hard to do. I think it's essential. You could certainly look at which members of Congress, for example, had their travel sponsored by different Chinese government entities, many of which, of course, don't necessarily have names that immediately convey that they are government entities.

But I think it was reported by The Globe and Mail last week that the current Canadian Ambassador, who is fairly new in Beijing, had received the largest amount of money of any sitting MP in the previous government from Chinese government agencies to underwrite travel to China.

I think these are hard questions that need to get asked about who is participating and what—and under what auspices. Forgive me if this is a slightly uncomfortable thing to say, but I think there are questions also to be asked about why there was a representative of the Republican National Committee at a meeting of political parties sponsored by the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing last week.

I don't know. I have asked if somebody from the Democratic National Committee was there too, but there were representatives of the democratic political parties from all over the world. Again, not necessarily illegal, but I think it goes to legitimizing a political party that's anything but democratic.

Senator KING. Well, as Senator Rubio and I both know, serving on the Intelligence Committee, it's a short jump from supporting a candidate to trying to take out a candidate you don't like. And that is—of course, we have seen the Russians doing that around the world.

And the question is—we are not there yet. Is that a likelihood? Is that a possibility? I think that is a reasonable concern.

What's going on here—I call it geopolitical jujitsu, where you are using your opponent's strengths as also their weaknesses. Our strength is our openness, our free society, our First Amendment, our protected expression. And that's being used by our adversaries to undermine our system. It's kind of an ironic turn, using our own values against us.

That's what's concerning to me because any country in the world could look at what the Russians did here in 2016, and say, wow, that worked. It was pretty cheap. And here's another avenue for influence.

Chairman RUBIO. Just to drill down on that point. There are different ways of influencing. There is the more frontal traditional approach that we have seen evidence of in 2016. And that involves the posting and the driving of certain information in order to exploit the existing divisions within a society in and of itself.

And I have opined publicly that that's my view. That more than anything else, this was designed to create chaos within the political order in the United States and sow instability and ensure that the next president, whoever that was, inherited societal conflict and a political mess.

What you are describing is different. It is changing the environment in which that debate is occurring, particularly as it relates to a particular country's worldview.

And you all keep going back—and I think Dr. Tiffert, you talked about that in your opening statement. You described efforts to project a "China model" globally as an alternative to the liberal order which, for decades—since the end of World War II—was anchored by the United States.

So I would ask all of you, if you can concisely, what is the narrative? What is this model? What is the message that they are pushing? In essence, what do they want us to accept as conventional wisdom about China and its role in the world and international norms in 10, 15, 20 years? What are they asking people to buy into?

Ms. KALATHIL. Well, I would briefly say that in this instance, it is instructive to look at the rhetoric surrounding China's Belt and Road Initiative. The key phrase that is attached to that initiative is "community of common destiny."

I think it's notable that you talked about how authoritarian regimes are trying to use democracies' openness against them. They're also subverting the rhetoric of democracy. They are explicitly using terms like "openness" and "community" and terms that seem to imply a sort of networked model of the world that is not unlike that pushed by the liberal international order over the last many years.

The difference is that there is also, underlying all of this, a quite explicit message of noninterference and sovereignty. And that, of course, in China's case, fits directly into its worldview and how it would like other countries to treat it. And you see this also in its approach to internet governance. You see it in many of its different initiatives.

But it's notable that—I would say China is not trying to say, be just like us. It is actually trying to use this very inclusive language to paint a picture that seems like a reasonable alternative to the liberal international order, one that appeals to small states, to countries that feel vulnerable, to those that feel that they might be safer or have more of a say in a multipolar world.

It is this sort of approach that I think is actually new and more sophisticated and one that we actually have to think deeply about how to address.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Good morning, Mr. Smith.

It's hard to improve on that.

I will just give you one quick example. Last weekend the Chinese ministry for foreign affairs hosted a south-south cooperation on human rights gathering.

The concluding document from that contained quite a bit of language that at first blush sounds sort of like UN language about human rights. It actually mentioned "universality," somewhat disingenuously, but at least the word was there.

But it, like some of the Chinese government's other efforts, for example, in UN resolutions, again, sort of pushed the idea of sovereignty or national conditions, or with Chinese, or swap in another country's name, characteristics. Right? That always creates the opportunity for a state to opt out of or not have to yield to international standards.

I think China is really seeking active partnership and global support for that idea, and at the same time, pointing to the U.S., and pointing to Brexit, and saying I think much more clearly and aggressively that electoral democracy doesn't work. It's a failure and that their system is superior.

Mr. TIFFERT. I would add to those excellent points also that China is doing a very good job of keeping its so-called "alternative China model" to the liberal international order deliberately vague so that different regimes can read into it what they choose to, simply as an alternative to what they might regard as having to respond to demands from western donors and western governments about things like human rights, transparency, reducing corruption, environmental protection, and other factors.

For them it's a direct appeal to the elites that might be governing these already authoritarian or marginally democratic regimes. It works in their self-interest.

To the extent that China is willing to bankroll economic development without the conditions attached that organizations like the World Bank might attach, then it's win-win for China and for the elites who govern these other countries.

Chairman RUBIO. And Congressman Smith has joined us. I am going to recognize him in a moment while he gets organized because I want to finish these thoughts and this is really at the core of what this hearing is about.

A couple of things you have touched on. The first thing, you said it earlier in response to Senator King, is we—let me back up and say that we often are guilty of ascribing our domestic political attributes to foreign actors, right? Or foreign nations, other nations. We think to ourselves, this is what it means here, so this is what it must mean over there.

So when the United States, whether it's McDonald's or Coca Cola, or Apple, or Facebook, go to another country, they are not there at the behest of the United States Government. They aren't even under the control of the United States Government.

And oftentimes in academia, perhaps more often than not in many cases, they certainly are not under our control. In fact, many times they go abroad and are critical of their own country and vice versa, which is their right in a free society.

One of the things we have heard from you today is that when you look at the toolbox, the influence toolbox that the Chinese Communist Party has in its government, all of these things are part of that toolbox. In essence, when you are engaging in commercial relationships with a Chinese company, potentially a large one, in essence you are not dealing with an independent multinational actor. You are dealing with an entity that grew large and is capable of operating because they are willing to be cooperative and in some cases, act as an agent on behalf of whatever it is that is being asked of them.

And I think that poses threats up and down, from technological transfers, the embedding of information and technology that could ultimately wind up here in this country because somebody is using that equipment for our telecom networks, all the way to the information about what you buy on a certain website, or the credit card and biographical information. And that's a real important distinction.

The other point that you talked about was kind of buying into the noninterference argument. Here is where we have a couple of examples of how this effort is bearing fruit in different parts of the world.

We had a vote a couple—I guess back in the summer of this year in which Greece blocked a European Union statement at the United Nations criticizing China's human rights record. There was a lot of, "What is that all about?"

And then you looked further and you realized that China's COSCO Shipping—the owner of the world's fourth largest container fleet—had just taken a 51 percent stake in Greece's largest port last year.

So, again, you tie those two things together, maybe they're related and maybe they're not. I believe that they are, but you start to see where the political angle of a large Chinese company—the economic angle, the economic power of a large Chinese conglomerate is able to wield influence over a smaller economy and how it votes at international forums.

Then we have the issue of access to this large market that people are dying for. So, again, this is where you come into this absurd situation where the World Internet Conference is held in China, meant to promote China's vision of cyber sovereignty, which all of you have talked about. Basically, the governments all over the world should have the right to control what appears on the internet in their countries.

The most confusing part of it all is that Apple CEO Tim Cook stood up at that conference and he celebrated China's vision of an open internet. He delivered the keynote speech on the opening day of that gathering. He wasn't there alone, by the way. He was joined by some of the other attendees from Google and Cisco.

But the most ironic part about it is that in a written response to questions to our colleagues, Senator Leahy and Senator Cruz, back in June, or earlier this year—I don't remember the month, maybe it was back in November. Apple admitted that it had removed 674 VPN apps from its app store in China. These are tools that allow users, of course, to circumvent censorship by routing traffic through other countries. They said they were complying with local law. Skype was also removed from Apple's China store, as was reported by the New York Times.

So, again, here's an example of a company, in my view, so desperate to have access to the Chinese marketplace that they are willing to follow the laws of that country even if those laws run counter to what the company's own standards are supposed to be.

And a good example for the United States and for our people, how some of these individuals who like to come here and lecture us about free speech and human rights, and domestic problems, then go abroad and are fully cooperative on some grotesque violation of human rights because there is a lot of money to be made, and they don't want to offend their host country.

Then the last thing I would point to before I turn it over to Congressman Smith is the story that we all are now aware of, of a University of Maryland valedictorian who experienced, after her commencement speech where she praised free speech in the U.S. as a breath of fresh air, she experienced this sort of onslaught of online attacks.

In your written testimony, Ms. Kalathil, you wrote how the Chinese government fabricates about 448 million social media comments a year to inject certain narratives. But that is, unfortunately, not an isolated case.

We have a number of others, and these are just a handful. An overseas university—this month, for example—this article is dated, but at some point a lecturer from Monash University in Australia was suspended after a Chinese student complained on Weibo of a classroom quiz that appeared to insult Chinese officials.

In 2010, the University of Calgary announced that China's education ministry had removed it from the list of accredited overseas

institutions. That came weeks after that University had awarded an honorary degree to the Dalai Lama.

We saw how the University of California at San Diego prompted the local chapter of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association to threaten "tough measures to resolutely resist the school's unreasonable behavior" because they had planned a speech by the Dalai Lama.

So you start to see these are all evidence of the different tools in that toolbox, which leads me to my final question for all of you, and that is—well, my final question here because Congressman Smith has questions for you, too.

Obviously, you are outspoken on this cause. All of you have done a significant amount of work. We have read some of the efforts that have been used to intimidate or otherwise.

Are any of you willing to share any experiences you have had based on your work, whether it is efforts to discredit it, whether it is efforts to influence people against your opinion, or beyond? What have you experienced, if anything? Maybe you've experienced nothing. But what have you experienced as a result of the work you have done on this topic, and in particular, appearing at this hearing today?

We often find that our witnesses in these hearings, especially if they are Chinese and have family back home, face consequences for that. But in your particular cases, have you ever faced anything that made you feel as if it was a result of your work on this topic?

Mr. TIFFERT. Personally, I have not to date within the United States. In China working on the topics that I work on, I come under significant pressure, and the informants and people that I speak to also do. I think that goes with the territory and it is well recognized among people who work on modern China and contemporary issues in China.

I have to say that in the classroom I've not experienced any negative activity or any of the personal outrage that we have seen at other universities, say in Australia, to my teaching. I have been spared that.

I have found Chinese students to be extremely thoughtful and even open-minded about issues that are passionately felt at home.

But there definitely is the danger, and early career academics are highly conscious of this, that there is always the possibility that a minority might express unhappiness or outrage at something that is taught because it is different than the way they have been taught it. And that produces unwelcome controversy.

And for faculty, because of the decline of tenure, faculty become risk averse. They do not want to cause controversy because they are also concerned that their universities may not adequately support them in the event that the Chinese Students and Scholars Association, or even a smaller group of students, take issue with something that happens in the classroom.

So there is a self-censorship, a chilling of speech that occurs as well.

Ms. KALATHIL. Yes. I also have not personally experienced that, in particular. But I would concur with Dr. Tiffert's views. As I have taught classes, I think some of the Chinese students in my class are surprisingly willing to be open about their criticisms.

And it would be, indeed, sad if pressure on them by the embassy, which I gather is starting to happen with more regularity, would constrain them from expressing their views in what is meant to be a free and open setting. That is a trend that I think would be quite terrible.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I can only recall maybe one or two conversations over the years, the dozen years I have been at Human Rights Watch, in which Chinese government officials said anything that might have risen to the level of being threatening. But certainly not anything that made me change my job.

For us, the enormous challenge is about how we are able to do research and correctly calculating what threats to people who talk to us actually are. That has gotten more challenging over the years, ensuring the safety of the people that we have interviewed in the same way that—you were talking about the safety or what happens to people who have come and testified before you.

Chairman RUBIO. The Cochairman.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY; COCHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

Cochairman SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First I want to thank you, again, for calling this hearing.

I apologize for being late. We had a Foreign Affairs Committee meeting with Rex Tillerson behind closed doors that went on for almost two hours.

I chaired it for a while and asked him some questions regarding China. It was about the redesign effort to reform the State Department's organization and operations, but it was also about issues and the interface between reorganization and foreign policy goals.

Again, but I want to thank you, Chairman Rubio, because this is a really important hearing and part of a whole series of hearings you've put together. So I want to thank you for your tremendous leadership.

I did thank Rex Tillerson for putting China on Tier 3 on the TIP Report. It is an egregious violator of trafficking. I wrote the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

If ever there was a country that should have been on it every year, especially in recent years, it is China. The previous administration refused to do it. I held hearings to try to hold them to account for it.

There was an automatic downgrade at one point, but that wasn't because of merit, but because they were on the watch list for too long. But this was made—and when you read the narrative, it couldn't be more clear that sex trafficking, labor trafficking are exploding in China.

They are missing some 62 million females, girls, because of sex-selection abortion which is further driving the demand. And nobody likes to talk about that because it's not politically correct, but I will talk about it every day of the week. It is a heinous crime against gender, against women, and it now has another consequence and that is that it drives sex trafficking.

I did have a hearing yesterday in my subcommittee on human rights—Africa, Global Health, and Global Human Rights, a really

important hearing, in my opinion. We had two women—and I would appreciate your thoughts on this—who escaped from North Korea into China. They were trafficked. They made it back into North Korea and told how they were beaten, how they were just terribly mistreated, which violates the Refugee Convention, as you know so well, that China has ratified.

There have been no consequences over the years for this gross violation of refoulement—I asked Rex Tillerson about that, and he is taking that back. I said, we need to raise it.

We know that our Nikki Haley does raise this issue, but it needs to be a full court press in my humble opinion, to say China violates the refugee convention with impunity and it's time to end that. There needs to be a sanction. There needs to be a, certainly, lifting of voices.

The Periodic Review comes up for China in November, I believe it is, of next year. But the NGO submissions begin in the spring. This commission ought to have a very strong statement—and it will, I am sure, under Mr. Rubio's leadership—to really make it clear that it's about time China was held to account. They have had the long reach of the Chinese dictatorship at the UN for far too long. They get a slap on the wrist, if that, by the Human Rights Council. And, obviously, China runs interference time and time again.

So if you could maybe speak to the issue of these women, mostly, men too, but women who are trafficked, but then they are sent back in violation of that refugee convention.

One other thing that was raised by Rex Tillerson, maybe I did say this, but I don't think I did. He talked about consolidating the dialogues—we have about two dozen dialogues with China at mid-level—to four major ones. When he outlined what they were, missing was a human rights dialogue. So I asked him about it, and he said that human rights would be integrated into the other dialogues.

And I said, I appreciate that. We need a whole-of-government approach. But frankly, this ought to be on its own. Would you have a fifth dialogue at the highest levels on human rights so they know without any ambiguity the United States believes in the fundamental freedoms and human rights that we have enshrined in our Bill of Rights, and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and so on and so forth?

You might want to speak to that because I think that's important.

On the World Internet Conference, I want to associate myself with the Chairman's remarks. In 2006, I began a series of hearings. The first one was with Yahoo, Microsoft, Cisco, and Google. And I had all of the top people raise their hands and we swore them in, and for eight hours asked questions as to why they were enabling the censorship, why they were part of the apparatus of repression, and their answers were awful.

And then when you see Tim Cook talking about, as Mr. Rubio said, the common future, it's an ominous continuing down that path of allowing this repression, this surveillance, this misuse of the internet by the Chinese dictatorship to repress its own people. You might want to speak to that.

And then, finally, on the Confucius Institutes, we have had a number of hearings on this commission as well as in my subcommittee on the whole issue of the Confucius Institutes as a way—we call it academic malware—where there is an all-out attempt to, again, influence academia, students, Chinese students, but also American students, in a way that would give the Party line—and we have them in New Jersey. They're all over the country.

Your thoughts on these Confucius Institutes. We all know that heads of colleges and universities are ever in search of more money and more programming. And if it comes free of charge, certainly it's an engraved invitation to say, come to our college or university. To me, it's an invitation for disinformation.

So your thoughts on that.

[The prepared statement of Representative Smith appears in the appendix.]

Ms. KALATHIL. Thank you, Cochairman Smith.

I thought I would address one piece of what you brought up and also what Chairman Rubio addressed in the role of U.S. and other tech companies going to China and being complicit in practices that enable surveillance and censorship.

One really fascinating development that's really just been in the last few years is the inversion of this typical frame. You've been holding hearings on this since 2006. We have all been very familiar with the behavior of some of the U.S. tech companies when they go to environments like China. There have been efforts to try to produce more transparency and accountability around their efforts there.

What we are seeing now, however, is, due to the emergence of these Chinese internet and technology giants, including new artificial intelligence companies, that essential framework has been reversed. So that these companies, which have essentially been incubated in an environment where they must do what the Party says or they will not profit, are now large enough to begin investing overseas.

So it's no longer simply about U.S. companies going to China and, perhaps, being complicit in censorship and surveillance. It's about what these really large Chinese internet companies are going to do as they expand globally, and will they bring aspects of the Chinese internet censorship and surveillance system with them.

There are initial indications from research done by Citizen Lab, which was mentioned earlier, that at least with one test run, it was found that accounts that had been registered to WeChat, which is the largest private chat messaging platform, as well as mobile commerce, and a host of other things—when devices registered within China were brought outside China, they still were not able to access certain sites.

And in addition, certain key words had been censored within chats without people knowing about it. There was no transparency about this censorship. The researchers were only able to determine this because they ran very specific tests on it.

I think this is just the beginning of what could be a larger trend and one that we also should keep our eye on, in addition to trying

to ensure that U.S. companies are not complicit in human rights violations.

Thank you.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I'll try to tackle North Korea and the dialogues.

Obviously, Human Rights Watch regularly calls out the Chinese government for violating the Refugee Convention, particularly with respect to North Koreans. I don't think China cares at all what we say about that.

In a way, honestly, our bigger concern at the moment, particularly as, again, one doesn't have the perfect dataset from one year to the next, but we have tracked more cases of forced returns in the past year than in previous years.

One of the upsides of technology is that it has given us much greater visibility into some of the cases of North Koreans in China who desperately need assistance.

And at a time when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees can't/won't exercise its protection mandate—it has the mandate to go out and help those people. And it is effectively prevented from doing that. It is a much larger problem in Geneva than what is happening in the office in Beijing.

But I think unless and until that problem for UNHCR can be fixed, the U.S. and other like-minded governments should come together to think about how to actually provide some protection to those people.

Often when we raise that issue, actually ironically, one of the answers we get back is that nobody wants to encourage the further trafficking of North Koreans through China, as if assisting these people would somehow increase traffickers' business.

In our standards, that's a second-order problem. You save people first. You keep them from being sent back to North Korea. That's the first-line obligation. And we need to see more governments willing to actually put a plan in place for that.

On the topic of dialogues—we have talked about this a lot over the years. I think it's very important that the larger context be considered. We've always been of the view that the Chinese government does not really take other governments' interventions about human rights seriously unless it is coming from the absolute top all the way down through a system.

I think in that sense, the President's trip was extremely problematic because he essentially showed up and said he thought that President Xi was doing a great job, which is going to make it extremely difficult for anybody further down in the system to effectively weigh in and not have their Chinese counterpart say, but your boss just said that our boss was doing a great job.

The dialogues have been very problematic over the years because they are so contained and so siloed. I don't want it to fall off the agenda, obviously.

The current framework of having only these four dialogues, in which we're told, but given no evidence that human rights issues have been raised or raised in an effective manner, I think, is extremely problematic.

We have some ideas about what could be done instead. The—for example, shadow dialogues with independent civil society. This is

something we recommended to the EU for years, as its dialogues have gotten boxed in. But I'd be happy to share some of our thinking about how to build this in in the current environment and make it relevant for human rights defenders from China.

Cochairman SMITH. If you could and make it a part of the record as well as convey to us.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Of course. Happy to.

Cochairman SMITH. You know, on your point before I go into the final, yesterday the testimony couldn't have been clearer.

We had Bob King as our former Special Envoy testify. And he noted that the numbers had dropped from 3,000 making their way into South Korea to 1,500. That was in 2011.

Last year and this year, it's even a slower pace. So Xi Jinping is actually further tightening the grip on those who successfully make it into South Korea, which is, again, a very, very horrible trend.

Mr. TIFFERT. I'd like to address the question of the World Internet Conference and Confucius Institutes.

It seems to me that the United States is accustomed to dealing with or engaging with the world from a position of strength, not just comprehensive economic and military strength, but also a deep confidence of the enduring appeal of our values around the world. And that, particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall, has produced a certain amount of complacency. We thought, game over.

I don't think China ended the game. And I believe that we are now playing different games, and the United States needs to get its game back on.

Our confidence about our strengths, our power, our soft power, not just our hard power, has produced a language of responsible stakeholding, convergence. They'll become more like us if we simply open our institutions to them and show them how fabulous we are.

China is the first country, I think, this century to challenge that from a position of comprehensive strength. They are large. They are increasingly rich, increasingly militarily powerful.

So we need to dig deep. Our way, I think, of dealing with a lot of these issues is to harden our own institutions, some of which are developing cracks—academia, the media, other institutions.

China is exploiting those cracks, and it is doing it in ways that, well frankly, are brilliant. But our best response to these exploitations is to strengthen ourselves, to raise consciousness, to get our game back on, and to reinvest in ourselves.

It is a question of values. Senator King raised this earlier. To the extent that we regard our engagement with them as purely transactional and disengage values from it, then Tim Cook can talk optimistically about a day when China may suddenly open up without having to confront the problem of the China of today.

Cochairman SMITH. And you know that is a continuation of Obama's strategy. I remember the Washington Post when the previous—not Xi Jinping—the previous premier was here, the Washington Post did a scathing editorial when he was asked about why Liu Xiaobo was not brought up; here you are with a Nobel Peace Prize winner, with the jailer sitting at a joint press conference, and President Obama said maybe they have a different system and

they have a different culture, which I found to be very, very disturbing.

Chinese people understand human rights. Look at Taiwan, how it has flourished and people who have suffered so much for their human rights by going to the Laogai and suffering repression.

And the Post did a scathing editorial about that. So it's a continuation of egregiously flawed policy and mindset, in my opinion, which is why, again, we need to get human rights front and center, which is what this commission tries so valiantly to do under Mr. Rubio.

Thank you.

Chairman RUBIO. Senator King.

Senator KING. I promise, Senator Rubio, a brief question, but it is a big one.

There has been sort of an assumption through this hearing that the intentions of China are malign. I don't know whether that's true or not. Here is my question, and perhaps you can take it for the record and give me a little one-pager. What does China want? What are their goals? Is it military hegemony in the region? Is it simply a more powerful economy, richer people?

There was a story this morning that they may buy a stake in Aramco in a private offering from Saudi Arabia. Is it access to resources? I don't think we really have time to delve into this, but I think it's an important question; what are their motivations behind all of this? Is it malign or is it simply self-interest defined as wanting to be the strongest economy in the world or certainly in the region? Do they have territorial ambitions?

I think it's a question worth asking. I would appreciate your thoughts for the record.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman RUBIO. Thank you. I guess before we wrap up I did want to give you all a chance to talk more in depth about the United Front Work Department, one of these agencies that seems to be the umbrella group for influence. Because it seems like there is always—look, information has always been valuable, right? And our approach to information has largely been to open up our political process here in the United States, to allow the world to watch it, and through our example, hopefully influence them and say, see, you can have a pluralistic society where people disagree about things, they argue about it, and in the end you can still govern.

And we have been less than perfect, but in the process people have seen our imperfections. We have debated some substantial societal issues over the last 50 years, some of which seem to bring us to the point of collapse. Yet, nevertheless, our nation persevered.

What has changed is the democratization of information, in essence, making it so diffuse, so easy to access from so many different sources on an hourly basis; it is a great positive. It has given us the opportunity for people all over the world to be quickly informed. It's also created the opportunity for people to be misinformed, and for information to be denied to them, or only certain information to be provided.

So today, we continue with the existing model. And I am not arguing that we should change it. But you turn on the television and

there is a station for every—no matter what your opinion is, there is a station out there prepared to confirm it.

We have in the case of China, an entity or a government that has realized that this is a powerful weapon and that our openness creates a space to provide information over a substantial period of time in a slow and patient way to change the environment.

It seems like this agency or department is at the tip of that spear. If you could just talk a little bit about who they are, what they do—but, ultimately, it seems to be that it is from there where all of these efforts emanate, whether it is sending people, influencing people, providing information—who are they? What's their purview? What do they do?

Mr. TIFFERT. I think the story has to begin with the history of the Chinese Communist Party as a hunted revolutionary movement over a century ago. They developed very keen strategies, helped by the Soviet Union, in fact, to cultivate allies among influential people in society to neutralize opposition to the point where they would get the upper hand.

The United Front Work Department is the tip of that spear pointed out of China in order to cultivate friends and allies, influence people abroad. Basically, it's their Dale Carnegie strategy of making friends and influencing people, and doing it underground in a way that is nonobvious.

It is a one-stop shop that coordinates national strategy for that purpose. The United Front Work Department is engaged with influencing foreign media, influencing foreign academia. There have been many people who carry, sort of, closet portfolios in the United Front Work Department who are working in Chinese news agencies.

Their agenda, basically, is to reshape the international environment in order to make it friendlier to China and advance China's policy goals without seeming to act specifically as the state.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I will just add to that. I think many people outside China circles, frankly, plenty of people in them too, are not terribly aware of entities like the United Front Work Department.

Look, to American or English-speaking political ears, it is a funny-sounding term. It almost sounds like a public works department, as if they took care of the pipes or something like that.

I think there is not much recognition that the United Front Work Department and other things like the ″peoples friendship associations,″ or patriotic fraternal associations are really at the end of the day wholly owned subsidiaries of either the Chinese government or the Party. They are not independent entities.

There is also the reality that as the United Front Work Department approaches political parties or institutions around the world, it's not as if those institutions can then reach out to the alternatives to the United Front Work Department or to a different Chinese political party.

They do not get options because those aren't permitted to exist. There is no rule that says just because you have met with the United Front Work Department, you now need to meet with somebody who is critical of the Chinese government. So I think as a vehicle, it is very powerful and there aren't other obvious voices to go out and to listen to.

Ms. KALATHIL. Just to add briefly to that, I think those are all very good points. I would also say that it is not only about the United Front Work Department, as we have probably demonstrated in our testimony today.

To go back to a concept that I referred to in my testimony, I think—this was in respect to China's system of Internet control, that it really could be applied to its system of external influence, also. The idea is to have redundancy built into every layer.

So it is not just about what the United Front Work Department is doing. It's also about joint ventures that are entered into with companies, particularly Hollywood or technology, other companies that shape the environment so that China can achieve its strategic interests. If we're not aware of that entire environment, I think we are also probably missing part of the puzzle.

Chairman RUBIO. I think you touched on just a couple little random notes I want to leave on the record so that they are clear that they were discussed today.

The first is, as you just mentioned, entertainment and Hollywood. There have been multiple reports of—I alluded to it earlier—movie scripts, entertainment that was altered for purposes of ensuring that that product had access to the Chinese market.

I've always got to chuckle, the reports that I read about the Chinese Communist Party were big fans of season one of House of Cards. They were not big fans of season two for different reasons.

Again, I think the average person doesn't realize there are actually movies that are changed here in America because they want to make sure the script is something that doesn't cause it to not have access to this growing important market.

So just the strategic use of its consumer power in and of itself could require everything from altering scripts to figuring out what they will require companies to put in these devices in case intelligence officials ever decide to turn it on.

So when you see an American telecom carrier, or provider, or whatever—has signed a deal with a company that has the sponsorship and support of the Chinese Communist Party, you should assume that as part of that, you are inheriting something on this device that could potentially—whether it's on the network or on your device—make you individually vulnerable to surveillance at some point in the future.

Again, something that we need to understand because our companies don't do that. You cannot go to them and say you must put stuff on your phone that allows us to listen to anybody we want anywhere we want when we tell you to. We have legal processes if that is even ever done.

The second is I want to quote from a report—if it is not already, it may be redundant, but I want this full report to be included in the record without objection. It's a December 2017—this month, from the National Endowment for Democracy about Latin America, an area that I spent a lot of time working on in the Foreign Relations Committee.

[The full report can be found at https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf]

Chairman RUBIO. And I quote from it saying, "Beijing strategy clearly targets Latin American elites, prominent regional leaders from multiple fields, including politicians, academics, journalists, former diplomats, current government officials, students, among others are subtly—that is the key word—subtly being enticed by the Chinese government through personal interaction with the ultimate purpose of gaining their support for China. As a result, many of these renowned and influential people have already become de facto ambassadors of the Chinese cause." And I would add de facto unwitting ambassadors. I don't think they know that they are targeted for this effort.

To some extent, all countries try to do that. They try to convince you in one direction or another, but this is an orchestrated effort in a part of the world.

It goes on to read, "the people-to-people engagement, money is key. Free-of-charge trainings, exchange programs, scholarships in China have proven to be effective tools to engage Latin America's regional elites, an idea that was supported in 2016, by Xi Jinping, when he announced he would train 10,000 Latin Americans by 2020.

"The media and academia are two areas of priority attention for these efforts. Consequently, China is determined to promote cooperation of different kinds between media companies, universities, and think tanks both at the regional and country level. Education and culture are increasingly important in Beijing's toolkit as well."

And it almost leads me to feel like 50 years from now when historians write about this period of time, they're going to write that policymakers here were lulled to sleep on a bunch of matters while this massive effort was happening right underneath us. And we didn't even realize it.

It is almost the analogy of the frog in the boiling pot. And if you throw it in the boiling pot, it jumps right out. But if you let it sit there as the water heats up, it never even notices it is being boiled to death.

Another matter of interest that I want to make sure is noted is a Wall Street Journal article that reported Facebook is trying everything to reenter China, including developing censorship tools. I want the record to reflect that in an open hearing of the Intelligence Committee, I asked specifically about it, and the answer from the general counsel was—and I believe it was the general counsel—we comply with the laws of the countries that we operate in.

So what that basically means is that Facebook, at least according to the information provided to us, was prepared to install censorship filters in order to get access to China and their market. And it's an important thing to remember as we move forward.

I have a final question, and this really relates to the first point I was making. Just as they undertake those efforts in Latin America, I think there is evidence that those efforts exist here as well.

And you all alluded to, a moment ago, about a representative of the RNC that was in China recently at a conference, some political parties. We know there is extensive travel, members of Congress and staff.

I guess my question is, what can we better do to educate staffers on lobbyists or people-to-people exchange opportunities that are sponsored by, whether it is the United Front or its affiliated organizations or anyone?

In essence, is it not incumbent upon—we are not going to prevent these trips—but is it not incumbent upon us to inform members of our staff and members of the House and Senate that when you go on these trips, here's why they do the trips, these are the kinds of things they do—by the way, they are not the only country in the world that does it. The Cuban government does this as well.

But shouldn't there be something in place, a protocol in place where when you accept one of these trips from certain countries, you are made aware of the fact that these trips are not done the way Belgium does them, or somebody else does them? There is a rationale behind it, and that is to win you over to their narrative and to what they want policy to be.

Ms. RICHARDSON. I am happy to give you the affirmative, yes. There should be a protocol that does that.

I agree that those trips should not be prevented, but people need to understand why they have been asked and how the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese government will construe their accepting those offers.

Mr. TIFFERT. Absolutely. I would absolutely agree with that. There needs to be a tremendous amount of consciousness raising on the depth and sophistication of the influence operations that are going on in the United States.

Beyond that, people who are invited to go should understand that they've probably been invited for very specific reasons, because of who they are, what their views might be, or where they sit in an organizational food chain in order to exercise that kind of influence that the Chinese government is hoping to have over them and potentially policymaking.

Ms. KALATHIL. I would just add, to step back and put it in the context of democracies in general, and particularly the emerging and vulnerable democracies that you referred to, in Latin America and elsewhere—there is a distinct lack of knowledge about China in many of these places, particularly in the countries of Latin America, in the countries that make up China's 16+1 initiative in Central and Eastern Europe.

There is not that deep breadth of knowledge which is demonstrated by my fellow panelists here that can speak to these issues. So a lot of the time these people go into these exchanges with no context.

So what I would like to see happen generally in democracies is for there to be more context and learning around this, more transparency. And perhaps some kind of, as you get through that, voluntary agreement to certain norms around whether it's exchanges or academic publishing or anything, but something that allows people to feel that they are not in it alone.

So if you are a university that is being approached by a Chinese counterpart and asked to compromise your academic freedom, you can reach out to others and understand that there's a common understanding of what is and isn't beneficial to democracies in that regard.

That, I think, would be a good first step.

Chairman RUBIO. A final quick question; we are running out of time.

Are any of you aware of efforts, whether it's in academia or entertainment or anywhere for universities, for example, to come together and confront this threat to academic freedom, establish some level of standards about what they will and will not do in the universities, a collective effort to all affirmatively say, we don't care if you are going to deny us trips and access to the marketplace or even to students or to exchanges or the ability to have a campus on the mainland; we are not going to allow you to pressure and undermine academic freedom?

Are you aware of any such efforts to create some sort of joint effort, whether it is in the entertainment industry or in academia?

Mr. TIFFERT. I think they are incipient. I hope that they continue and develop further. There are conversations that are beginning to happen along those lines, as consciousness about the breadth of influence operations is getting raised.

We are nowhere near where we need to be, though.

Ms. RICHARDSON. Just by chance, I happened to spend Sunday morning with a group of China-focused academics. And this issue dominated our conversation, and I think it is fair to say there is enormous interest in having some sort of set of principles or a code of conduct.

But I think there is also a recognition of how difficult it would be to get institutions to sign on to that for fears about loss of funding or the desires of fundraisers or administrators versus the interests of faculty. But I think there is momentum to capitalize on.

Ms. KALATHIL. And I have seen that incipient movement which I think is terrific. I do think that that is more likely to occur in institutions that already privilege certain types of democratic expression, such as university campuses or media organizations. In areas such as technology or entertainment companies, where the motive is to access China's market and there is no underlying value base there, I think that is much more difficult.

Chairman RUBIO. Well, then I'll close with these three very quick comments as a matter of personal privilege in this regard.

The first is I hope my colleagues if they ever read this record, if it's ever reported what we are about to talk about here, what we have talked about today, realize that big companies, corporations, business interests, their obligation is to their shareholders, and/or owners to make money.

China is an enormous marketplace, so they are driven by that. They are prepared to advocate for virtually anything that allows them access to that marketplace. Just because they have an English name and happen to be headquartered in the United States does not make them advocates of the principles that we need to balance as public policymakers.

And we should be wary of that because oftentimes some of the strongest advocates for tyrannical regimes are the businesses and individuals that are making good money in that market due to their relationship with the current tyrannical government, and their basic argument is, don't mess it up. We've got a good thing going. We have lived through that with Russian sanctions, to some

extent a little bit with Venezuela sanctions, and clearly when it comes to China, over and over again.

Which leads me to my second point, and that is kind of a sense of frustration about this issue. The reaction to today's hearing will be one of two things: (1) largely ignored; or (2) the argument that we are paranoid, that this is paranoia. This is ridiculous. This is not at all what is happening.

And, of course, that furthers the narrative that the Chinese Communist Party is always putting out, that we are just a small, poor country trying to just catch up to where you are. We are not any threat to you.

But the first part of ignoring really bothers me because there will be a lot of coverage today about whatever the President or someone else tweeted this morning. Meanwhile, this extraordinary geopolitical issue that has incredible historical importance in a way that people will write and talk about for a century is happening right underneath us, and very few people realize it. And those that do would rather talk about whatever the outrage of the day is. I don't even know. I haven't gone online to see what it is.

And the last point—and I always make this in these hearings because I want to be abundantly clear. This is not about the Chinese people. It is not even about China who we hope will emerge—it does not have to have our system of government, per se.

There are all sorts of different ways to structure democracies. No one is more hopeful than we are, and me personally, to have a China that is a partner in the international community.

Can you imagine what a China that respects human rights and the liberty and the dignity of all people, their own and others abroad, could do in partnership with the United States? The issues we could confront and solve.

It would be an extraordinary development in human events if that were to occur. So this is in no way hostility towards the people.

On the contrary I have respect for the achievements and the importance of Chinese culture and Chinese history, a nation that for almost all of human history has been the most important or one of the most important in the world, has made extraordinary contributions in the arts and the sciences, and learning, and academia.

I want that potential and that history to be unleashed to change the world in a positive way. Unfortunately that is not what we see. What we see here on the behalf of the government and the Communist Party is an effort to roll back the advances towards human freedom that have been made over the last hundred years, or particularly since the end of the Second World War.

And that's also important to communicate, because sometimes when we talk about China, it means in the minds of some that we are talking about the Chinese. And we are not. We are fully cognizant that in a nation that large with that many people, there are hundreds of millions of people who aspire to a different way forward, but simply do not have the way to advocate for it or are punished for advocating for it, sometimes even with their lives. So that is always important to leave clear on the record.

So with that, the record for this hearing, as I said at the outset, is going to remain open for 48 hours so additional documents and information can be provided.

I thank all of you for being here, for your patience. It's been a long hearing, but I think an important one.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m. the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

PREPARED STATEMENTS

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHANTHI KALATHIL

DECEMBER 13, 2017

Chairman Rubio, Chairman Smith, distinguished Members of the Commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this important topic today. It is an honor to testify before this Commission alongside such expert colleagues.

Today I will address China's outwardly directed efforts to shape expression and communication globally, and the negative implications this poses for democratic expression and discourse, even within democracies. In particular, I will discuss how the Chinese government directs and harnesses private sector activity in the Internet and technology space, as well its efforts to reshape global narratives through a range of influence activities that have typically been categorized as "soft power."

To begin with, consider a metaphor sometimes invoked to explain China's domestic approach to the Internet, namely, that of the "walled garden." The garden is not devoid of color: indeed, certain flowers are cultivated and allowed to bloom profusely, while those plants deemed weeds are yanked out by the root. In this way is the space pruned to fit the preferences of the master gardener.

While metaphors are always imperfect, this one does convey important ideas about how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) approaches China's information, media and technology sector, ideas that also have relevance for its international approach. Three key aspects of its domestic "walled garden" approach are relevant here.

First, the CCP has put the technology it needs into place. The so-called "Great Firewall" is dependent on an elaborately layered system of control, beginning with the technological and communications "pipes" themselves and extending to what is an increasingly advanced system of not just censorship but comprehensive surveillance. A recent BBC story noted that there are 170 million CCTV cameras in place, many enhanced with facial recognition technology, and an estimated 400 million new cameras coming online in the next three years.[i] The Wall Street Journal reported last week about a man detained for a stray wisecrack made on a private chat on the WeChat messaging platform; government authorities can now identify citizens on the street through facial recognition, monitor all online behavior, and identify potential (or even future) dissenters and "troublemakers."[ii] For an example of this dystopian model taken to an extreme, look no further than the Chinese province of Xinjiang, where the government tests tools like iris recognition, and constant surveillance is a fact of daily life.[iii]

Second, it is not simply about the technology. Beijing relies on individuals, corporations and institutions for not just censorship and self-censorship but the proactive shaping of norms, narratives and attitudes. For instance, the Chinese government places the responsibility on private sector companies as gatekeepers to monitor and circumscribe online activity, as well as on individual users to self-censor. In addition, as a recent study noted, the government fabricates roughly 448 million social media comments a year, injecting certain narrative elements into online chatter to distract or cheerlead in order to stop the spread of information that may spur collective action.[iv] One of the study's authors has described the overall approach as the three Fs: fear that induces self-censorship, friction that makes true information hard to find, and flooding of the information space with distraction or chaos.[v]

Underpinning all of this activity is the third aspect: Beijing's core economic bargain, which consists of preferential treatment and implicit prosperity for those who respect Beijing's so-called "red lines," and punishment for those who do not. Chinese Internet and technology companies, who are probing frontiers in mobile commerce, artificial intelligence, and a host of other areas, have with direct or indirect help from the state evolved into formidable behemoths with global ambitions. While their relationship with the Party is not always straightforward, they understand that staying on the CCP's good side (which includes reliable policing of communication and development of technologies that will benefit the state) will deliver tangible benefits, while getting crosswise might entail severe corporate and even personal penalties.

The entire combination of these aspects is a complex system that curtails freedom, suppresses dissent, and manages public opinion, reliant not on any individual element but on a principle of redundancy built into every layer. Why is this domestic approach relevant to our topic today? Because it is becoming evident that the CCP

under Xi Jinping is intent on encompassing the rest of the world within its "walled garden."

This is not to say that China now attempts to control every facet of communication, or that it wants to impose its exact model of authoritarian governance everywhere. But it is increasingly true that Beijing's technology ambitions, combined with its attempts to determine on a global scale the parameters of "acceptable" speech and opinion with respect to China, pose clear threats to freedom of expression and democratic discourse outside its borders. Indeed, in 2015 Freedom House's China Media Bulletin estimated that since Xi came to power, the Chinese government had negatively affected freedom of expression outside China over 40 times in 17 different countries and institutions; that number has only increased since then.[vi]

While Beijing obviously cannot muffle dissent and accountability across different countries in the same way it does at home, it does seek to apply its principal "gardening" techniques within the international sphere. First, while it cannot control the infrastructure and technology of the global Internet, Chinese companies are actively building out key telecommunications infrastructure in the developing world, particularly on the African continent, which has raised questions about security and the dissemination of censorship capabilities.[vii] In addition, if China succeeds in dominating the emerging global market for data-enabled objects (the "Internet of Things"), as it seeks to do through its Internet Plus initiative, its approach to embedded surveillance may become the norm in places with weak individual privacy protection.

Moreover, the same Chinese tech giants whose platforms enable the domestic surveillance described in last week's Wall Street Journal story are taking stakes in the firms that provide key global apps and services. Just last Friday, Tencent (the parent company of WeChat) and Spotify announced that they had taken minority stakes in each other, following earlier Tencent acquisitions of minority stakes in Snap (the parent company of Snapchat) and Tesla.[viii] Artificial intelligence companies such as iFlyTek pioneer the surveillance aims of the government through the use of big data and weak Chinese privacy standards, while also entering into deals with industry leaders such as Volkswagen and others.[ix] It is reasonable to ask whether Chinese firms with global ambitions plan to follow the same explicit and/or unspoken Party dictates with respect to data-gathering, surveillance and policing of "sensitive" communication abroad as they do at home.

These technological advances dovetail with the government's efforts to shape the Internet and other future technologies through key Internet governance bodies and discussions. The Chinese government's initially derided attempt to direct this conversation, the recently concluded World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, succeeded this year in attracting high-level Silicon Valley participation. Importantly, it established the optic that the world's leading technology firms have blessed China's approach to the Internet.

Second, as is the case within China's borders, it is never only about the technology. The Chinese government has spent tens of billions of dollars to shape norms, narratives and attitudes in other countries, relying on the cultivation of relationships with individuals, educational and cultural institutions, and centers of policy influence. Such efforts are not properly conceived of through the familiar concept of "soft power," which is generally described as reliant on attraction and persuasion, but rather as "sharp power," which is principally about distraction and manipulation, as argued in a new study released last week by the National Endowment for Democracy examining authoritarian influence in young democracies.[x]

One of the clearest examples of this "sharp power" is the expanding network of Confucius Institutes, controversial due to their lack of transparency, disregard of key tenets of academic freedom, and ability to function as an arm of the Chinese state within academic campuses.[xi] Concerns have been raised about self-censorship on topics related to China in the realm of academic and other publishing worldwide, posing fundamental questions about freedom of expression in democracies.[xii] In addition, China's heavily funded people-to-people diplomacy exposes visitors from Africa and Latin America, as well as the young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe within the context of China's "16+1" initiative, to a carefully managed narrative about China's "win-win" approach, finding fertile ground in countries which lack the expertise to examine these messages and arguments critically.[xiii]

Finally, underlying all of this is the unavoidable aspect of China's carrot-and-stick contract with the rest of the world. China's efforts to enclose the rest of the world within its walled garden would not have been feasible had not governments, universities, publishers, Hollywood and technology companies all been roped into this implicit and sometimes explicit bargain.[xiv] Apple CEO Tim Cook, one of the most high-level Silicon Valley participants at the recent Wuzhen conference, essentially under-

scored this point through his celebration of China's digital vision, paired with the company's earlier yanking of anti-censorship VPNs from its app store in China.[xv]

Some might say that the Chinese government is simply pursuing its strategic and economic interests, like any other country. Even if views differ on this, it nonetheless behooves the international community to acknowledge that the values that inform Beijing's interests in this realm pose serious concerns for democratic norms and institutions around the world. It is therefore both timely and necessary for democratic governments and civil society to be proactive in asserting why norms such as transparency, accountability, and pluralism are critical to their interests, and to come up with fresh approaches to build resilience. First steps might include:

- Continuing to shine a light on the ways in which the Chinese government's media and technology initiatives, as well as "sharp power" influence activities, are impinging on democratic institutions outside China's borders. While this is now beginning to happen in some places, notably Australia and New Zealand, it is still the case that most democratic societies are not yet connecting all the dots, much less formulating nuanced responses that hew to core values.
- Facilitating democratic learning, particularly within countries without deep capacity to analyze China. Because the Chinese government constrains critical discourse about issues it considers sensitive, and these constraints are built into the fabric of its engagement with both state and non-state actors in young democracies in particular, genuine critical discourse about China may be lacking.
- Seeking transparency in agreements with Chinese state-affiliated institutions, such as Confucius Institutes and others. Particularly (but not only) when public funds in democracies are involved, civil society should insist on its right to understand whether fundamental issues such as freedom of expression are placed at risk.
- Collectively establishing mutually agreed informal norms and "good practice" within respective industries (such as publishing, academia, media, film, and technology) so that individual actors are not as susceptible as they are now to being picked off and pressured by the Chinese government or its surrogates. For instance, academic publishers in democratic settings might collectively agree to resist censoring materials that pertain to China, and so on. In the absence of such norms defending key democratic values, China will continue to set standards based on the CCP's restrictive understanding of these values.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to answering your questions.

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[xiii] Christopher Walker, Jessica Ludwig, Juan Pablo Cardenal, Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Meseznikov, and Gabriela Pleschova, "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence," International Forum for Democratic Studies, National Endowment for Democracy, December 2017. https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Sharp-Power-Rising-Authoritarian-Influence-Full-Report.pdf

[xiv] Shanthi Kalathil, "Beyond the Great Firewall: How China Became a Global Information Power," Center for International Media Assistance, March 2017. https://www.cima.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CIMA-Beyond-the-Great-Firewall__150ppi-for-web.pdf

[xv] Simon Denyer, "Apple CEO backs China's vision of an 'open' Internet as censorship reaches new heights," The Washington Post, December 4, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/12/04/apple-ceo-backs-chinas-vision-of-an-open-internet-as-censorship-reaches-new-heights/?utm__term=.51bcf207a356

HEARING OF THE CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

"The Long Arm of China: Exporting Authoritarianism With Chinese Characteristics"

Wednesday, December 13, 2017
Russell Senate Office Building, Room 301

Statement of Glenn Tiffert
Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Commission, I am honored to have been invited to participate in today's hearing. I have long followed the Commission, and the important work that it does.

In my remarks today, I wish to address China's efforts to cultivate and project soft power through a potent mixture of carrots and sticks. I will focus my attention on American higher education, that is the domain of universities, scholars, and the research they consume and produce.

As a point of departure, let me stipulate the obvious: China is a Leninist, one-party state, and its ruling Communist Party brooks no meaningful ideological or political opposition. That Party dominates Chinese society by hegemonizing the allocation of resources, controlling information, and vigorously suppressing dissent. But one must recognize that it has also earned a substantial reserve of performance legitimacy grounded in the meteoric rise in wealth and power that China has lately enjoyed on its watch.

On the strength of that record, President Xi Jinping has in recent months indicated a new confidence about projecting an as yet vaguely-defined "China model" globally, as an alternative to the liberal order anchored for decades by the United States. For some time, China has been working diligently to revise existing international institutions, and to create new ones of its own design in order to facilitate that vision and to exercise influence commensurate with its new ambitions.

Shaping public opinion is a key facet of that plan. Indeed, authoritative Chinese sources regularly depict public opinion as a "battlefield" 舆论战场 upon which a highly disciplined political struggle must be waged and won. The domestic implications of this military metaphor are well known to this Commission, and include various forms of state repression and censorship, but the point I would like to stress today is that they do not stop at the border. China is also intent on actively shaping the narrative about it abroad, and to varying degrees it has adapted methods honed at home to that task.

Since its origins as a hunted, underground revolutionary organization almost a century ago, the CCP has repeatedly proven adept at the art of turning unfavorable circumstances to its advantage by strategically coopting influential partners, nurturing relationships of dependency, and isolating and neutralizing potential opposition. It plays a long game, and like the Soviet Union and former socialist governments of Eastern Europe, it coordinates its influence operations across a variety of fronts, many of them seemingly innocent and on the surface unconnected to national strategy. However, recent disclosures in Australia and New Zealand should dispel any doubts or complacency on these points, and must serve as a wakeup call for the United States.

We can hardly expect China to reliably honor values on the world stage that it does not respect at home, and to the extent that it does endorse principles such as academic freedom with its international partners, it often attaches very different meanings to them. Moreover, judging from the historical record, we would do well to understand these disarming endorsements as provisional and transactional rather than as bedrock commitments. They survive purely at the pleasure of the Communist Party, which by its own admission is always in command, and they are therefore always subject to revision.

Consider, for example, the 2014 annual meeting of the European Association for Chinese Studies in Portugal, which received partial funding from the Hanban, the PRC state organ charged with promoting Chinese language and culture abroad, which also oversees Confucius Institutes worldwide, about which I will say more in a moment. Vice-Minister Xu Lin, Director-General of the Hanban, attended this conference, and directed her subordinates to confiscate copies of the conference program at the venue upon discovering that the program acknowledged the co-sponsorship of the conference by a Taiwan-based foundation. After a brief standoff, she agreed to return the program for distribution to the conference's participants, but only after her staff had torn four offending pages out of each of the confiscated copies.[1]

To the best of my knowledge, Chinese authorities have not carried such brazen bullying to the United States, but that is arguably a tactical decision that reflects the relative power dynamics between the two countries than a deeper commitment to tolerance. Instead, towards the United States, China has for the time being adopted a savvy strategy of winning friends and influencing people that aims where we are in fact most vulnerable: not at our hearts or even our minds, but at our wallets.

Lenin once said that "capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them," and the Chinese Communist Party has taken this lesson to heart. At a time when the United States is reconsidering its role in the world, and many domestic American institutions, such as the media and our universities, are retrenching, China is seizing the opportunity to step into the breach, flush with resources. It is asymmetrically exploiting the comparative openness of our society,

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[1] Roger Greatrex, "Report: The Deletion of Pages From EACS Conference Materials in Braga (July 2014)." (2014): accessed December 10, 2017, http://chinesestudies.eu/?p=584.

cultivating local allies, and extracting value in a bid to surpass us. As strategy, this is shrewd and deserves our respect.

With that in mind, let me draw your attention to four ways in which the long-arm of Chinese authoritarianism is reshaping American academia:

1) Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes are far and away the best known vehicle by which the Chinese government is carving out a space in American education. By the Hanban's own figures, there are currently 110 Confucius Institutes, and 501 Confucius Classrooms in the United States. The former are predominantly embedded in American colleges and universities, while the latter are hosted by American primary and secondary schools. Their mandate is to promote cultural exchange, primarily through instruction in Chinese language and culture.

Contracts differ from campus to campus, and are usually not public, which is of concern, but generally speaking expenses are shared by the Chinese and American partners, while instructors and teaching materials are selected in China by the Hanban.

Therein lies the problem. By outsourcing academic services to the Hanban, participating schools have traded away some of their autonomy to an organ of the Chinese state that is obliged, in the final analysis, to promote the ideological program and policy goals of the Chinese Communist Party. We must acknowledge that openly.

This arrangement is unprecedented in American education, and intensely controversial.[2] How it plays out in practice hinges greatly on local factors, such as the terms of the contract, the prestige, bargaining power and institutional robustness of host schools, and the degree of oversight those schools can muster. Nevertheless, instances of academic censorship and problematic employment practices have been documented at some Confucius Institutes, prompting a small number of schools to terminate their participation. And a general unease about entrusting a government that practices aggressive censorship and tightly restricts academic inquiry at home with the education or, as critics might say, indoctrination of Americans rightly hangs like a shadow over the program. At the very least, these circumstances invite misfortune.

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[2] Christopher R. Hughes, "Confucius Institutes and the University: Distinguishing the Political Mission From the Cultural," *Issues & Studies* 50, no. 4 (2014), 45-83; Rachelle Petersen, "Outsourced to China: Confucius Institutes and Soft Power in American Higher Education." (2017): accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.nas.org/images/documents/confucius_institutes/ NAS_confuciusInstitutes.pdf; Marshall Sahlins, *Confucius Institutes: Academic Malware* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2015).

Yet, in spite of that infirmity, the number of Confucius Institutes continues to grow, and we need to ask why. Many schools depend on them to fill staffing and curriculum gaps, and to fund activities that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to provide on their own, for lack of resources. Reducing the presence of the institutes on American campuses would almost certainly set back Chinese Studies in the United States at a time when we can ill afford that as a nation. We are to an extent dependent on the services they provide -- a predicament of our own making that does not serve our long-term interests, but suits those of the Chinese government admirably.

2) International students

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), students from the PRC accounted for nearly one-third of all international students studying in American colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 academic year. By country of origin, they are far and away the largest group of international students in the United States, numbering more than 350,000, and they inject more than $12 billion into the U.S. economy.[3] On some campuses, they make up more than half of all international students, which can complicate the question of who is meant to accommodate to whom.

Chinese students in the United States are socio-economically and politically diverse and, in my experience, typically thoughtful and open to opposing viewpoints in the classroom, even on issues that are sensitive or passionately felt in China. Nevertheless, they are exposed to information and perspectives about China that are rarely found in the PRC outside of a few elite institutions, and for some those encounters can be unsettling or even upsetting. A minority have responded with defiant patriotism in defense of national honor.

In rare instances, conflict has erupted on campus, and then spilled over into China, carried by the Internet. A particularly heated episode erupted at MIT in 2006 over a Japanese woodblock print depicting the gruesome execution of Chinese prisoners of war during the 1895 Sino-Japanese War. In the ensuing fracas, MIT faculty were threatened, and police were called in.[4] Likewise, in 2017, after consulting with the local Chinese consulate, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association at UC San Diego demanded that the university rescind its invitation to the Dalai Lama to serve as a commencement speaker. Appropriating the language of equity and inclusion lately favored by other campus activists, the group insisted that the invitation "contravened the spirit of respect, tolerance, equality, and earnestness—the ethos upon which the university is built," and it promised unspecified "further measures to firmly resist the university's unreasonable behavior" if the invitation stood. The university's Shanghai alumni group added that the Chinese community at the school would feel "extremely offended and

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[3] Institute of International Education, "Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange." (2017): accessed December 20, 2017, https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors.

[4] Peter C. Perdue, "Reflections on the "Visualizing Cultures" Incident." *MIT Faculty Newsletter* 28(5) (2006): accessed December 10, 2017, http://web.mit.edu/fnl/volume/185/perdue.html.

disrespected" if the speech went forward, as it ultimately did. In apparent retaliation, months later, the China Scholarship Council, a PRC state organ that funds overseas study for Chinese students, announced that it would no longer process applications for Chinese students to attend UC San Diego.

Such episodes prey on the aversion of American universities to negative publicity, particularly on issues associated with identity politics, and can damage the university's brand among a coveted community of international donors and applicants, many of whom are prepared to pay full tuition, and are therefore a potentially significant source of income. Accordingly, tenured faculty have felt pressure to apologize for offending Chinese sensibilities, and some non-tenured faculty, whose employment is already precarious, shy away from provocative classroom discussions in order to avoid career-damaging controversy, fearful that their own universities may not adequately support them.

Furthermore, it is widely believed that the Chinese government cultivates informants among its citizens studying abroad, and Chinese scholars and students are certainly aware that heterodox or impolitic views expressed on American campuses can reach home with traumatic consequences. In 2008, an undergraduate from the PRC was vilified in China, and her family was threatened after she struck an independent stance at Duke University on human rights in Tibet. In 2017, a graduating senior from the PRC at the University of Maryland was hounded into an apology by compatriots after her commencement address describing free speech in the United States as a breath of fresh air went viral in China, and aroused online outrage. Such incidents chill speech among Chinese students, and diminish learning outcomes for everyone.

3) Self-Censorship and Surveillance

The extent to which foreign scholars of China practice self-censorship is fiercely debated in academic circles. Many would insist that they choose their research freely, and that their students continue to work on sensitive topics. While the data on this matter is primarily anecdotal, the enduring intensity of the debate suggests that other academics feel quite certain that self-censorship occurs regularly, and professional rank is surely pertinent here. For early career scholars, who lack the security of tenure, visa denials can be disastrous, and examples of promising academics whose prospects were cut short after making a Chinese government blacklist are well-known. While few in number, their abilities to pursue field work, interface with colleagues, and publish groundbreaking research are profoundly diminished. Some disciplines, particularly in the social sciences and modern history, carry this weight more heavily than others, and certain advisors do in fact counsel their students to exercise caution so as not to jeopardize fledgling careers.

The status of one's home institution is arguably also relevant. Foreign academics from elite universities may enjoy greater leeway to work on sensitive topics in the interests of preserving larger, mutually beneficial relationships. At the same time, those relationships and the considerable sums at stake in them may also militate against their home institutions mounting principled defenses of academic freedom on behalf of individuals singled out for retaliation by

the PRC. In one way, American universities clearly are practicing self-censorship. Increasingly, they are pursuing institutional collaborations in fields that present fewer ideological obstacles, such as engineering and the sciences, and are excluding their China area specialists from the negotiations over these ventures.

Sadly, foreign publishers are also practicing self-censorship. For instance, in 2017, both Cambridge University Press (CUP) and Springer Nature admitted to withholding content at the request of Chinese censors from subscribers visiting their online sites from the PRC.[5] CUP removed more than 300 articles and book reviews from its back catalog of the venerable British academic journal, *The China Quarterly*, and was also asked to remove more than 100 articles from its catalog of the *Journal of Asian Studies*, the flagship publication of the American Association of Asian Studies (AAS). Following negative publicity, the press reversed itself and restored the missing content. By contrast, Springer Nature, a privately-held German firm that bills itself as the world's largest academic press, has held firm, arguing that the more than 1,000 titles it has censored from subscribers in the PRC amount to a small fraction of its total catalog, and are in effect the cost of doing business in China. By demonstrating the willingness of Western academic presses to compromise their integrity in exchange for market access, the PRC has set an important precedent, which it may press further in the future, and other authoritarian regimes will no doubt also seek to build on. It remains to be seen whether China's preferences will over time affect the global editorial policies of the affected journals and the manuscripts they accept for publication. Content that cannot be sold in a major market is arguably less attractive to a publisher.

Lastly, the long-arm of the Chinese state surveils foreign academics from afar. We are routinely targeted by malware, phishing schemes, and fake social media profiles designed to compromise our information security, and our Chinese informants. In many instances, our Chinese colleagues are already under surveillance, and face far more harrowing constraints. Institutional email accounts have also been penetrated and quietly reconfigured to forward all activity to mysterious addresses, and ostensibly private academic listservs are monitored by Chinese authorities. This too can exert a chilling effect on academic inquiry.

4) Manipulation of the source base

Censorship in China is not ordinarily news. The Chinese state has long manipulated domestic flows of information and the source base from which history is written. However, the emergence of new technologies and the turn towards digitization have raised these practices to a new and terrifying level of efficiency that brings to mind the dystopic visions of George Orwell.

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[5] Ellie Bothwell, "Chinese Power 'May Lead to Global Academic Censorship Crisis'." *Times Higher Education* (2017): accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/chinese-power-may-lead-global-academic-censorship-crisis.

In recent years, a number of online commercial databases have appeared in the PRC that promise to open the fruits of Chinese academic research more widely to the world. Tempted by the convenience and scale of these offerings, many foreign universities are subscribing and clearing out redundant paper volumes from their stacks.

My research establishes that leading academic journal databases in China are practicing deliberate censorship aimed at rewriting history to suit the current Party line.[6] In the past, censors altered history by striking offensive passages, tearing out pages, and seizing or destroying entire texts, all crude methods by today's standards. Now, they can tinker endlessly with the digital record to achieve their goals without ever leaving their desks, making one non-destructive edit after another, each propagating nearly instantaneously around the globe, leaving behind no discernible trace or loose ends. The same technologies that filter our newsfeeds can be used to tamper with scholarship and memory.

In short, Chinese censors are capitalizing on the conversion of our libraries from redundant, fault-tolerant repositories of tangible objects into passive links in a centralized distribution chain dominated by a small number of online providers. As the CUP and Springer episodes demonstrate, we are dependent on the good faith of these providers, and vulnerable to the political, regulatory, commercial and licensing terms that may impinge upon it. As libraries outsource growing shares of their collections to Chinese providers in particular, they are voluntarily surrendering the evidence necessary to independently monitor the performance of those providers and hold them to account.

As a strategy for co-opting foreign academics and reshaping the public opinion battlefield, this is brilliant because the more faithful foreign scholars are to their subtly censored Chinese sources, the better they may unwittingly promote the biases and agendas of the censors, and incorporate those biases and agendas into the received wisdom of their disciplines, which can influence policymaking. American academics have yet to come to terms with the full implications of this new environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Let me be clear: American academic exchanges with the PRC have been of immense benefit to both nations, and they have promoted mutual understanding in what is likely to be one of the most consequential bilateral relationships of the next century. Personal connections between students and scholars in both countries remain both warm and fruitful, and I have every hope that this will continue to be the case.

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[6] John Pomfret, "China's Odious Manipulation of History is Infecting the West." (2017): accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/08/23/chinas-odious-manipulation-of-history-is-infecting-the-west/?utm_term=.53a4274400c9.

Yet, the government of the PRC, and the Party that controls it, have strategic goals that they pursue, just as we do, and that complicates the relationship. Most academics who live and work outside of the PRC can take solace in the fact that the long arm of Chinese authoritarianism reaches them only obliquely, often as spillover from the CCP's primary concern with controlling its own people and maintaining its grip on power. Our ability to resist will remain strong if we recognize that insecurity for what it is, devise measured responses and remain vigilant.

In many instances, China is merely exploiting openings that we have given them, and that is where I believe that we should focus our attention. Deep structural shifts have made American academia more vulnerable to the long-arm of Chinese authoritarianism than it has ever been before. Declining support for higher education at every level of American government has put pressure on university budgets and forced administrators to seek revenue where they can find it. But if we tear down the ivory tower, and push higher education to be more entrepreneurial and responsive to the market, can we fault it for behaving more like a business, and for responding to the financial inducements the PRC dangles before it? Can we fault our schools for accepting the bargain Confucius Institutes offer at a time when area studies in the United States is under assault, and our own elected officials express disdain for the humanities? If we undermine graduate enrollments by raising the tax burden for American students, can we fault our universities for worrying about their brands overseas, or for entertaining the demands of foreigners who will pay full tuition?

The decline of tenure and the increasing precarity of academic employment are making many American scholars risk averse, and sowing doubt over the extent to which administrators will defend academic freedom when it may jeopardize the broader institutional stakes universities have in maintaining good relationships with the Chinese state. Similarly, the privatization of academic publishing and its centralization in the hands of a few media conglomerates is eroding the traditional resolve of even the most established presses, and evidently making complicity in Chinese censorship simply a cost of doing business.

In closing, I submit to you that one way of looking at Lenin's prediction about capitalists and their rope is that we do have control over our fate if we can simply muster the courage to seize it. China has deeper pockets than the Soviet Union ever had, and American academia is arguably less robust than it once was, which makes the challenge all the harder. But the choice to uphold our academic independence is ours alone, and as matters of national policy and national interest, I hope that you will help us make it.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, A U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA; CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

DECEMBER 13, 2017

Good morning. This is a hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. The title of this hearing is "The Long Arm of China: Exporting Authoritarianism with Chinese Characteristics."

We will have one panel testifying today. The panel will feature:

- **Shanthi Kalathil:** Director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED);
- **Glenn Tiffert, Ph.D.:** expert in modern Chinese legal history and visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution;
- **Sophie Richardson, Ph.D.:** Director of China Research at Human Rights Watch.

Thank you all for being here.

Before we move to the topic at hand, I want to take a moment to recognize Ms. Deidre Jackson on the Commission's staff. After 38 years of government work, including nearly 16 years at the Commission, this is her final hearing before retiring at the end of the year. We thank her for her faithful service and contribution to this important work.

The focus of today's hearing is timely. This is an issue that merits greater attention from U.S. policymakers. Chinese government foreign influence operations, which exist in free societies around the globe, are intended to censor critical discussion of China's history and human rights record and to intimidate critics of its repressive policies. Attempts by the Chinese government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence and control discussion of "sensitive" topics are pervasive and pose serious challenges to the United States and our like-minded allies.

The Commission convened a hearing looking at China's "long arm" in May 2016—the focus at that time was on individual stories from dissidents and rights defenders, journalists and family members of critics of the regime who shared alarming accounts of the intimidation, harassment, pressure and fear they felt as a result of their work. This was especially true for those with family still living in China. These issues persist.

Just recently, Chinese authorities reportedly detained around 30 relatives of the U.S.-based Uyghur human rights advocate Rebiya Kadeer—a frequent witness before this Commission. We'll no doubt hear similar accounts when Dr. Richardson explores some of what Human Rights Watch documented in its recent report on China's interference in United Nations human rights mechanisms.

Beyond that, we hope today to step back from individual accounts regarding China's long arm and examine the broader issue of Chinese Communist Party influence around the world. What animates their efforts? What is their ultimate aim? What sectors or institutions are most vulnerable? And what can we do about it? Given the scope of the issue, we will only begin to scratch the surface.

When examining these foreign influence operations it is important that we understand the Communist Party infrastructure that exists in support of this endeavor.

The United Front Work Department (UFWD) is one of the Party's agencies in charge of influence operations at home and abroad. Chinese President Xi Jinping elevated the UFWD's status in 2014, calling their work the "magic weapon" for the "Chinese people's great rejuvenation." The UFWD is charged with promoting a "positive" view of China abroad and exporting the purported benefits of its authoritarian model.

United Front officials and their agents, often operating under diplomatic cover as members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, develop relationships with politicians and other high-profile or up-and-coming foreign and overseas Chinese individuals to, in the words of Wilson Center Global Fellow Anne-Marie Brady, "influence, subvert, and if necessary, bypass the policies of their governments and promote the interests of the CCP globally." A key element in these "long arm" efforts has focused on information technology and Internet governance or "sovereignty," asserting national control of the Internet and social media platforms not only in recent domestic cyber legislation and development plans but also at international gatherings.

We look forward to Ms. Kalathil's testimony, which will further explore this important dimension of the Chinese government's efforts.

China has developed tools to surveil social media and mobile phone texting platforms, and to disrupt overseas websites that contain content the government deems politically sensitive. Earlier this year it was reported that "real-time" censorship of instant messaging platforms is now taking place.

Private group chats are censored without users' knowledge. As it relates to China's "long arm," the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab—a human rights and information technology research center—reported in mid-January 2017 on Chinese government censors' work to prevent Tibetans inside and outside of China from discussing the Dalai Lama's major religious teaching in India in January 2017.

The Chinese government is also clearly targeting academia. The Party deems historical analysis and interpretation that do not hew to the Party's ideological and official story as dangerous and threatening to its legitimacy. Recent reports of the censorship of international scholarly journals illustrate the Chinese government's direct requests to censor international academic content, something which Professor Tiffert will address.

Related to this, the proliferation of Confucius Institutes, and with them insidious curbs on academic freedom, are a major concern—an area which CECC Cochairman Smith has been sounding the alarm on for some time.

Chinese foreign investment and development, which is slated to reach record levels with the Belt and Road Initiative, is accompanied by a robust political agenda aimed in part at shaping new global norms on development, trade and even human rights. There is much more that has been publicly reported on in the last few months alone, and even more that we will likely never know:

- The academic whose scholarly paper provides background on the banned China Democracy Party or other politically sensitive issues refused a visa to conduct research in China;
- The Hollywood studio that shelves the film script with a storyline involving China's abuse of the Tibetan people;
- The Washington "think tank" that puts out policy papers critical of legislative initiatives that would negatively impact the Chinese government, all the while never revealing their financial ties with senior Chinese officials; or
- The American internet company willing to censor content globally in order to obtain access to the Chinese market.

There are endless scenarios. And there is a growing body of important research on the topic.

Without objection, we'll keep the hearing record open for 48 hours to submit some additional relevant materials in that regard, including the executive summary of an important report by the National Endowment for Democracy, "Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence," which outlines in part China's influence operations in young democracies including two in our own hemisphere in Latin America.

Each year, the Commission releases an Annual Report which painstakingly documents human rights and rule of law developments in China. China's Great Firewall, rights violations in ethnic minority regions, harassment of rights defenders and lawyers, suppression of free speech, onerous restrictions on civil society—these are the shameful markings of an authoritarian, one-party state.

But to the extent that the same authoritarian impulses animate the Chinese government's efforts abroad, it directly threatens our most deeply held values and our national interests. Chinese leaders are engaged in the long game and it is something that policymakers in the U.S. and like-minded allies must take seriously.

Please join me in welcoming our witnesses Ms. Shanthi Kalathil, Director of the International Forum for Democratic Studies at NED, Dr. Glenn Tiffert, a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and Dr. Sophie Richardson, China Director of Human Rights Watch.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER SMITH, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY; COCHAIRMAN, CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON CHINA

DECEMBER 13, 2017

This hearing is the second in a series looking at China's foreign influence operations and the impact on universally recognized human rights. With the Congress and U.S. public focused on Russian influence operations, Chinese efforts have received little scrutiny and are not well understood. This must change.

Attempts by the Chinese government to guide, buy, or coerce political influence, control discussion of "sensitive" topics, and export its authoritarian practices globally are widespread and pervasive.

Long-time allies Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have been rocked by scandals involving Chinese sponsored influence operations targeting politicians, businesses, and academic institutions. Australia in particular is in the midst of a national crisis and all like-minded democratic allies should be supporting their efforts

to root out those elements intended to corrupt or co-opt Australian political and academic institutions.

All countries pursue soft power initiatives to promote a "positive" global image and build good will, but the Chinese government's use of technology, coercion, pressure, and the promise of market access is unprecedented and poses clear challenges to the freedoms of democratic societies.

An example of Chinese rewards given to companies and individuals for abiding by the Chinese government's rules is the case of publisher Springer Nature, the world's largest academic book publisher. Springer Nature removed more than 1,000 articles from the websites of the "Journal of Chinese Political Science" and "International Politics" in order to comply with China's censorship directives and was later "rewarded" for its censorship by signing a lucrative strategic partnership with the Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings.

In addition to academic publishers, the Chinese government is going to school on college and universities. American institutions are being seduced by the promised infusion of much-needed wealth from China. But one always has to pay a price—play by China's rules, don't ruffle feathers and don't discuss or write about "sensitive" topics. Universities committed to academic freedom are bound to run into problems eventually.

I have held two hearings on the threat to academic freedom posed by Confucius Institutes and the creation of U.S. campuses in China. We should all be for creative research partnerships and expanding educational opportunities for U.S. students, but not at the cost of fundamental freedoms. I have asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate academic partnerships between the U.S. colleges and the Chinese government. The first report came out last Spring.

The GAO is now in the process of conducting investigations of Confucius Institutes. I have written to all U.S. colleges with Confucius Institutes and asked them to make their contracts public and available for public inspection.

Many foreign businesses in China have already faced similar dilemmas. Some, like Apple, which recently removed from its Chinese app store applications that help users bypass China's "Great Firewall." The networking site LinkedIn agreed to censor content and Facebook is promising to do the same in order to get access to the Chinese market.

Chinese operations to curtail the activities of dissidents and critics of the Communist Party are also pervasive, troubling, and must be stopped. We have heard multiple stories from U.S. citizens and foreign nationals living in the U.S. about efforts to intimidate, censor, and silence them.

The case of Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui is just the latest example of egregious behavior. High-ranking Chinese security ministry officials, in the U.S. on transit visas no less, met with Mr. Guo multiple times in order to threaten and convince him to leave the U.S.

Chinese agents have repeatedly violated U.S. sovereignty and law according to the Wall Street Journal report on the incident. These incidents and those we will discuss today are just the tip of the iceberg.

The Commission's 2017 Annual Report contains several recommendations to counter Chinese foreign influence operations—including expanding the mandate of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) to include Chinese government media organizations and think tanks, expanded Internet Freedom initiatives and efforts to counter Chinese propaganda and disinformation at the State Department. I encourage those interested to look at our recommendations.

As we start to grapple with the scale and scope of Chinese influence operations, we will be looking for new legislative ideas and I hope our witnesses today can provide recommendations for the Commission's action.

We must be clear from the outset that we support better relations with the people of China and the United States. The issues we are discussing here today are part of influence operations conducted by the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government.

President Xi Jinping, who has concentrated more power than any Chinese leader since Mao, is determined to make the world safe for authoritarianism. Beijing is intent on exporting its censorship regime, intimidating dissidents and their families, sanitizing history, and stifling critical discussion of its repressive policies.

These actions pose direct threats to deeply held core values and fundamental freedoms enjoyed by all democratic societies. We must find ways to effectively and resolutely push back. Doing so should be a critical national interest.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE RECORD

QUESTION FOR SHANTHI KALATHIL, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC STUDIES AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, FROM SENATOR DAINES

Question. Ms. Kalathil, in your testimony, you reference a study that highlights the Chinese government posting over 400 million social media comments annually in an effort to influence political narratives and advance their interests. Chinese official media organizations have also bought space in U.S. and foreign newspapers to convey Beijing's preferred narrative on various issues. How effective are these Chinese government-sponsored efforts in shaping political discourse in foreign countries?

Answer. My impression is that official media efforts, such as the "China Watch" inserts in the Washington Post and other newspapers, have not been hugely successful to date in influencing attitudes in other countries. Yet this is not the only strategy, or even the primary strategy, upon which the CCP relies to shape discourse. The Chinese government has invested truly vast resources and demonstrated serious commitment at the highest political levels to influencing the media and information space globally, focusing on what might be called the "infrastructure" of communication—not simply the pipes, but the nodes that shape and control how information flows around the world. This is accomplished through partnerships with foreign media companies; cultivating close or beneficial relationships with influential people/institutions in other countries (including academic publishers, entertainment companies, political actors and others) who have the power to proactively shape discourse in favor of Beijing or marginalize discourse that it considers troublesome; and exerting influence over the governance of communication at the ITU and other international forums.

QUESTIONS FOR SHANTHI KALATHIL, DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC STUDIES AT THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY, FROM CHAIRMAN RUBIO

Question. As Chinese researchers continue to make technological advances that enable authorities to expand their surveillance powers, rights advocates worry that artificial intelligence is being used to carry out state suppression and erode privacy protections for Chinese citizens. Chinese security officials have made use of artificial intelligence, such as facial recognition technology and drones, to surveil and police individuals, particularly in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas of China. At the Fourth World Internet Conference held in eastern China in early December, which was attended by Apple chief executive Tim Cook and Google chief executive Sundar Pichai, Chinese companies put such technology on full display. A Chinese anti-terrorism expert who spoke at a panel on terrorism at the conference described groups that speak out on behalf of Uyghur rights as terrorists, and said the Chinese government should try to push Twitter to change its terms of service to counteract such groups.

- As American companies and individuals engage with Chinese counterparts in cooperation on Internet forums and investment in artificial intelligence, what steps can the U.S. Government take to ensure that American companies adhere to the principles of free expression and avoid enabling mechanisms used by the Chinese state to repress its citizens? How can American Internet and technology companies stick to longstanding commitments to open communications while seeking to expand online forums in China?

Answer. The international community has long assumed that American technology companies will by virtue of their very provenance promote and defend principles of free expression and avoid enabling repression when operating overseas. Sadly, this has not necessarily proven true in many cases, although there are instances in which companies have proactively taken steps to provide transparency about their actions (such as Google's transparency reports that highlight when governments have asked information to be removed from searches). These assumptions, then, need to be re-examined, such that these companies are directly asked about repression-enabling practices and strongly encouraged to voluntarily adopt more rigorous principles that hew to democratic norms when operating overseas. Such an effort occurred in the aftermath of the famous Yahoo! case in 2003, in which the company provided information to the Chinese authorities that led to the jailing of pro-democracy writers Wang Xiaoning and Shi Tao. While the subsequent establishment of the Global Network Initiative and other initiatives has led to positive move-

ment in this direction, the current moment requires reinvigorated attention to these issues and a renewed broader effort to hew to democratic principles.

Question. Do you believe that a World Trade Organization dispute could be successfully used to challenge the Chinese government's discrimination against U.S. technology and media companies?

Answer. While such remedies have been proposed in the past, to date they have not achieved significant progress. It is possible that renewed attention to this angle might result in greater success but only if the companies themselves also believe that this approach is worth the time and effort.

Question. In your written testimony you mentioned the expanding network of Confucius Institutes around the world, including here in the United States, which, as you noted, are controversial at least in part because of "their lack of transparency, disregard of key tenets of academic freedom, and ability to function as an arm of the Chinese state within academic campuses." What do you view as the greatest challenge posed by Confucius Institutes? Is greater U.S. Government oversight needed of Confucius Institutes?

Answer. My view of the challenge posed by the Confucius Institutes is best summarized by a 2014 statement by the American Association of University Professors, which noted the CI role in advancing "a state agenda in the recruitment and control of academic staff, in the choice of curriculum, and in the restriction of debate." At the very least, the simple prospect of greater oversight of Confucius Institutes might compel universities to be more forthcoming about the agreements signed with such institutions. There has only been one comprehensive report about the impact of Confucius Institutes within the U.S., and its fact-finding was hampered by an unwillingness on the part of universities to discuss their relationships with Confucius Institutes. Drawing attention to these issues in a public way might open up more debate and transparency, which would allow greater scrutiny and thus assessment of the true extent of the challenge. If, as CI supporters contend, these institutions serve an essentially benign cultural function, then they should welcome this transparency.

Question. What can the U.S. Government do to overcome challenges from Chinese United Front organizations and activities that seek to co-opt U.S. interests in favor of Chinese political and economic interests?

Answer. In all democracies, a range of tools should be brought to bear for making transparent foreign government efforts that weaken democratic institutions. In this way, neither China nor any other country need be singled out, but merely held to the same standard as all others. The challenge with United Front activities is that they have been largely mischaracterized (or ignored) from the beginning and have thus escaped scrutiny.

Question. You suggested that certain industries (publishing, academia, film, technology, etc.) ought to band together to establish agreed-upon informal norms and "good practice."

- Are you aware of efforts already underway in that regard?
- What role, if any, can policymakers play in facilitating or supporting such efforts?

Answer. Within academia, some are already calling for voluntary adherence to common democratic principles in such areas as academic publishing. Such efforts should be lauded and supported, as they face resistance from institutional structures conditioned to seek resources where they can. Within the context of the private sector, the Global Network Initiative is one effort providing a framework for international technology and telecommunications companies that is rooted in international standards, while also instilling a measure of accountability (through regular independent assessments performed as a condition of membership). It came about as a direct result of Congressional inquiry into the human rights implications of technology companies operating in China. While some may say that the GNI does not go far enough, it is one example of a voluntary process that seeks to implement some adherence to widely agreed human rights principles. There are other examples from the corporate social responsibility/business and human rights communities that may also be useful for entertainment companies and other private firms grappling with these challenges. Consistent attention to these issues by Congress serves as a useful impetus for such initiatives.

QUESTIONS FOR SOPHIE RICHARDSON, DIRECTOR OF CHINA RESEARCH AT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, FROM CHAIRMAN RUBIO

Question. The United Front Work system is not just about shaping the message or mobilizing friends, but also controlling the terms of engagement for how foreigners engage China and the Chinese Communist Party.

- How can the United States better protect and educate its citizens, including students, businesses, non-profit organizations, Congressional employees, and other government staff at local, state, and national levels against Chinese influence operations that seek to shape attitudes and perceptions according to Chinese national interests?
- How can the United States regain and maintain control of shaping the terms of engagement for U.S.-China bilateral relations in light of United Front operations? What are some mechanisms and tactics the U.S. Government can employ?
- How can local governments, civil society groups, and academic institutions counter Chinese United Front Work operations at local levels?

Answer. A pressing priority for the U.S. and other democratic governments is to thoroughly assess the ways in which human rights are threatened by China's growing influence: are naturalized U.S. citizens from China being threatened in the U.S. by mainland officials? Are American universities changing their minds about commencement speakers on their campuses because those individuals are disliked by Beijing? Are local, state, or federal government agencies engaging with Chinese government officials who have been responsible for serious human rights violations in the mainland? An honest assessment would serve three purposes: (1) to provide an accurate picture of the nature and scope of national and local vulnerabilities, (2) to direct attention and resources to protecting those areas, and (3) to acknowledge that achieving this kind of influence is an explicit goal of the Chinese government and Chinese Communist Party. Such a study could be carried out at the request of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or other congressional bodies, and should include input from a variety of U.S. government sources, ranging from law enforcement to education officials, and drawing on federal, state, and local disclosure mechanisms.

Legislators at the state and federal level should consider various responses: if, for example, public universities are accepting Confucius Institutes because they lack other resources for Chinese-language instruction, education authorities should recognize the risks to academic freedom and the institution's reputation and consider other budgetary solutions. Government officials who have any engagement with Chinese state or Communist Party entities could be required to disclose that information on a monthly or quarterly basis, with a view towards publishing it to promote greater transparency about those interactions. Congressional committees or bodies, such as the Congressional Executive Commission on China, could offer training seminars on the United Front Work Department, the International Liaison Department, friendship associations, and other Chinese state or Party agencies.

With respect to reshaping the terms of engagement, we recommend that you consider the tactics outlined in my recent article "How to Deal with China's Human Rights Abuses." It is of concern to Human Rights Watch that the current administration's overhaul of bilateral dialogues appears to relegate human rights to the margins; we urge that human rights be built into all bilateral dialogues implicating rights concerns, including law enforcement, counter-terrorism, and academic or "people to people" exchanges. We also strongly urge greater outreach by all branches of government to independent Chinese voices; there are now dozens of Chinese lawyers, scholars, and experts on all manner of topics who are outside China and independent of Beijing.

Question. United Front-affiliated organizations, such as the China-U.S. Exchange Foundation and its domestic partner organizations, seek to actively lobby Congress and influence Congressional staff as well as state and local government officials through exchanges.

- How can the U.S. Congress better educate its staffers on lobbyists or "people-to-people" exchange opportunities sponsored by United Front-affiliated organizations, such as the China Association for International Friendly Contact (CAIFC), that seek to actively promote the Chinese Communist Party's political agenda?
- What can the U.S. Government do to overcome challenges from Chinese United Front organizations and activities that seek to co-opt U.S. interests in favor of Chinese political and economic interests?

- In your sphere of work, how have you encountered United Front-affiliated organizations or efforts, and to what extent should the U.S. Congress and Government be concerned about actively guarding against these efforts?

Answer. Individual members, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee, the two China commissions, and the U.S.-China Working Group could provide seminars and other educational opportunities to their staff members regarding different Chinese influence agencies, and limit their ability to take money from or participate in activities sponsored by those groups, particularly with respect to travel to China. U.S. officials could be required to provide information regarding the nature of overtures from those agencies, their frequency, and who has responded positively to them could be published on an at least quarterly basis. Such knowledge and reporting requirements may significantly alter the scope of Beijing's efforts.

The U.S. could also strengthen support to and increase funding for domestic programs and institutions that the Chinese government seeks to influence. For example, state and local authorities could increase funding to public schools and universities' Chinese language programs and China studies departments, and provide grants to ethnic Chinese civil society groups that are independent and self-organized, and support independent Chinese-language media.

Question. Last week, on December 7, the Chinese government hosted a "south-south" human rights forum, during which Chinese officials claimed the benefits of China's "human rights development path with Chinese characteristics." Can you discuss what this "model" consists of, and whether it meets the international human rights standards established by UN human rights instruments?

Answer. China's "model" falls far short of established international human rights standards in several critical respects. First, it explicitly prioritizes state sovereignty over rights of the individual, and has been advanced at a time when China increasingly rejects the universality of human rights. This model would leave individuals living under abusive governments with no recourse to independent courts or institutions, like the UN's human rights mechanisms. Second, it explicitly prioritizes economic and social rights, particularly a vaguely worded "right to development," over civil and political rights, effectively making the acquisition of an undefined level of development the precursor to consideration of rights like freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, or political participation. Third, rather than welcoming a broad, organic process of improving human rights in a given country, the model clearly puts the state at the center of these discussions, leaving little room for independent civil society to play a role other than the one the state explicitly allows.

Lastly, as the final article of the December 2017 concluding statement makes clear, there is no room for established international human rights law in this model but rather vague, easily manipulated standards: "In terms of human rights protection, there is no best way, only the better one. The satisfaction of the people is the ultimate criterion to test the rationality of human rights and the way to guarantee them. It is the responsibility of governments to continuously raise the level of human rights protection in accordance with the demands of their peoples."

Question. The Human Rights Watch Report mentions a resolution proposed by China at a June 2017 Human Rights Council session that asserts the "importance of development in human rights." This resolution was adopted by a vote of 30 to 13. Why is the language of "development" critical to China's definition of human rights? Will the adoption of this language have any long-term impact on the Human Rights Council's work?

Answer. China emphasizes development as a human right because it is the issue on which Beijing thinks it can most clearly demonstrate progress—longer life expectancy, higher per capita income, and millions of people lifted out of poverty. To the extent these are demonstrably true, they are of course laudable achievements, yet China consistently omits discussion of the less positive aspects of its economic development strategy, including rampant pollution, the appalling phenomenon of "left-behind" children, or the discriminatory hukou system that leaves domestic migrant workers unable to access state benefits.

China's emphasis on development appears to be part of a broader strategy to insert its narrative into UN resolutions, promoting development and economic, social and cultural rights at the expense of civil and political rights, detracting attention from its systemic denials of freedom of expression and crackdown on human rights defenders and dissenting voices. The U.S., in its explanation of its vote on the development resolution, rightly expressed concern that China's text quotes key international instruments "in a selective and imbalanced way that often omits key language that fully explains the relationship between human rights and development, or changes consensus language to materially alter its meaning," noting that "these and other distortions of consensus language reinforce the incorrect message that de-

velopment is a prerequisite for states fulfilling their human rights obligations—a message that is clearly inconsistent with states' commitments reflected in the VDPA [Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action]." The European Union similarly expressed concern that "the draft resolution introduced by China aims to construct an unhelpful narrative which would elevate the process of development above human rights."

We understand that at the upcoming session of the Human Rights Council in March 2018, China is proposing a similar initiative focused on promoting dialogue and cooperation at the expense of addressing serious human rights violations and protecting victims from abuse. It is important that states engage in these debates to resist efforts to distort the international human rights framework.

Question. There are 24 UN agencies with a presence in China; the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is not among them. Is the resident coordinator (the head of the country team) doing enough to help push the Chinese government on human rights, especially in light of the non-presence of OHCHR?

Answer. The current resident coordinator is improving on his predecessors' performance with respect to human rights by taking some modest steps, including meeting with some human rights activists and disseminating information about UN human rights mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review. Yet, there is a great deal more his office could do: ensuring robust discussion of human rights issues in annual reports and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which typically only make superficial reference to the issue; providing a specific and platitude-free assessment of China's human rights situation in Chinese government-run discussions such as the December 2017 "South-South Forum on Human Rights"; making regular use of the UN's "Rights Up Front" strategy to convene regular discussions across those agencies about human rights developments in China. However, taking those steps is not solely a question of an individual resident coordinator's inclinations, but equally, if not more, a function of thoughtful, consistent support for such an approach at the highest levels of the UN. This in turn requires sustained, thoughtful support from powerful UN member states such as the U.S.

Question. Are there realms other than the United Nations, such as INTERPOL, where you think there is reason to be concerned about Chinese government influence?

Answer. Human Rights Watch has expressed concern about Interpol's ability to uphold its stated commitment to operating according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under the leadership of Chinese Vice-Minister for Public Security Meng Hongwei, who became the president of Interpol in November 2016. Human Rights Watch has also documented that China—against Interpol regulations—has issued politically motivated "red notices"—alerts seeking the arrest and extradition of wanted people—against dissidents and others abroad whom China deemed problematic. China's record of arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearance, as well as unlawful forced repatriation, raise concerns that those subject to Interpol red notices from China will be at risk of torture and other ill treatment. Most recently we have documented Chinese authorities' subjecting the family members in China of "red notice" individuals to forms of collective punishment—unlawfully punishing someone for the actions of another. The authorities have also pressured relatives to travel to the countries where red notice individuals live to persuade them to return to China. Other Interpol member states such as the U.S. could condition some of their financial support to the organization on its demonstrated commitment to human rights in its operations.

Human Rights Watch has also tracked efforts by Chinese state-owned enterprises to lower labor standards in Zambia, which has strong laws protecting the rights to assembly and association; the sale of and training on surveillance technology made by ZTE, a large Chinese company, to Ethiopian authorities, who used that technology to repress peaceful criticism; and the potential for the Chinese-established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to replicate abusive practices of previous international development banks.

Human Rights Watch has, since 2014, been researching threats to academic freedom outside China but resulting from Chinese government pressure. The abuses include: institutionally driven and self-imposed censorship to avoid irking Chinese authorities; and threats, harassment, and surveillance by Chinese authorities, and in some cases by Chinese students and scholars, of one another, and of those seen as critical of China. Given the number of mainland Chinese students in the U.S., and the positive interest on U.S. campuses in studying China, it is imperative that this realm of free expression be protected.

Question. In May 2017, Human Rights Watch issued a report on a nationally searchable DNA database being built by Chinese police. Human Rights Watch

raised concerns over a lack of meaningful privacy protections and a lack of consent for the collection of DNA and other personal information, particularly for Uyghurs. A May 2017 report published by the scientific journal Nature noted that police in the northwest region of Xinjiang had reportedly purchased eight sequencers produced by Thermo Fisher Scientific in Waltham, Massachusetts. These machines can be used to examine DNA and match DNA samples collected from a crime scene with individuals or their relatives listed in a database.

- Should U.S. officials be concerned about the sale of this type of equipment to Chinese security personnel? What steps, if any, should the U.S. Government take to ensure that equipment and technology produced in the United States is not transferred to countries where they will be used to carry out human rights violations?

Answer. In follow-up research, Human Rights Watch determined that Xinjiang authorities are gathering DNA samples from all residents of the region between the ages of 12–65 under the guise of a free public health program.

While Human Rights Watch does not have evidence of complicity in human rights violations by Thermo Fisher, its unwillingness to provide assurances that it has undertaken thorough due diligence measures to ensure that it is not enabling abuses is worrying. The US should, as a matter of urgency, undertake a review of all U.S.-based companies manufacturing surveillance technology in, and/or selling surveillance technology to, China to ensure that existing export control standards and "dual use" loopholes are not enabling abuses.

The U.S., including through congressional committees, could also convene a panel of experts to focus on surveillance technologies and take advice on whether it is necessary to revise export controls.

Question. The U.S. Embassy and U.S. companies have set up a working group to engage with China's Belt and Road Initiative and provide a forum for U.S. exporters to introduce their products and services. At a forum on the Belt and Road Initiative hosted by the Chinese government in Beijing in May 2017, Matthew Pottinger, senior director for Asia at the National Security Council, expressed support for the initiative but also raised concerns about transparency in the bidding process and other issues.

Answer. Our primary concerns regarding the "One Belt, One Road" initiative include how the project may further undermine an already highly abusive environment in Xinjiang, that many of the Central Asian governments involved in the project have poor human rights track records, particularly with major infrastructure projects, whether AIIB members—even ones with strong protections in place for peaceful expression—will tolerate public criticism of China, and whether those who protest peacefully against One Belt, One Road projects will be allowed an opportunity for meaningful engagement, be ignored, or be imprisoned.

Private companies involved in One Belt, One Road projects should recognize they have a responsibility to carry out effective human rights due diligence, as outlined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Companies should assess human rights risks and take effective steps to mitigate or avoid those risks. Companies also have a responsibility to ensure that people who claim to experience abuses have access to appropriate remedies. Potential financiers, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, should keep in mind their own responsibility to respect human rights as they invest in One Belt, One Road.

If all One Belt, One Road participants aspire to respect human rights, the project could be truly transformative. But that will require dedicated commitment to community consultation, respect for peaceful protest, openness to reject or change projects in response to community concerns, and genuine commitment to transparency. Many participating governments do not seem particularly inclined to respond in such a manner to such challenges. Whether higher standards prevail should be the key test of One Belt, One Road's long-term impact.

Question. As American companies, including General Electric, invest in projects related to the Belt and Road Initiative, what steps, if any, should U.S. officials take to ensure such investment complies with international human rights standards? What steps can American companies themselves put in place to ensure compliance with human rights norms?

Answer. See answer above for guidance on the human rights standards for corporations.

Question. Under newly revised implementing regulations for its counterespionage law, China's State Council has expanded state powers to punish Chinese and foreign individuals for offenses the Chinese government deems threatening to its national security or "social stability." Under the new rules, Chinese state security authorities

can bar foreigners from entering China if they are "likely to engage in activities that might endanger national security." Foreigners can also be prevented from leaving China for a period of time, or can be deported for "harming national security." Foreign individuals or groups who "fabricate or distort facts" can also be penalized. Human rights organizations and governments have raised concerns that Chinese national security legislation is enabling Chinese authorities to target rights advocates and dissidents who criticize the CCP or advocate political reform.

- What steps could the United States and other governments take to provide protection for Americans engaged in China-related civil society, advocacy, and academic work, in order to prevent them from potentially being punished under these regulations? How might the United States and other countries seek to protect Americans' Chinese counterparts from being punished for engaging in peaceful civil society, advocacy, or academic efforts?

Answer. The U.S. government—through the White House, State Department, and members of Congress and congressional committees—should forcefully and publicly speak in defense of this work generally and with respect to specific groups and individuals. U.S. officials should also regularly remind Chinese authorities of its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, particularly in light of the ongoing arbitrary detention of European and Taiwanese citizens. Doing so not only helps those who have been silenced or detained, but is also of assistance to other countries seeking the freedom of their nationals.

The U.S. could also consider funding, through the State Department and foundations such as the National Endowment for Democracy, innovative work by independent Chinese civil society outside the country if doing so in the mainland proves too risky; it could consider doing so in collaboration with other like-minded groups. Engaging a broad cross-section of Chinese in the U.S.—whether they are U.S.-born or naturalized; whether they are scholars or dissidents—will help the U.S. push back against the Chinese government's efforts to paint U.S. concerns as biased or racist.

Question. The Commission has followed closely troubling developments related to China's relatively new Overseas NGO Management Law. We've received anecdotal accounts of U.S. foundations, during the application process being asked to provide information to Chinese authorities on their activities in the U.S., including research that relates to China, despite the fact that none of that research is occurring in China, or involves funds or other resources being transferred to or within China.

- Have you heard similar accounts?
- What are the implications?

Answer. We have not heard of such inquiries in the context of the FNGO Management Law, but have documented Chinese government inquiries about the origins, perceived political affiliations, funders, and other details of foreign NGOs in other countries and via the UN's ECOSOC accreditation process for NGOs. The net effect of these efforts by Beijing is to ensure that even groups working outside China are aware that their work is being tracked, and, in the case of seeking ECOSOC accreditation, that such status can be delayed for years at a time for undertaking work Beijing does not like.

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

National Endowment for Democracy
Supporting freedom around the world

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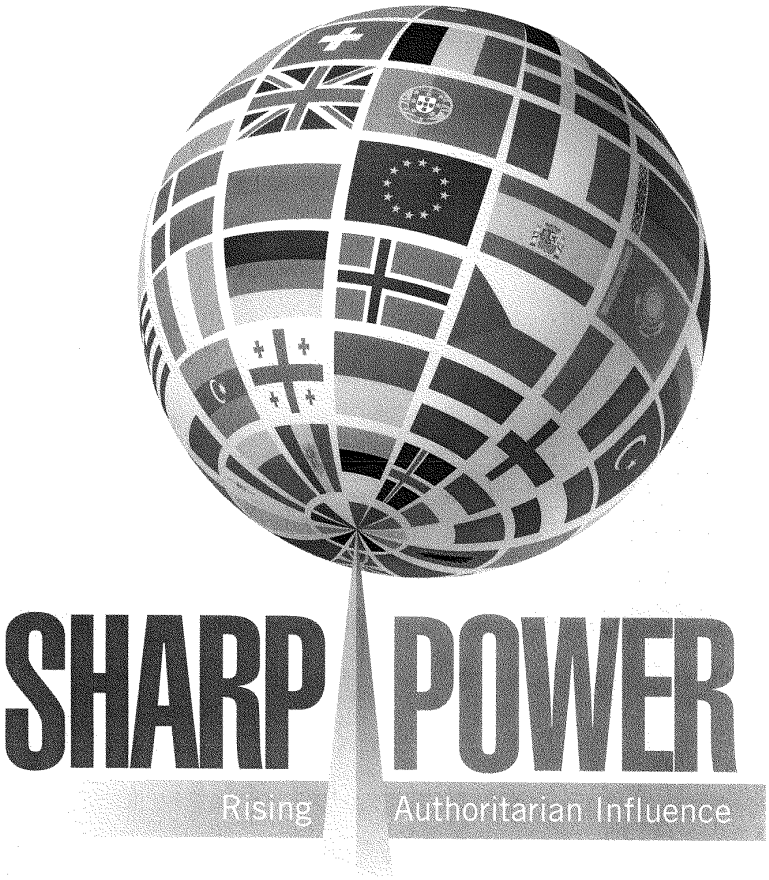


From 'Soft Power' to 'Sharp Power'

Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World

Over the past decade, China and Russia have spent billions of dollars to shape public opinion and perceptions around the world, employing a diverse toolkit that includes thousands of people-to-people exchanges, wide-ranging cultural activities, educational programs, and the development of media enterprises and information initiatives with global reach. As memory of the Cold War era receded, analysts, journalists, and policymakers in the democracies came to see authoritarian influence efforts through the familiar lens of "soft power." But some of the most visible authoritarian influence techniques used by countries such as **China and Russia, while not "hard" in the openly coercive sense, are not really "soft" either.**

Contrary to some prevailing analysis, the attempt by Beijing and Moscow to wield influence through initiatives in the spheres of media, culture, think tanks, and academia is neither a "charm offensive" nor an effort to "win hearts and minds," the common frame of reference for "soft power" efforts. **This authoritarian influence is not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centers on distraction and manipulation.** These ambitious authoritarian regimes, which systematically suppress political pluralism and free expression at home, are increasingly seeking to apply similar principles internationally to secure their interests.

We are in need of a new vocabulary for this phenomenon. **What we have to date understood as authoritarian "soft power" is better categorized as "sharp power" that pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the targeted countries.** In the new competition that is under way between autocratic and democratic states, the repressive regimes' "sharp power" techniques should be seen as the tip of their dagger—or indeed as their syringe.

Key Context

Exploiting a Glaring Asymmetry: Critical to the headway made by authoritarian regimes has been their exploitation of a glaring asymmetry: In an era of hyperglobalization, Russia and China have raised barriers to external political and cultural influence at home while simultaneously taking advantage of the openness of democratic systems abroad.

A Widening Scope of Authoritarian Influence: This study examined four countries (Argentina, Peru, Poland, and Slovakia) in two regions (Latin America and Central Europe), but similar forms of Russian and Chinese "sharp power" are visible in a growing number of democracies around the world.

A Particular Threat to Vulnerable Democracies: While the leading authoritarian regimes' ambitions have gone global, a subset of countries where democratic roots remain shallow are especially vulnerable to their influence efforts. Those in Latin America and Central Europe make attractive targets due to their proximity and strategic value to the established democracies of North America and Western Europe.

The Implications of Authoritarian "Sharp Power"

Taken separately, authoritarian influence efforts in particular countries may seem fairly harmless or ineffectual. However, when the seemingly disparate activities of Russia and China around the world are added together, a far more disturbing picture emerges.

This report suggests that even exchange-related activities backed by authoritarian governments should be approached with greater skepticism. Although some of these initiatives may appear to advance admirable goals, many are designed to promote a particular political narrative, which in turn creates favorable conditions for authoritarian regimes.

While there are differences in the shape and tone of the Chinese and Russian approaches, both stem from an ideological model that privileges state power over individual liberty and is fundamentally hostile to free expression, open debate, and independent thought. At the same time, both Beijing and Moscow clearly take advantage of the openness of democratic systems.

The following are key steps that can be taken to address the malign efforts by Russia and China to influence and manipulate democracies:

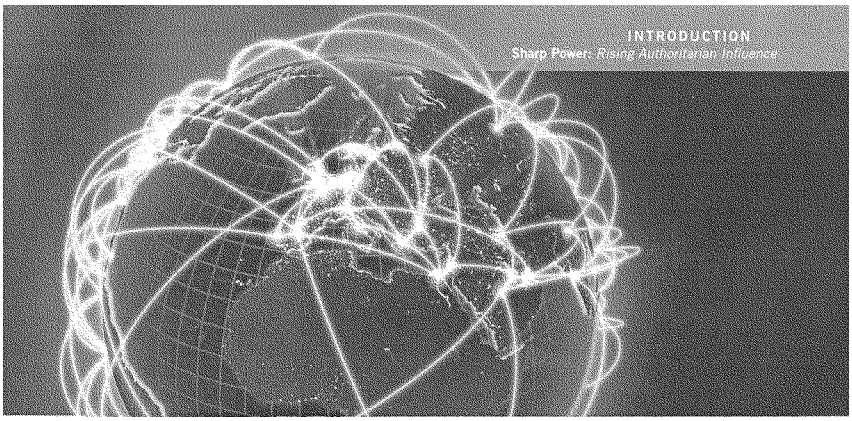
Address the shortage of information on China and Russia. In the four democracies examined, information concerning the Chinese political system and its foreign policy strategies tends to be extremely limited. There are few journalists, editors, and policy professionals who possess a deep understanding of China and can share their knowledge with the rest of their societies. The same holds true for Russia in places such as Latin America, though knowledge of today's Russia is stronger in Central Europe.

Unmask authoritarian influence. Chinese and Russian sharp power efforts rely in large part on camouflage—disguising state-directed projects as the work of commercial media or grassroots associations, for example, or using local actors as conduits for foreign propaganda and tools of foreign manipulation. To counteract these efforts at misdirection, observers in democracies should put them under the spotlight and analyze them in a comprehensive manner.

Inoculate democratic societies against malign authoritarian influence. Once the nature and techniques of authoritarian influence efforts are exposed, democracies should build up their internal defenses. Authoritarian initiatives are directed at cultivating relationships with the political elites, thought leaders, and other information gatekeepers of democratic societies. Moscow and Beijing aim to get inside democratic systems in order to win supporters and to neutralize criticism of their authoritarian regimes.

Reaffirm support for democratic values and ideals. If one goal of authoritarian sharp power is to legitimize illiberal forms of government, then it is effective only to the extent that democracies and their citizens lose sight of their own principles. Top leaders in the democracies must speak out clearly and consistently on behalf of democratic ideals and put down clear markers regarding acceptable standards of democratic behavior.

Reconceptualize 'soft power.' Finally, journalists, think tank analysts, and other policy elites need to recognize authoritarian influence efforts in the realm of ideas for what they are: corrosive and subversive "sharp power" instruments that do real damage to the targeted democratic societies. The conceptual vocabulary that has been used since the Cold War's end no longer seems adequate to the contemporary situation.



From 'Soft Power' to 'Sharp Power'

By Christopher Walker
and Jessica Ludwig

Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World

'Soft Power' in Contemporary Perspective

In his report to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in October 2007, then president Hu Jintao laid down a marker that would propel to new heights his country's investment in what is commonly referred to as "soft power." Hu said at the time:

We must keep to the orientation of [an] advanced socialist culture, bring about a new upsurge in socialist cultural development, stimulate the cultural creativity of the whole nation, and enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests, enrich the cultural life in Chinese society and inspire the enthusiasm of the people for progress.[1]

In the decade since Hu's exhortation, China has spent tens of billions of dollars to shape public opinion and perceptions around the world, employing a diverse toolkit that includes, but is not limited to, thousands of people-to-people exchanges, wide-ranging cultural activities, educational programs (most notably the ever-expanding network of controversial Confucius Institutes), and the development of media enterprises with global reach.

During roughly the same period, the Russian government accelerated its own efforts in this sphere. In the mid-2000s, the Kremlin launched the global television network Russia Today (since rebranded as the more unassuming "RT"), built up its capacity to manipulate content online, increased its support for state-affiliated policy institutes, and more generally cultivated a web of influence activities—both on and offline—designed to alter international views to its advantage.

At the outset, many observers in major democracies breezily dismissed Russian and Chinese government efforts to build more modern and sophisticated tools of international influence. The authoritarians' television and online initiatives, whose programming and editorial lines were at first stilted or disjointed, were seen as autocratic vanity projects or otherwise not worthy of serious consideration. To one degree or another, these governments struggled to "tell their story" in ways that would appeal to the world. It would require extraordinary editorial gymnastics and creativity to overcome the evident features of their systems: entrenched kleptocracy, massive environmental problems, institutionalized censorship, deepening economic inequality, and harsh political repression that remains fundamental to governance in both settings.

Exploiting a Glaring Asymmetry

But the dismissiveness of skeptics in the democracies led to a dangerous complacency, allowing the authoritarians, through trial and error, to refine their existing efforts and develop a much more powerful array of influence techniques suitable for a modern environment. Critical to their success has been their exploitation of a glaring asymmetry: In an era of hyperglobalization, the regimes in Russia and China have raised barriers to external political and cultural influence at home while simultaneously preying upon the openness of democratic systems abroad.

The adjustments made by the authorities in Moscow and Beijing have been gradual but systematic in nature. Russian officials, for their part, determined that they did not need to convince the world that their autocratic system was appealing in its own right. Instead, they realized that they could achieve their objectives by making democracy appear to be relatively less attractive. Russian disinformation efforts have since constituted a relentless, multidimensional attack on the prestige of democracies—the United States and leading European Union countries especially—and on the ideas underlying democratic systems.[2]

Meanwhile, as China has dramatically expanded its economic interests and business footprint around the globe, its government has focused its influence initiatives on masking its policies and suppressing, to the extent possible, any voices beyond China's borders that are critical of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).[3] Its techniques include both co-optation and manipulation, and they are applied to targets in the media, academia, and the policy community. They seek to permeate institutions in democratic states that might draw attention or raise obstacles to CCP interests, creating disincentives for any such resistance.

While there are differences in the shape and tone of the Chinese and Russian approaches, both stem from an ideological model that privileges state power over individual liberty and is fundamentally hostile to free expression, open debate, and independent thought.

The decision makers in Beijing and Moscow clearly have the political will and the resources to build up and implement their influence efforts. By comparison, the United States and other leading democracies seem to have withdrawn from competition in the ideas sphere. They have been slow to shake off the long-standing assumption—in vogue from the end of the Cold War until the mid-2000s—that unbridled integration with repressive regimes would inevitably change them for the better, without any harmful effects on the democracies themselves. But as globalization accelerated and integration deepened over the past decade, the authoritarians survived, and their ability to penetrate the political and media space of democracies has become progressively stronger.[4] The authoritarian initiatives themselves are truly global in scope, turning up in democratic countries on every continent.

The Particular Threat to Vulnerable Democracies

While the leading authoritarian regimes' ambitions have gone global, a subset of countries where democratic roots remain shallow are especially vulnerable to their influence efforts. Those in Latin America and Central Europe also make attractive targets due to their proximity and strategic value to the established democracies of North America and Western Europe.

Given the troubling implications of the Chinese and Russian projects, the International Forum for Democratic Studies, in cooperation with several leading think tanks, undertook an initiative to closely examine and inventory the instruments of authoritarian influence in vulnerable democracies. The think tanks carried out on-the-ground research and analysis in Slovakia (Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava), Poland (Institute of Public Affairs, Warsaw), and Argentina and Peru (The Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America, Buenos Aires).

These powerful and determined authoritarian regimes, which systematically suppress political pluralism and free expression in order to maintain power at home, are increasingly applying the same principles internationally to secure their interests.

This initiative focused on the dimensions of Chinese and Russian authoritarian influence that in recent years have become especially visible, but have been understudied in the context of democratic societies: cultural and education-related activities; think tank and policy-relevant engagement; and the development of media platforms that can disseminate information globally. Such efforts are typically understood in the familiar context of "soft power." They represent, however, only a portion of a far larger iceberg of influence activity undertaken by the Russian and Chinese governments.

The findings of the think tanks are the focus of this report, which describes how Russia and China alike are investing resources in the media, think tank, cultural, and university sectors, through either overt programmatic support or less transparent means. The authoritarians' efforts in these areas are of a piece with their broader influence initiatives, and more established democracies would be wise to draw lessons from the four countries assessed here, as the same antidemocratic techniques are now being applied around the world.

The think tanks' research raises serious questions concerning the democratic community's understanding of the threat to date. Contrary to some prevailing analysis, the influence wielded by Russia and China through initiatives in the spheres of media, academia, culture, and think tanks is not a "charm offensive," nor is it an effort to "share alternative ideas" or "broaden the debate." It is not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centers on manipulation and distraction. These powerful and determined authoritarian regimes, which systematically suppress political pluralism and free expression in order to maintain power at home, are increasingly applying the same principles internationally to secure their interests.

Nevertheless, the underlying logic of the authoritarians' wide-ranging engagement in the democracies' public spheres remains murky to many. Why do the world's leading antidemocratic regimes devote vast material resources and political energy to participating in the ideas space of the democratic world? This report seeks to shed light on that question.

Methodology

This report represents a collaborative effort undertaken by the National Endowment for Democracy's International Forum for Democratic Studies and three think tank partners based in Poland, Slovakia, and Argentina to document and analyze the influence activities of two trendsetting authoritarian states—Russia and China—in young democracies. The Center for the Opening and Development of Latin America (Argentina), the Institute of Public Affairs (Poland), and the Institute for Public Affairs (Slovakia) are members of the Forum's global think tank network, the Network of Democracy Research Institutes.

In order to understand how authoritarian regimes are leveraging and repurposing traditional tools of "soft power" for what we believe is more appropriately understood as corrosive "sharp power," the three think tanks and their lead researchers conducted a comprehensive on-the-ground inventory of activities carried out by the Chinese and Russian governments or their surrogates in four specific spheres: (1) media, (2) academia, (3) culture, and (4) the think tank and policy communities. These sectors were selected for analysis due to their critical role in shaping perceptions and public opinion in democratic societies. The researchers employed four principal methods to conduct their inventories:

- Aggregating and analyzing prior research done by local scholars, journalists, and think tanks
- Qualitative interviews with country-based analysts, journalists, academics, students, university administrators, and counterparts in the policy community
- Surveying themes covered in print and online media, as well as in social media
- Examining the topics of events and projects organized by cultural institutions, universities, and research institutions based in each country

By undertaking a cross-regional comparative approach, this report seeks to explain how the Chinese and Russian regimes project and exert influence across varied democratic settings. Latin America and Central Europe were identified as regions in which both China and Russia have sought to develop a presence and invested significant resources. The four case countries—Peru, Argentina, Poland, and Slovakia—were selected in light of their status as young democracies that are classified as "Free" according to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* rating system (receiving a rating of 1 to 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 7).

The International Forum convened two meetings with the lead researchers in Washington, DC, in May 2016 and January 2017 to discuss the scope of the think tanks' inventory efforts, share interim findings and analysis, and solicit input from Latin American and Central European regional experts, as well as analysts familiar with Chinese and Russian foreign policy interests in those two regions. In addition, several think tank researchers who study Chinese and Russian influence strategies in other democratic states participated in the January 2017 gathering to provide further comparative perspectives on how these efforts may impact democratic societies.

The Unanticipated Threat from Authoritarian Regimes

Analysts, journalists, and policymakers in the democracies have tended to view authoritarian influence efforts through the familiar lens of "soft power." According to Joseph Nye's original definition,[8] a country's "hard power" is based on coercion, largely a function of its military or

economic might, whereas "soft power" is based on attraction, arising from the positive appeal of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. The regimes in Moscow and Beijing surely are seeking to shape public perceptions, sentiments, and opinions overseas to an extent that simply would not have been possible a decade or more ago. With the explosive growth of the internet and social media, and the integration of authoritarian information outlets into the media spaces of democracies, the opportunities for exerting influence are far greater today than at any time in the recent past.

But those who interpret these efforts as a way for Moscow and Beijing to boost their countries' "soft power" appeal may be missing the mark, and risk perpetuating a false sense of security. After all, if the aim of the authoritarians' efforts is to improve their international image, and Russia and China do not in fact enjoy an improved image in the democracies,[6] then it stands to reason that their elaborate initiatives must not be working.[7] And even if they were, there would be no obvious or direct harm to democratic states.

Unfortunately, authoritarian regimes view the use of such power overseas and the notion of success in world politics in an entirely different way, one that cannot be divorced from the political values by which they govern at home. As the essays in this report point out, they are not engaged in "public diplomacy" as democracies would understand it. Instead, they appear to be pursuing more malign objectives, often associated with new forms of outwardly directed censorship and information control, which are directly at odds with the benign conception of "soft power."

A clearer picture of these regimes' intent can be gleaned from their domestic political and media landscapes. Beijing and Moscow have methodically suppressed genuine dissent, smeared or silenced political opponents, inundated their citizens with propagandistic content, and deftly co-opted independent voices and institutions—all while seeking to maintain a deceptive appearance of pluralism, openness, and modernity. In fact, in recent years the realm of ideas in the two authoritarian behemoths has been steadily monopolized by the state and its surrogates.

Both regimes have redefined censorship for a twenty-first century context. Their systems allow a considerable volume and diversity of information, but precious little objectivity or pluralism when it comes to news coverage and political ideas. The dazzling variety of content available to consumers helps disguise the reality that the paramount authorities in these countries brook no dissent. In China's case, a sophisticated system of online manipulation—which includes a vast, multilayered censorship system and "online content monitors" in government departments and private companies who number in the millions[8]—is designed to suppress and neutralize political speech and collective action, even while encouraging many ordinary people to feel as though they can express themselves on a range of issues they care about.

It is with a similar approach that the authoritarian trendsetters have plunged into the open societies of the democratic world. For example, just as Beijing has compelled its domestic internet companies and news outlets to police their own content for violations of the regime's redlines, it hopes to school its international interlocutors on the boundaries of permissible expression and encourage them to self-censor in a manner that limits candid scrutiny of what China views as sensitive topics.

The nature of the regimes in Russia and China must be taken squarely into account when considering the implications of their vigorous international influence efforts. They have not come simply to attract or win over. They have come to manipulate, confuse, divide, and repress.

'Sharp Power': A New Conceptual Vocabulary

In common parlance, "soft power" has become a catch-all term for forms of influence that are not "hard" in the sense of military force. But the authoritarian influence techniques that have gained pace and traction in recent years, while not hard in the openly coercive sense, are not really soft, either.

Although Russia and China undertake some activities that can credibly fall into the category of normal public diplomacy, the nature of these countries' political systems invariably and fundamentally color their efforts. In the case of China, for example, educational and cultural initiatives are accompanied by an authoritarian determination to monopolize ideas, suppress alternative narratives, and exploit partner institutions. The rulers of Russia, a less wealthy and powerful state, sometimes seem content to propagate the idea that their kleptocratic regime—whose paramount leader is rapidly approaching two decades in office—is a "normal" member of the international community, and that its actions and statements are no less valid than those of democracies. But they can only generate this false sense of equality by sowing doubt and disorder among their rivals.

hrough sharp power, the generally unattractive values of authoritarian systems—which encourage a monopoly on power, top-down control, censorship, and coerced or purchased loyalty—are projected outward.

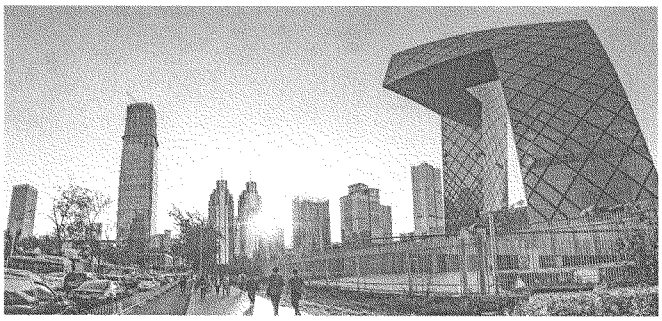
We are in need of a new vocabulary to describe this phenomenon. What we have to date understood as "soft power" when speaking of authoritarian regimes might be more properly labeled as "sharp power."

Authoritarian influence efforts are "sharp" in the sense that they pierce, penetrate, or perforate the information environments in the targeted countries. In the ruthless new competition that is under way between autocratic and democratic states, the repressive regimes' "sharp power" techniques should be seen as the tip of their dagger—or indeed their syringe. These regimes are not necessarily seeking to "win hearts and minds," the common frame of reference for "soft power" efforts, but they are surely seeking to manage their target audiences by manipulating or poisoning the information that reaches them.[9]

"Sharp power" likewise enables the authoritarians to cut, razor-like, into the fabric of a society, stoking and amplifying existing divisions. Russia has been especially adept at exploiting rifts within democratic nations.[10] And unlike the blunt impact of hard power, "sharp power" entails a degree of stealth. Taking advantage of the open information environment of democracies, the authoritarians' "sharp power" efforts are typically difficult to detect, meaning they benefit from a lag time before the targeted democracies realize there is a problem.

Above all, the term "sharp power" captures the malign and aggressive nature of the authoritarian projects, which bear little resemblance to the benign attraction of soft power. Through sharp power, the generally unattractive values of authoritarian systems—which encourage a monopoly on power, top-down control, censorship, and coerced or purchased loyalty—are projected outward, and those affected are not so much audiences as victims.

The authoritarian ideal for the media is plain to see in China. On the ninetieth anniversary of the establishment of the People's Liberation Army, four separate state-owned newspapers had identical covers. In February 2016, President Xi Jinping visited the headquarters of the three



main state media organizations, which pledged their loyalty to the Communist Party.[11] When such total control is not possible or desirable, authoritarian regimes often resort to strategic distraction. Among other examples, this can be observed in the Russian national broadcast media, which are by turns disorienting and entertaining, or in Beijing's large-scale fabrication of social media posts designed to disrupt discussion of controversial topics.[12]

Chinese universities, meanwhile, have come under increasing ideological control. Party committees oversee the running of the schools and monitor the ideological and political thinking of undergraduate and graduate students.[13] In the run-up to the CCP's 19th Party Congress in October 2017, China's leading anticorruption agency, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), stepped up efforts to assess the effectiveness of these party committees at a number of China's top universities—including several that host joint academic initiatives with foreign universities.[14]

There is clearly nothing "soft" about these regimes' treatment of the media, education, and the realm of ideas more generally in their domestic environments. Why should we view their outward-facing activities so differently?

In order to fully appreciate the qualitative distinctions between authoritarian sharp power and soft power as it is customarily understood, it is essential to review the array of influence techniques developed by leading authoritarian regimes, and how they are deployed.

The Authoritarian Inventory of Influence

China's emergence on the world stage is a relatively recent phenomenon that the regime is able to play to its own advantage. Its first major contact with many countries occurred under the auspices of Beijing's "going out" strategy, which positioned China as an alternative source of investment for developing nations. The global financial crisis in 2008 provided China with an opportunity to expand this role. That year, the government released its first foreign policy "white paper" on Latin America and the Caribbean, articulating principles for a new framework to guide China's relations with the region.

Beijing published a second policy paper in 2016, during President Xi's visit to Lima, Peru, for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. Among updates to the first paper were new sections that heavily emphasized people-to-people exchanges, culture, and media cooperation.[15] Many of these concepts are echoed in China's first policy paper for Central and Eastern Europe.[16]

In the media sphere, Juan Pablo Cardenal's survey of Chinese government-sponsored activities identifies "a triple approach" for formal engagement with the local media and individual news consumers: (1) developing the local presence of Chinese state media in Latin American countries; (2) establishing partnerships, content exchanges, and cooperation agreements between Chinese state media and local public media, as well as with some independent media outlets; and (3) offering exchange opportunities and trainings for individual journalists.

On paper, such exchange-based activities between media outlets appear to be conducted in the spirit of openly sharing information and perspectives. However, the projects that Cardenal documents—such as the insertion of elaborate media supplements like *China Daily*'s *China Watch* into several local private newspapers in Argentina, and the prime-time airing of China Global Television Network (CGTN) documentaries on the public station TV Peru Channel 7 during the 2016 APEC Summit—reveal a more ambitious plan to use local media as a "borrowed boat" for the dissemination of Chinese state propaganda. Likewise, interviews with journalists who participate in trainings paid for by Chinese state media outlets reveal how such trips are shaping the way that Latin American journalists, who often possess little prior knowledge of China, ultimately view and report on the country and its policies toward their own countries and region.

In all four of the countries examined, the think tank researchers noted that there are few experts in the media, academic, and analytical communities who follow China closely, and the tendency among the few who do is to focus on the economic aspects of China's relationship with their own country. Given China's size, complexity, and growing presence in the international arena, the researchers were surprised to find that commentators rarely discuss other aspects of the country that might be of interest to citizens living in a democracy, such as China's political system and human rights record. The researchers suggest that this is likely due to a combination of factors, such as the public's general lack of interest (as in Slovakia), or a fascination with China's rapid economic development as an "alternative model" (as in Poland). But the result is a vacuum in the information environment of the democracies that China is able to exploit.

In this context, Cardenal's review of the academic sectors in Argentina and Peru shows how China, through partnerships between Latin American universities and its own tightly controlled state universities, can have an outsized impact on the frame and tone of China-focused scholarship in the region. One example is the establishment of the Joint International Research Center (CIMI in Spanish) in April 2017 as a partnership between the prominent Buenos Aires–based National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET in Spanish) and Shanghai University. Cardenal notes that the new center's research aims "to clarify the way in which China is perceived in Argentina's public opinion" using new methodologies for studying the social sciences and globalization.

China has also sponsored the establishment of Confucius Institutes at local universities in all four case countries examined in this report: four in Peru, two in Argentina, five in Poland, and two in Slovakia. In Poland, Jacek Kucharczyk notes that plans are currently in the works to open a sixth Confucius Institute at Warsaw University, despite protests by the university's students, who have voiced concerns about the potential impact the institute might have on academic freedom.

Although the researchers note that many Confucius Institute activities seem innocuous, emphasizing Chinese language instruction and cultural events such as film exhibitions, other elements of their activities are out of place in a university context. Chinese government control over staffing and curriculum ensures that both will subtly promote CCP positions on issues like territorial disputes or religious minorities in China. In Slovakia, Grigorij Mesežnikov and Gabriela Pleschová describe how shortly after Slovak president Andrej Kiska's 2016 meeting with the Dalai Lama—which was highly criticized by the Chinese government—the Confucius Institute based at the Slovak University of Technology joined the Chinese embassy in cosponsoring an exhibition that emphasized China's territorial claims over the Tibetan region, titled "A Chinese Story: Chinese Tibet."

In Latin America, a unique Confucius Institute Regional Center for Latin America—located in Santiago, Chile, and operated by Hanban, an Education Ministry office responsible for teaching the Chinese language abroad—provides methodology trainings for Confucius Institute instructors based throughout the region. At the individual institutes, Hanban supplies teachers and staff from China—some of whom lack sufficient Spanish skills to communicate effectively with local students. Yet local universities are typically expected to cover some of the costs for hosting the institutes. In Argentina, the two universities that host Confucius Institutes each provide funding for 50 percent of the operating expenses; the same is also true for at least one of the universities hosting a Confucius Institute in Peru. Since in all three instances the universities are public, this essentially means Argentine and Peruvian taxpayers are footing the bill for Chinese state-run institutes that can be employed as vehicles for promoting Beijing's views and narratives. Similar local subsidization of Confucius Institutes occurs in other democracies.[17]

For Beijing, culture has become an important avenue for advancing sharp power, precisely because its potential in this regard is often underestimated. Kucharczyk describes how China presents itself as an "ancient, anodyne culture" that poses no threat and can provide opportunities for "win-win cooperation." Yet cultural events like Chinese New Year celebrations—which have proliferated around the world and become increasingly prominent in recent years[18]—can afford the Chinese authorities a prime opportunity to exert influence over how the country is represented abroad. In Argentina, Cardenal tells the story of how the Chinese embassy has used behind-the-scenes influence to transform what was once a grassroots cultural occasion organized by Buenos Aires' predominantly Taiwanese Chinatown community into a high-profile public event centered on the People's Republic of China.

Because Russia has far fewer financial and human resources at its disposal, as well as more complicated historical relationships with many countries, it has adopted a different approach to exerting influence in young democracies.

Perhaps the most highly visible Russian tool of influence—and one that has received the most attention from analysts—is the international expansion of its state media. In their inventory efforts, the researchers found that direct audience consumption of Russian television and print content is in all likelihood quite low in Central Europe. However, Jacek Kucharczyk points out that Russian state media still serve as an important channel for introducing disinformation into Poland. Their stories are often picked up by third-party websites—some run by Polish individuals or entities with their own reasons for supporting such narratives. The information, once filtered through a local source, becomes more palatable to a local population that would likely be skeptical of a Russian source.

All of Russia's influence efforts in the media, academia, culture, and the policy community tend to promote specific political narratives that advance the Kremlin's interests. In Poland and Slovakia, a general goal is to stoke and amplify any domestic opposition to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). To achieve this in each country, however, the Russian regime adopts a tailored approach. In Slovakia, it draws on the population's Slavic identity in an attempt to argue that Russia and Slovakia share the same values, and that those associated with Western Europe and the United States are alien to Slavic history and culture. In Poland, where the notion of fraternal ties with Russia carry far less weight, the Kremlin supports initiatives that emphasize the need to defend the Poles' own "traditional values" from the liberal ideas embraced by the rest of Europe. Perhaps most troubling, however, have been Russian-sponsored initiatives intended to undermine Poland's support for the new democratic government in Ukraine by reviving narratives about historical tensions between the two countries. In both Poland and Slovakia, the Russian government seeks to weaken a sense of belonging to the European and transatlantic communities, in which democratic governance and a commitment to shared liberal values have been defining and unifying features.

In both Poland and Slovakia, the Russian government seeks to weaken a sense of belonging to the European and transatlantic communities, in which democratic governance and a commitment to shared liberal values have been defining and unifying features.

For Russia, collaboration with academic and educational institutions in young democracies is important because their local reputations lend an air of credibility to the narratives that the regime wants to promote. In Slovakia, Mesežnikov and Pleschová detail a number of efforts, such as lecture tours by political scientists and historians aligned with Russia's government. They are funded by the Russian embassy, but Slovakian universities and high schools are sought out as event hosts and cosponsors. In both the Russian and Chinese cases, partnerships with local institutions are integral to accomplishing the authoritarian regimes' sharp power aims.

One additional realm in which the researchers noted increasing activity by the Russian and Chinese regimes is their own overseas communities. They appear to be expanding the definition of who is "Russian" or "Chinese" and are attempting to bring the relevant populations into their sphere of influence. In Slovakia, these efforts include initiatives to co-opt all Russian speakers through Russian expatriate associations. In Peru, Cardenal describes how China's efforts to engage the country's Tusan community—Peruvian citizens with ethnic Chinese heritage whose ancestors emigrated from China in a number of waves since the 19th century—have succeeded to such an extent that some Tusan are beginning to self-identify as "overseas Chinese" in tandem with their identity as Peruvian citizens.

The Goals and Impact of Authoritarian Influence Campaigns

By underwriting initiatives that borrow many of the traditional vehicles for transmitting soft power, China's one-party regime attempts to make itself more relatable to democratic societies. State-funded research centers, media outlets, Confucius Institutes, and people-to-people exchange programs essentially mimic the various outgrowths of independent civil society that exist in a democracy. Local actors in young democracies are often unaware of the extent to which civil society is tightly controlled inside China. The Russian authorities have also imposed growing restrictions on their own civil society sector,[19] a point that is similarly not well understood by observers in Latin America.

An analysis of Beijing's various sharp power initiatives suggest that they seek to reduce, neutralize, or preempt any challenges to the regime's presentation of itself. In this sense, they are instruments of manipulation and censorship, not simple attraction.

According to the researchers' inventory, the Chinese government often aims to portray the country as either a benign foreign influence or a successful example of economic development without democratic political institutions. Beijing does not necessarily expect other countries to follow its supposed alternative model (although in certain circumstances it does promote this notion), and it is willing to find ways to engage with governing elites regardless of their political ideology or regime type. However, embedded within China's campaign to defend and promote its own one-party system is a tacit criticism of democracy as inefficient, chaotic, and a poor catalyst for economic development. And Beijing does not hesitate to use its local allies and influence to silence opposition to its projects.

Russia, meanwhile, tends to focus its sharp power more directly on undermining the health and credibility of democratic regimes. The promotion of narratives that tap into the existing frustrations and cynicism of local populations is effective even in environments where popular opinion of Russia is not favorable. Whereas Beijing attempts to raise its profile and expand its power mainly through aggressive investment, co-optation, and dishonest salesmanship, Moscow hopes to level the playing field largely by dragging down its democratic adversaries, either in appearance or in reality.

One key challenge of measuring the impact or culpability of Russian and Chinese influence efforts is that they cannot be assessed in isolation from the genuinely domestic dynamics of democratic societies. In his report, Jacek Kucharczyk recognizes Poland's recent democratic backsliding first and foremost as a product of local factors and political trends. But as he also points out, "the research detailed in this essay reveals many dangerous liaisons between specific political narratives employed by homegrown populists and Russian propaganda, as well as calculated efforts by China to portray itself as an ultramodern, benevolent power featuring an authoritarian political system that offers a better incubator for economic growth than liberal democracy."

Democracy is more often than not an untidy process in which ideological and policy debates take place out in the open. Moscow in particular exploits such conflicts to increase polarization and break down democratic comity and consensus. Illiberal narratives generated abroad and local populist themes can feed off each other in a vicious circle, further complicating the task of separating one from the other. As Kucharczyk puts it, "This narrative overlap makes it difficult to distinguish propaganda contents originating in and propagated by Russia from material produced by domestic actors. At the same time, the proliferation of populist narratives creates an opportunity for Russian propaganda, as these narratives can be amplified with different propaganda tools, such as online trolling."

Another finding that emerges from the researchers' inventories is that authoritarian states such as China and Russia employ economic activity as leverage to advance political goals in the realm of ideas. China is especially adroit in this regard, applying pressure with varying intensity and through indirect channels that are not always apparent unless one examines Chinese business activities in conjunction with Beijing's other influence efforts.[20]

The cultivation of personal relationships is also a key facet of the authoritarians' sharp power influence. Many of the initiatives documented in this report, such as the authoritarians' people-to-people exchanges, are directed at the political elites, thought leaders, and other information gatekeepers of democratic societies. For politicians, journalists, academics, and think tank researchers in young democracies, such new connections offer the prospect of greater prestige and access to resources. For the authoritarians, currying goodwill and shaping the perspectives of key individuals can be a particularly cost-effective way to alter policy, while also gaining indirect access to wider audiences. These efforts are part of the larger aim of Moscow and Beijing to get inside democratic systems in order to incentivize cooperation and neutralize criticism of their authoritarian regimes.

A Widening Scope of Influence

This study examined four countries in two regions, but similar forms of Russian and Chinese sharp power influence are visible in a growing number of democracies around the world.

In Central Europe, the Czech Republic and Hungary have both been courted and manipulated by the two leading authoritarian states. In the Balkans, Russia still has a higher profile: A 2016 report estimated that 109 registered nongovernmental organizations, associations, and media outlets could be linked to pro-Russian lobbying efforts.[21] Russian media have been especially active. According to one analyst, Russia's strategy for Serbia has been to use the pro-Kremlin outlets to "destabilize the region and discredit the EU and Serbia's membership ambitions."[22] However, China also seems to be focusing more and more attention on Southeastern Europe. Under the auspices of its Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing has made significant infrastructure investments in Serbia and elsewhere in the Balkans, which could provide the Chinese authorities with new allies and leverage within the EU as such countries enter the bloc.[23]

The potential results can already be seen in Greece, a longtime EU member that has recently become a hub of Chinese investment in Europe. As the two countries' economic and other ties have deepened, observers have raised concerns that Beijing is buying Greece's silence or even cooperation on human rights issues. In June 2017, for example, Greece prevented the EU from condemning China's human rights record.[24]

The nature of China's growing influence in sub-Saharan Africa, a region rife with young democracies, is also an urgent concern. An analysis of Afrobarometer's 2014–15 opinion polling data found that nearly one out of every four Africans surveyed indicated a preference for China as a model for their own country's development.[25] China has stepped up its engagement especially in Africa's media sphere, expanding the presence of its state media outlets, hosting exchange programs and trainings for journalists, and acting as a supplier for Africa's telecommunication infrastructure.[26] Far more study is required to understand the impact of Chinese sharp power on the prospects of democracy on the continent.

In New Zealand, China's web of influence has reached deep into democratic institutions, partly by attempting to assert political control over the country's diverse ethnic Chinese population, and by offering attractive incentives to former New Zealand politicians who maintain close ties to the current government and can promote Beijing's interests.[27]

Democracies have assumed that engagement with authoritarian countries would lead to changes in their repressive systems, but there is little parity in an exchange between an open society and a deliberately closed one.

In Australia, another established democracy that has strong economic ties with China, Beijing has applied sharp power in an intensive way across a number of important sectors, including the media, business, politics, and culture. For example, Chinese entities are suspected of funneling donations to political parties and individual politicians, Chinese state-run media outlets buy space in Australian newspapers to promote official views, and government representatives exert influence over Chinese students at Australian universities—deterring open debate and promoting the official line on sensitive issues.[28]

A key aim of Chinese influence efforts in Australia is to weaken the country's alliance with the United States.[29] But regardless of its intended goals in terms of Australian government policy, Beijing's activities are damaging the underpinnings of Australian democracy. This threat to a long-standing bastion of freedom in the world should serve as a wake-up call for democracies everywhere.

Understanding Authoritarian Influence in an Era of Globalization

Taken individually, authoritarian influence efforts in particular countries may seem fairly harmless or ineffectual. However, when the seemingly disparate activities of Russia and China around the world are added together, a far more disturbing picture emerges.

The evidence presented by the report authors suggests that even exchange-related activities backed by authoritarian governments should be approached with greater skepticism. Although some of these initiatives may be genuine and advance admirable goals, many are designed to promote a particular political narrative, which in turn creates favorable conditions for authoritarian regimes.

While Russia and China may take somewhat different approaches to the application of sharp power, they both clearly take advantage of the openness of democratic systems. Democracies have assumed that engagement with authoritarian countries would lead to changes in their repressive systems, but there is little parity in an exchange between an open society and a deliberately closed one. In the marketplace of ideas, authoritarian regimes simply do not respect the rules: They protect their own controlled environments while attempting to tip the

scales abroad. This lack of reciprocity is evident with respect to media, nongovernmental organizations, and academia as well.

In many local contexts, there is a general lack of knowledge and expertise regarding the foreign policy objectives of China and Russia and the full extent of repression within their borders. The initiatives documented in this report demonstrate a serious effort by the Chinese and Russian regimes to exploit the situation and ensure that thought leaders and sociopolitical elites in democratic societies are willing to help advance their strategic interests.

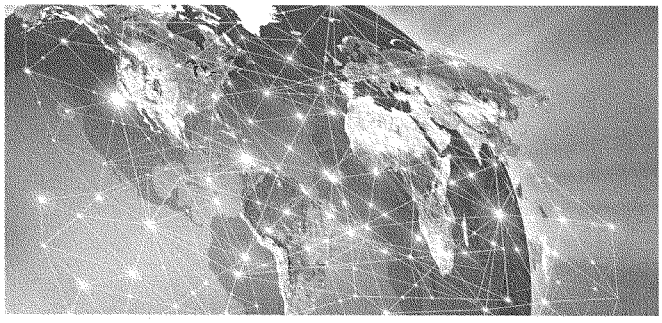
China especially is making long-term investments in this sphere. Many of its exchange and educational initiatives focus specifically on youth, such as the exchange program for young think tank leaders from Central and Eastern Europe cited by Kucharczyk, and the Bridges to the Future exchange program for young Latin American leaders described by Cardenal.

To some extent, the increased but fundamentally unbalanced interconnectedness associated with globalization has already borne fruit for authoritarian regimes. Many experts, policymakers, and journalists consulted for this report were reluctant to be cited by name. Offering an educated opinion that may be critical of the Chinese government can jeopardize an expert's access to China.

It is worth noting the similarities between the skewed exchanges of information and ideas described here and the prevailing pattern of economic engagement between democracies and the authoritarian powers. With the passage of time, it has become increasingly clear that the autocrats have managed to maintain tight control over their national economies while expanding the reach of their standard-bearing companies abroad. In China's case, the authorities have deftly put up barrier after barrier to foreign companies seeking access to the domestic market, requiring them to give up intellectual property, partner with approved Chinese firms, and comply with censorship and other demands. Meanwhile, Chinese firms have profited from their access to democratic markets; among countless other investments, China is pumping billions of dollars into U.S. companies that are working on cutting-edge technologies with potential military applications. While policymakers have recently become more attuned to the national security dimension of China's economic activities in democracies, they have been terribly slow to react to the dangers posed by China's influence activities in the media, academic, or cultural spheres. The same can be said with respect to Russia.

The regimes in Moscow and Beijing are essentially exploiting the opportunities of globalization while rejecting its underlying principle of free and open exchange. This basic hostility to universal liberal norms is most clear in their propaganda narratives, which typically frame democratic values as "Western values" that have no place in other parts of the world. As an alternative, the two governments promote nationalist, "traditional" cultural constructs and revisionist histories that seem to justify authoritarian rule and the violation of basic human rights.

As Joseph Nye and Wang Jisi have argued, "soft power is not a zero sum game in which one country's gain is necessarily another country's loss."[30] Yet the leaders of China and Russia apparently see themselves as engaged in a zero-sum competition with democratic nations, which runs counter to the conventional understanding of soft power. Until policymakers in the democracies recognize and properly define what they are facing, they will continue to fall prey to authoritarian influence efforts.



Implications for the Democracies

Even the strongest and most well-established democracies are far from immune to authoritarian influence. The United States and Western European powers have been targeted with an onslaught of Russian and Chinese initiatives in the arenas of media, culture, and politics. Among other problems they are grappling with is the pollution of the information space by a widening array of state-sponsored media campaigns, as well as the challenges to free expression and academic integrity presented by Confucius Institutes and university partnerships.

But it is the authoritarians' emphasis on young or institutionally fragile democracies that poses a particularly serious problem. In countries like Argentina, Peru, Poland, and Slovakia, democratic standards and values are not as well entrenched, and the system is not as well equipped to resist outside manipulation. Resources to support and sustain independent knowledge building about China and Russia are also scarce. The leading authoritarian states have sought to exploit this vulnerability, dedicating formidable and growing resources to the countries in question.

The following are key steps that can be taken to address China and Russia's malign efforts to influence and manipulate democracies:

- **Address the shortage of information on China and Russia.** In the four democracies examined, information concerning the Chinese political system and its foreign policy strategies tends to be extremely limited. There are few journalists, editors, and policy professionals who possess a deep understanding of China and can share their knowledge with the rest of their societies. Given China's growing economic, media, and political footprint in these settings, there is an acute need to build capacity to disseminate independent information about the country and its regime. The same holds true for Russia in places such as Latin America, though knowledge of today's Russia in Central Europe is more robust.

  Civil society organizations should develop strategies for communicating expert knowledge about China and Russia to broader audiences. This should include a conscious effort to break down ordinary academic and policy barriers to enable collaboration between experts

on China and Russia and regional specialists focused on Latin America or Central Europe. The challenge is global in scope, turning up in democratic countries on every continent, and the response must take this into account.

- **Unmask authoritarian influence.** Chinese and Russian sharp power efforts rely in large part on camouflage—disguising state-directed projects as commercial media or grassroots associations, for example, or using local actors as conduits for foreign propaganda and tools of foreign manipulation. To counteract these efforts at misdirection, observers in democracies should put them under the spotlight and analyze them in a comprehensive manner.

  Given the dispersed, globalized nature of authoritarian influence activities, which are increasingly embedded within democratic societies, the formation of working alliances across professional fields and borders is critical. Researchers, journalists, and civil society leaders who are concerned about the ever more complex challenges posed by authoritarian sharp power should also analyze the discourse of illiberal elites in democratic societies, and highlight the ideological concepts that authoritarian regimes seek to propagate in order to advance their own interests.

- **Inoculate democratic societies against malign authoritarian influence.** Once the nature and techniques of authoritarian influence efforts are exposed, democracies should build up internal defenses. Authoritarian initiatives are directed at cultivating relationships with the political elites, thought leaders, and other information gatekeepers of democratic societies. Such efforts are part of the larger aim of Moscow and Beijing to get inside democratic systems in order to incentivize cooperation and neutralize criticism of their authoritarian regimes.

  Support for a robust, independent civil society—including independent media—is essential to ensuring that the citizens of democracies are informed enough to critically evaluate the benefits and risks of closer engagement with authoritarian regimes. Where collaboration with Chinese and Russian state-backed entities has become widely accepted, civil society can develop and adopt their own voluntary standards of conduct for appropriate engagement with their "counterparts" in authoritarian regimes, mitigating the risk of co-optation and the export of censorship practices from autocratic to democratic settings.

- **Reaffirm support for democratic values and ideals.** If one goal of authoritarian sharp power is to legitimize illiberal forms of government, then it is only effective to the extent that democracies and their citizens lose sight of their own principles. Russia's efforts to exploit preexisting cleavages in democratic societies and China's attempts to neutralize criticism of its own regime place an emphasis on fueling citizens' doubts about democracy as a successful form of government. Top leaders in the democracies must speak out clearly and consistently on behalf of democratic ideals and put down clear markers regarding acceptable standards of democratic behavior. Otherwise, the authoritarians will fill the void.

- **Reconceptualize "soft power."** Finally, journalists, think thank analysts, and other policy elites need to recognize authoritarian influence efforts in the realm of ideas for what they are: corrosive and subversive "sharp power" instruments that do real damage to the targeted democratic societies. The conceptual vocabulary that has been used since the Cold War's end no longer seems adequate to describe what is afoot. The growing inventory of tools used by repressive regimes are not "soft" in the sense that they seek merely to attract support.

> They are not principally aimed at "charming" or "winning hearts and minds." Such tactics should be seen instead as instruments of manipulation, distortion, and distraction that reflect the antidemocratic political systems of the authoritarian states that wield them.

The regimes in China and Russia are deeply engaged in an international struggle over information, influence, and ideas. If the United States and other powerful democracies do not rise to the challenge, they will be abdicating their leadership roles, abandoning their allies, and neglecting their own long-term security. Should these and other well-resourced autocratic regimes maintain their current momentum for the foreseeable future, their efforts could do grievous damage to the integrity of young democracies. This in turn would deliver a devastating blow to the rules-based international order that has underpinned global security and prosperity.

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Witness Biographies

THE LONG ARM OF CHINA: EXPORTING AUTHORITARIANISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

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